



EXPERIMENTAL ARCHAEOLOGY AND MATERIALITY OF THE HIGH MEDIEVAL PERIOD AT FERRYCARRIG, IRELAND

Course ID: ARCH 365BB

June 11 – July 8, 2023

Academic Credits: 6 Semester Credit Units (Equivalent to 9 Quarter Units)

School of Record: Connecticut College

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INTRODUCTION

The program provides a practical introduction to the role of crafts, technologies and construction techniques in Ireland through time. Focusing on both the built environment and materiality in the later medieval period, students will actively participate in a range of bespoke experimental archaeology workshops and building projects. Through participation in this program students will be equipped with a good understanding of medieval society in general, with a specific focus on the role of technologies and materiality in people's lives at that time. The program also teaches many 'life-skills' such as creativity, problem solving, teamwork, time management, resourcefulness and project design and implementation.

What makes this program unique is its collaboration with a leading archaeological research project – *Digging the Lost Town of Carrig*. The experimental archaeology program is delivered adjacent to an authentic *ringwork* castle (the Carrick ringwork), within the confines of the Irish National Heritage Park (INHP) in Wexford, southeast Ireland. This ringwork is one of Ireland's most important medieval monuments and crucial to the earliest stages of the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland, being the first Anglo-Norman fortification built in the country in 1169 CE. Archaeological excavations at the site by the IAFS since 2018 show that significant evidence of the site's medieval history is preserved below the

ground – including remnants of a 12th century fort with wooden structures, 13th century stone castle and 14th century hall and chapel. As the archaeologists uncover the history of both the site and buildings the results are communicated in almost ‘live time’ to the experimental archaeology students, underpinning their projects with exceptional authenticity and added significance.

A further strength of the program is the partnership with the INHP - Ireland’s largest open-air museum, measuring 35 acres (14 hectares). The park depicts 9000 years of re-created history, from first settlers to the coming of the Normans, situated within natural forestry and wet woodlands. The park is a cornerstone of *Ireland’s Ancient East* and provides a stunning backdrop to the program. INHP specializes in communicating heritage to the local community and wider public, including through the provision of experimental archaeology initiatives and craft workshops. During their time in the park students will be taught an appreciation on the importance of communicating heritage, and the role experimental archaeology can play in this.

The program is delivered by both the Irish Archaeology Field School (IAFS) and Dr. Brendan O’ Neill of University College Dublin (UCD), one of the world’s leading experimental archaeologists. Arising from the strengths of the partnership between the IAFS, UCD and the INHP a new initiative, entitled *Building the Lost Town of Carrig*, was conceived in 2019. This project will develop gradually over the next few years, as the excavations at Carrick reveal the scale and nature of the medieval settlement. However, in time it is hoped that a series of replicas, or faux medieval settlement, will be built in the INHP directly based on the archaeological findings. Programs such as this are a crucial first step in this process, and actively contribute in explaining the site’s history to the public. Student’s work will thus leave a lasting legacy as an educative resource for both the Carrick project and the INHP – allowing future visitors and students a chance to better comprehend the history of this most important site and medieval society in general.

While on the program students will be housed in homestay accommodation in rural locations. Their closest major town is the stunning medieval centre of Wexford Town.

Wexford Town

Wexford town is nestled on the estuary of the River Slaney, on the southeast coast of Ireland. The town is one of the country’s great Viking and medieval townscapes, with intact medieval streetscapes and numerous upstanding archaeological monuments. The town of Wexford is named from the Norse “Waesfiord”, meaning “the inlet of mudflats”, a clear reminder of its Viking Heritage, which dates from the early 9th century CE. Since the Viking period the beautiful port town has been impacted by foreign invaders, sieges, a famous insurrection and the gradual decline of its once crucial maritime industries.

