



The Medieval Landscape of Ferrycarrig: Tracing the Anglo-Norman Invasion of Ireland

Course ID: ARCH 365AA

January 3–30, 2021

Academic Credits: 8 Semester Credit Units (Equivalent to 12 Quarter Units)

School of Record: Connecticut College

DIRECTORS:

Dr Denis Shine, Irish Archaeology Field School (denis.shine@iafs.ie)

Dr Stephen Mandal, Irish Archaeology Field School (stephen.mandal@iafs.ie)



INTRODUCTION

The program provides a practical introduction to all aspects of the archaeological process including excavation, survey, post-excavation and dissemination. Our program is delivered at the Ferrycarrig (or Carrick) *ringwork* castle, within the confines of the Irish National Heritage Park (INHP) in Wexford, southeast Ireland. This ringwork is crucial to the earliest stages of the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland, being the first Norman fortification built in the country in 1169 CE. Today a bank and ditch are all that remain above the ground of this hugely important fortification, but archaeological excavations undertaken by the IAFS since 2018 show that significant evidence of the site's medieval history is preserved below the ground (see below).

Students will actively participate in uncovering the ringwork's history, while also learning how to critically assess the importance of this crucial site within its wider landscape and historical context. We achieve such an understanding by deploying a range of methods that include archaeological survey, archaeological excavation, experimental archaeology and post-excavation analysis (focusing on artefact curation and conservation). The diversity of our course allows students to understand the significance of the archaeological site within its heritage setting in the INHP, and that of the medieval Wexford in particular. To facilitate such a multi-faceted program, instruction will be conducted at the site itself, at a series of other sites on field visits, as well as in dedicated on-site facilities within the INHP.

The INHP is Ireland's largest open-air museum, measuring 35 acres (14 hectares), and contains the site of the ringwork. 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 archaeological dig. INHP specializes in communicating heritage to the local community and wider public, including through the provision of experimental archaeology initiatives and craft workshops. As part of their program students will be

exposed to the wider heritage initiative within the park, and craft/experimental archaeology workshops will form a component of their program.

The core of the program focuses on the excavation of the ringwork, one of the most historically significant sites in southeast Ireland. The ringwork was originally constructed in the winter of 1169 CE by Sir Robert Fitzstephen, to command a strategic position on a promontory overlooking the River Slaney and Wexford Town. In medieval texts the site is recorded as consisting of a fosse, bank and a palisade of wood and sods – something that appears borne out by the archaeological record. The historical record also documents medieval stone buildings at the site, including a stone castle that was built sometime within c. 60 years of the site's foundation. In 1857 CE a faux Early Christian round tower was constructed in the middle of the ringwork, as a memorial to those who died in the Crimean War (1854-1856), and it is not known to what extent this building impacted on the stone castle, with the later tower likely to be built from the castle's stone. Excavations to date revealed evidence of other medieval stone buildings (thought to be 13th and 14th century in date) and wooden structures thought to relate to the first fortification at the site in the 12th century.

This program of research aims to document the two main periods of site occupation: a) the original 'colonising' ringwork established by Fitzstephen and b) the later medieval stone castle (and associated structures) of 'Carrick Castle' and Carrick Borough (or town).

Specifically, students will be helping to answer two main questions:

- A. How was the site originally constructed and defended? – how significant were the defences/palisade; was a curtain wall constructed on the bank; was a gate tower constructed at the site; what archaeological artefacts survive from this period.
- B. How did the 'castle' and borough subsequently develop? – what medieval masonry/structures are extant on the site; what date are these structures and what were they used for; what archaeological artefacts survive from this period.