One of the most significant historical events to impact Wexford (and Ireland) occurred in May of 1169, when a force of roughly 500-600 Anglo-Norman and c. 500 Irish soldiers, led by Robert Fitzstephen, Maurice de Prendergast and the recently deposed Irish king of Leinster, Diarmait Mac Murchada, attacked and defeated the Norse-Irish town. Following the capture of Wexford Mac Murchada granted lands, including the Norse town itself, to Robert Fitzstephen and Maurice Fitz Gerald. In an effort to fortify the region Robert Fitzstephen built a wooden ‘ringwork’ castle on top of a large rock at Ferrycarrig, directly overlooking a strategic point on the River Slaney (approximately 4 km west of the town). This ringwork is the current location of this IAFS program.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The program will introduce students to a range of traditional building techniques as well as past crafts and technologies – with a focus on the high medieval period. During this four-week program at the INHP students will deliver their own unique project(s), helping in both project design and implementation. Student learning will be complimented by tours to several heritage sites, as well as a series of archaeological lectures/workshops. After this program, students will:

- Have an understanding of traditional skills, crafts and technologies
- Understand the background of experimental archaeology in Ireland
- Critically interrogate historical records and archaeological survey data, as part of an overall project design

- Deliver a unique semi-permanent project, which will become part of the park's/archaeology project's teaching resource
- Have an understanding of the medieval history of both Ireland and Wexford
- Understand how heritage can be explained and presented in an engaging manner to visitors and the community alike – especially in the context of an open-air museum
- Gain a base understanding of changing materiality in Ireland through time, focusing on the medieval period
- Build a structure(s) that will form a lasting legacy as part of the *Building the Lost Town of Carrig's* public outreach

ACADEMIC CREDIT UNITS & TRANSCRIPTS

Credit Units: Attending students will be awarded 6 semester credit units (equivalent to 9 quarter credit units) through our academic partner, Connecticut College. Connecticut College is a highly ranked liberal arts institution with a deep commitment to undergraduate education. Students will receive a letter grade for attending this field school (see grading assessment and matrix). This field school provides a minimum of 270 hours of experiential education. Students are encouraged to discuss the transferability of credit units with faculty and registrars at their home institution prior to attending this field school.

Transcripts: An official copy of transcripts will be mailed to the permanent address listed by students on their online application. One more transcript may be sent to the student home institution at no cost. Additional transcripts may be ordered at any time through the National Student Clearinghouse: <http://bit.ly/2hvurkl>.

PREREQUISITES

There are no academic prerequisites. This program is hands-on, experiential learning in a live field environment. What is required is enthusiasm, an open mind and a readiness to 'give it a go'.

DISCLAIMER – PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

Our primary concern is with education. Traveling and conducting field research involves risk. Students interested in participating in any IFR program must weigh whether the potential risk is worth the value of education provided. While risk is inherent in everything we do, we take risk seriously. The IFR engages in intensive review of each field school location prior to approval. Once a program is accepted, the IFR reviews each program annually to make sure it complies with all our standards and policies, including student safety.

The IFR does not provide trip or travel cancellation insurance. We encourage students to explore such insurance on their own as it may be purchased at affordable prices. insuremytrip.com or Travelgurad.com are possible sites where field school participants may explore travel cancellation insurance quotes and policies. If you do purchase such insurance, make sure the policy covers the cost of both airfare and tuition.

We do our best to follow schedules and activities as outlined in this syllabus. Yet local permitting agencies, political, environmental, personal or weather conditions may force changes. This syllabus, therefore, is only a general commitment. Students should allow flexibility and adaptability as research work is frequently subject to change.

You should be aware that conditions in the field are different from those you experience in your home, dorms or college town. Archaeological fieldwork in Ireland is carried out in all weather conditions – including rain. You are required to provide suitable waterproof and weatherproof clothing and footwear as well as wind protection. However, in bad weather you will also be provided with shelter. Program activities will include moderately strenuous physical work. Students must be in good physical condition and able to walk three miles a day comfortably.

If you have medical concerns, please discuss them with your doctor. All other concerns may be discussed with the project director – as appropriate.

GRADING

Quiz (5%): A quiz will be held at the end of Week 2 to assess student understanding of archaeological techniques and their application in Irish archaeological research.

Field school Participation (50%): Students are required to participate in all field school activities, including research, archaeological survey, excavation and laboratory work. Assessment will be undertaken by the supervisory team and will be based on attendance, willingness to work and to try diverse tasks, attention to detail and accuracy, participation in teamwork and contribution to discussions.

Field Journal (30%): Students are expected to complete a field school journal and present it for evaluation during their final week on site. Project staff will instruct students on the expectations for workbook entries.

Research Paper (15%): Students are expected to submit an individual research paper (1,500 words of text plus appropriate in-text citations, illustrations, and bibliography). The paper is due two weeks after the end of the field program though students may submit earlier if they so wish. This paper should be submitted via email as a MS WORD document to Dr Denis Shine (denis.shine@iafs.ie). For their research paper students will be assessed on their ability to organise and critically evaluate historical and field data, and the strength of their subsequent argument.

IFR COVID-19 SAFETY LOGISTICS

An IFR field school is designed to provide positive, constructive experiences for communities, students, and researchers. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, IFR protocols have been developed based on the assumption that any participant in an IFR field school may be an asymptomatic carrier of SARS COVID-19. Our goal, with these protocols, is to reduce the possibility for COVID-19 transmission among participants, staff, and local community members. IFR depends on the complete and sustained commitment of all students to stay healthy and to help others stay healthy. On enrolment, students commit to comply with all aspects of the IFR COVID-19 avoidance policy as well as any/all policies specific to their respective IFR field school.

PRIOR TO TRAVEL

IFR requires all students participating in IFR programs to be “up to date” with their COVID-19 vaccines, meaning they have completed a COVID-19 vaccine primary series AND received the most recent booster dose recommended by CDC, if eligible. For recommendations and eligibility for booster shots according to age and health status, please consult the [CDC website](#).

VISA REQUIREMENTS

Citizens of the US and Canada do not require visas to enter Ireland. You will need your passport to be valid for at least 90 days and will enter on a tourist visa. Citizens of other countries are asked to check the embassy website page at their home country for specific visa requirements

No other vaccinations are required for entry to Ireland but anyone working in archaeology in Ireland needs to have an up-to-date tetanus shot.

TRAVEL (TO AND DURING THE PROGRAM)

Due to ongoing uncertainties regarding the travel regulations related to COVID-19, IFR will assess the local conditions closer to the travel date (5-6 weeks prior to the program beginning) and will make Go/No Go decisions then. We urge you to participate in the mandatory orientation meeting when we will discuss the latest travel information and regulations. We also suggest you consider postponing the purchase of your airline ticket until after the program orientation.

Students will be met at Ferrycarrig, Co. Wexford. Since students will arrive on different flights at different times of the day, we will meet all students on Sunday, June 26th, at the Irish National Heritage Park at 4pm. Full details on reaching the park will be provided in the online orientation once you are enrolled in the course.

If you fail to make the meeting, please call/text or email Dr Denis Shine. You will be sent relevant contact details once you are enrolled in the course.

LOCAL PROTOCOLS, REGULATIONS, & EXPECTATIONS

COVID-19 Disclaimer:

The logistics outlined below for this IFR field school were written according to the most current and accurate information available to IFR. We recognize that the best practices for preventing the transmission of the coronavirus may change in the coming months. The IFR will be revisiting program-specific plans periodically throughout the enrollment period and will update program details according to new developments, new travel protocols, and updates to local policies. Updates to program-specific protocols will be communicated to participants at the pre-program orientation.

An IFR field school is designed to provide safe, positive, and constructive experiences for participating communities, students, and researchers. We are committed to protocols and practices that support the health and well-being of all involved in our field school projects, including the members of the community in which these projects take place. The IFR COVID-19 Policies have been developed with Dr. Kurt Eifling, the IFR Medical Director. Dr Eifling is a Fellow of the Academy of Wilderness Medicine and a practicing physician (<https://ifrglobal.org/about/staff/>).

We strongly recommend reviewing IFR's COVID-19 policies before enrolling in a program. All IFR students sign an agreement (Student COVID-19 Prevention Agreement) to uphold and abide by all aspects of the IFR COVID-19 policy as published on the website (<https://ifrglobal.org/ifr-covid-19-practices/>) as well as any program-specific protocols. These practices are subject to change as health and risk management experts provide new recommendations and best practices.

In Ireland we follow the government guidelines and restrictions, which are published on the Health Service Executive (our equivalent of the CDC), which has a designated webpage for COVID-19 restrictions, information and advice (see <https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus/>). The COVID-19 Safe Operating Procedures (SOP) of the Irish Archaeology Field School are also currently available on the IFR's website and will be updated prior to the start of the field season, based on the current advice in Ireland at that time. These policies, and those of the IFR, will be explained in full to you in your onsite orientation.

Wexford: Wexford is a relatively small, friendly and safe Irish town, [some 140km] south of Dublin. All the relevant local government agencies are aware of the students' presence, and they and all the people of the town are anxious to ensure that your stay is safe and enjoyable. Students are asked to respect local sensitivities and traditions and to understand that the presence of such a large team of outsiders in town does not entitle participants to any special treatment or privileges.

Although everyone will speak English, students should expect surprising cultural differences and exciting opportunities to learn about the lives of others as well. IFR students will be immersed in Irish culture through learning, language, food and music, and should be prepared for the rewards and challenges that life in a different culture will offer.

Please note: As the project is a public archaeology initiative students must also be prepared to engage with the local community in a professional and respectful manner both in an official capacity on site and unofficially when off duty.

ACCOMMODATION

Students will stay with local families in Co. Wexford. Homestay students live with local families, and experience true home life in provincial Ireland. Students will be brought to the site daily. Students should understand that the host families are in rural settings, requiring taxis to reach the town of Wexford. Breakfast and dinner will be provided along with a packed lunch. Students are encouraged to avail of their free time at weekends and explore Ireland.

Most students will be in a twin room and so will share with one other student. Our *current* policies dictate that mask wearing indoors will not apply in the homestay environment, which will be considered a bubble during your stay in Ireland. Regular hand washing should also be practiced in homestays.

EXCAVATION/TOOL KIT

Students are required to bring a basic tool kit. This includes but is not limited to:

- Work **gloves**: gardening glove suitable for work in wet weather (textile glove with a rubberised palm).
- Work shoes or boots: **closed toe-footwear, waterproof** that will be comfortable for both walking and kneeling: a hiking style shoe or boot would be suitable. Gumboots/wellingtons are also suitable for use on site however if you choose to wear these on site, you may need a pair of trail shoes or similar for field trips etc.
- **Waterproof outerwear**: a jacket (with a hood) and pants – gore-tex is best (but expensive). You will need something sturdy that will stand up to wear and tear of everyday use on site. You can buy waterproof gear locally in Ireland (if you choose to do this, budget to spend about €50/\$70).
- **Warm layers** – wool, fleece, thermal layers – you should bring and wear lots of layers rather than one warm/heavy layer. Bring things that are suitable for outdoor work.
- **Sunscreen**: students should wear an SPF daily to protect against UV exposure and windburn.
- **Hat**: something to keep your head warm. It will be cold and/or sunny.
- **Laptop/tablet**: a device on which you can prepare and submit your presentation and written assignments. A smart phone is not suitable for this.

FIELD PROGRAM

The field program, while focused on experimental archaeology, includes instruction on Irish history and the archaeology of the medieval period in general. The program is based on the Ferrycarrig site in Wexford, although students will also be brought to regional heritage sites. Site and project orientations will be conducted at the start of week one.

Week 1: Following project orientation and induction students will be brought to a number of regional heritage sites, before participating in an in-depth orientation on the Carrick archaeological site, including its artefacts, archaeological features and archaeological recording techniques; students will then be introduced to ancient technologies and construction techniques in the medieval period. Working directly with the archaeologists (and informed by past archaeological results) students will be expected to design and deliver a project reflecting structures, such as a kiln or furnace, that once stood at the Carrick archaeological site. Following this construction students will be actively engaged in an iron smelt and bronze casting – producing both raw iron and finished artefacts that would have commonly been seen at Carrick in the medieval period.

Week 2: Students will be introduced to medieval life, with a focus on pottery, diet, textiles and craft, industry etc. Students will be expected to construct both coil/hand-built pots and wheel thrown pots (on both modern and medieval replica pottery wheels) – leading to an understanding of the crucial importance of the pottery wheel to medieval society. Through a range of experimental archaeology workshops and a field trip, they will gain an insight to medieval society at large, and life at the Carrick site in the 12th and 13th centuries more specifically.

Week 3 and 4: Students will spend their time on two legacy projects, namely the construction of a medieval kiln and the construction of low walls, using authentic medieval mortars and techniques, which preserve the outline of medieval structures found on the excavation. Dependent on student numbers the group may be split and rotated through these projects, which will run simultaneously. Alternatively, it may only be possible to complete one of these projects within the program timeframe. Working on

both projects will equip students with a clear understanding of medieval construction techniques, with the program ultimately contributing an exhibit for the open air-museum, which can be used to explain medieval Carrick to the general public.

SCHEDULE

All IFR field schools begin with safety orientation. This orientation includes proper behavior at the field area, proper clothing, local cultural sensitivities and sensibilities, potential fauna and flora hazards, review IFR harassment and discrimination policies and review of the student Code of Conduct.

In addition to working on site, students will be introduced to Irish archaeology through a series of lectures/workshops. Students are given free time on their one full weekend, to allow them to explore Ireland.

The normal working day is from 9:00am to 5pm with a morning tea break from 11:00-11:30am and lunch from 1:30-2:15pm.

INDICATIVE SCHEDULE *

Week	Day	Date	Time	Event
1	Sun	Jun-11	Afternoon	Students arrival and welcome meeting
	Mon	Jun-12	Morning	Lecture/Project Orientation
			Afternoon	Lecture/Workshop: Archaeology of Medieval Carrick/Wexford Field trip 1: Tour of INHP and visit to Carrick Town
	Tue	Jun-13	All day	Medieval furnace and metallurgy: students will build a furnace, based on the remains of an actual feature from the excavation, before smelting iron – which includes processing of charcoal, temperature control/bellowing, processing of raw bog-ore, hammering etc.
	Wed	Jun-14	All day	Medieval furnace and metallurgy: as above
	Thu	Jun-15	Morning	Lecture/Workshop: Landscape and Geology
			Afternoon	Field trip 2: Ferns Towns- A High Medieval Landscape
	Fri	Jun-16	All day	Medieval pottery: the Carrick excavation has uncovered c. nine different medieval pottery types thus far. Students will learn how to make several of these potteries, both hand-built and wheel-thrown, in the process gaining a better understanding of how the transition to wheel thrown pottery was so crucial to medieval society
Sat	Jun-17	All day	Free Day	
Sun	Jun-18	All day	Free Day	
2	Mon	Jun-19	All day	Medieval pottery: as above
	Tue	Jun-20	All day	Medieval textiles: focusing on processing of raw wool, spinning wool into yarn using hand spindles and various types of weaving (including tablet and card weaving)
	Wed	Jun-21	Morning	Journal submission
			Afternoon	Field trip 3: Anglo-Norman Wexford - Hook lighthouse & Tintern Abbey
	Thu	Jun-22	All day	Medieval textiles continued
	Fri	Jun-23	All day	Departure feast: Using several of the skills learnt during the program students will be expected to design and deliver their own 'feast', including all preparation of food, construction of cooking areas (if required), seating etc.
				Falconry workshop with a focus on the medieval period
Prepare for departure				
Sat	Jun-24	All day	Free Day	
Sun	Jun-25	All day	Free Day	
3	Mon	Jun-26	All day	Kiln project: using traditional medieval stone masonry skills students will be tasked with constructing the first pottery kiln at Carrick for c. 700 years. This will ultimately be used to fire both the student's pots, and pots from future programs.
	Tue	Jun-27	All day	Kiln project as above
	Wed	Jun-28	All day	Kiln project as above
	Thu	Jun-29	All day	Kiln project as above
	Fri	Jun-30	All day	Kiln project as above
	Sat	Jul-01	All day	Free Day
Sun	Jul-02	All day	Free Day	
4	Mon	Jul-03	All day	Medieval masonry: working with skills learnt during the construction of the kiln students will create low 'medieval walls' outlining the buildings exposed on the excavation to date. This work is part of an ongoing project, whereby the results of the excavation are presented to the general public in a tangible manner.
	Tue	Jul-04	All day	Medieval masonry: as above
	Wed	Jul-05	All day	Medieval masonry: as above
	Thu	Jul-06	Morning	Departure feast: Using several of the skills learnt during the program students will be expected to design and deliver their own 'feast', including all preparation of food, construction of cooking areas (if required), seating etc.
			Afternoon	Journal submission Falconry workshop with a focus on the medieval period
	Fri	Jul-07	All day	Program wrap up
Sat	Jul-08	Morning	Depart program	

**Please note: changes to this schedule will occur due to factors beyond our control such as weather, etc. Sessions may also be extended or curtailed, based on student progress, or replaced with other experimental sessions, if necessary, for the Building the Lost Town of Carrig project. Dependent on student numbers the group may be split and rotated through these projects simultaneously. Alternatively, it may only be possible to complete one of these projects within the program timeframe if student numbers are low.*

MANDATORY READINGS

Enrolled students will receive a copy of the following book upon arrival to the program:

Shine, D., Potterton, M., Mandal, S. and McLoughlin, C. (eds). 2019. *Carrick, County Wexford: Ireland's first Anglo-Norman Stronghold*. Four Courts Press, Dublin. ISBN 978-84682-796-9.

PDF files of all other mandatory readings will be provided to enrolled students via a shared Dropbox folder.

Bennett, I. 1985. Preliminary Archaeological Excavations at Ferrycarrig Ringwork, Newtown Td., Co. Wexford. *Journal of the Old Wexford Society*, 10: 25-43.

O'Sullivan, A., Powers, M., Murphy, J., Inwood, N., Gilhooly, B., Kelly, N., Malone, W., Mulrooney, J., Corrigan, C., L'Estrange, M., Burke, A., Kazuro, M., McDermott, C., Warren, G., O'Neill, B. Heffernan, M. and Sweeney, M. 2014. 'Experimental archaeology: making; understanding; story-telling. In B. Kelly, N. Roycroft and M. Stanley (eds). *Fragments of Lives Past : archaeological objects from Irish road schemes*. National Roads Authority. Dublin. 115-126.

Sørensen, T. and O'Sullivan, A. 2014. Experimental archaeology in Ireland: its past and potential future. In Reeves Flores, J. and R. Paardekooper (eds). *Experiments Past: Histories of Experimental Archaeology*. Sidestone Press. Leiden. 47-66.

Shine, D., Potterton, M., Mandal, S. and McLoughlin, C. (eds). 2019. *Carrick, County Wexford: Ireland's first Anglo-Norman stronghold*. Four Courts Press, Dublin. (Read as much as possible – the whole book is relevant).

Shine, D. Mandal, S., Hayes, C. and Harris, M. 2018. Finding Carrig. *Archaeology Ireland*, 32 (2), 35-40.

Shine, D. and Mandal, S. 2018. Digging the Lost Town of Carrig: Archaeological Excavation Report 2019. Unpublished technical report prepared for the National Monuments Section.

OTHER READINGS

Beglane, F. 2010. Deer and Identity in Medieval Ireland. In Kucera, M. and G-K. Kunst (eds.) *Using Animals to Construct Human Identities in Medieval Europe*: 77-84. Vienna Institute for Archaeological Science.

Beglane, F. 2015. *Anglo-Norman Parks in Medieval Ireland*. Four Courts Press. Dublin.

Colfer, B. 2002. *Arrogant Trespass : Anglo-Norman Wexford 1169-1400*. Duffry Press, Wexford, Chapters 1-4.

Duffy, S. 1997. *Ireland in the Middle Ages*. Gill and Macmillan, Dublin.

McLoughlin, C. and Stafford, E. 2017. Excavation of the remains of an early thirteenth-century house at the Thomas Moore Tavern, Cornmarket, Wexford. In Doyle, I. and Browne, B (eds.). *Medieval Wexford: Essays in memory of Billy Colfer*. Four Courts Press, Dublin.

O' Keefe, T. 2015. *Medieval Irish Buildings 1100-1600*. Four Courts Press, Dublin

Rondelez, P. 2014. Ironworking in late medieval Ireland, c. AD. 1200 to 1600. Unpublished PhD thesis submitted to University College Cork.

Scott, A.B. and Martin, F.X. (eds.) 1978. *Expugnatio Hibernica by Giraldus Cambrensis*. New History of Ireland Ancillary Publication No. III. Royal Irish Academy. Dublin.