While digging at the site 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 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 4km west of the town). This ringwork is the current location of the IAFS program.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The program will introduce students to a range of techniques used by modern archaeologists both in excavation and survey. Students will learn the typical progression of archaeological research through non-invasive survey, archaeological excavation and laboratory protocols (focusing on artefact curation and remedial conservation). Student research will be complimented by tours to a number of heritage sites, as well as a series of archaeological lectures/workshops:

- Understand different strands of archaeological enquiry and their application in an archaeological research context
- Critically interrogate historical records and archaeological survey data, as part of an overall research design
- Have an understanding of the skills required for the conduct of an archaeological excavation
- Understand on-site laboratory protocols, and how these contribute to artefact research, conservation and interpretation
- 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

ACADEMIC CREDIT UNITS & TRANSCRIPTS

Credit Units: Attending students will be awarded 8 semester credit units (equivalent to 12 quarter credit units) through our academic partner, Connecticut College. Connecticut College is a private, 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 160 direct instructional hours. Students are encouraged to discuss the transferability of credit units with faculty and registrars at their home institutions 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 additional transcript may be sent to the student's home institution at no additional 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 and students will learn how to conduct archaeological research 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 involve risk. Students interested in participating in IFR programs must weigh whether the potential risk is worth the value of education provided. While risk is inherent in everything we do, we do not take risk lightly. 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](http://insuremytrip.com) or Travelguard.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. See this [Wall Street Journal article about travel insurance](#) that may help you whether to purchase such insurance.

We do our best to follow schedule 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 than 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.

Archaeological investigation 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 and will provide a mid-program assessment on journals, to allow students time to rectify any shortcomings.

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.

ACCOMMODATION

Students will stay with local families in the County of Wexford. Home Stay 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 most of 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.

TRAVEL & MEETING POINT

Hold purchasing your airline ticket until six (6) weeks prior to departure date. Natural disasters, political changes, weather conditions and a range of other factors may require the cancelation of a field school. The IFR typically takes a close look at local conditions 6-7 weeks prior to program beginning and make Go/No Go decisions by then. This time frame still allows the purchase of discounted airline tickets while protecting students from potential loss of airline ticket costs if we decide to cancel a program.

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, January 3rd, 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.

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 visit the Ireland Consulate web page at their home countries for specific visa requirements.

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

CULTURE, LOCAL ENVIRONMENT & ETIQUETTE

The town of Wexford is 155km (about 95 miles) south of Dublin. Wexford is a quintessentially classic, small, friendly and safe Irish town. All the relevant local government agencies are aware of the students' presence in the town, and they and all townspeople 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 expedition in town does not entitle participants to any special treatment or privileges.

This project can involve the participation of volunteers from the local community alongside IFR students. Although everyone will speak English, all students should expect surprising cultural differences and exciting opportunities to learn not only about the past but about the lives of others as well. 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.

EXCAVATION/TOOL KIT

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

- A four inch pointed **archaeology trowel** (also known as a four inch pointing trowel): We recommend a Marshalltown type trowel (<https://marshalltown.com/4-stiff-london-style-pointing-trowel-wood-handle>).
- 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 for digging, you may need pair of trail shoes or similar for field trips etc.
- **Waterproof outdoorwear**: a jacket (with a hood if possible) and pants – gore-tex is best (but expensive). You will need something sturdy that will stand up to wear and tear of everyday use in excavation. 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. A peaked hat can be useful for shade while digging.
- **Laptop/tablet**: a device on which you can prepare and submit your presentation and written assignments. A smartphone is not suitable for this.

FIELD PROGRAM

The field program, while focused on excavation, includes instruction in archaeological survey and post-excavation techniques. The program is primarily based on the Ferrycarrig site in Wexford, although students will also be brought to a regional heritage site each week. Site and project orientations will be conducted at the start of week one.

Week 1 - Orientation and Fieldtrips: Following project orientation and induction students will be introduced to the wider research area and period through a series of lectures and visits to regional heritage sites, such as Wexford, Ferns, Enniscorthy, Bannow Bay and the Hook Lighthouse. These fieldtrips will help demonstrate the different physical, archaeological and cultural landscapes surrounding the site. The field trips are designed to help place Ferrycarrig within its broader historical and geographic context.

Weeks 2, 3 and 4 - Excavation (located on site, under cover as appropriate): Students will be instructed in archaeological excavation and recording techniques – including excavation of archaeological features, documentation of finds, completion of site drawings and record taking of archaeological deposits. During their time on site students will also be provided with instruction in laboratory protocols, working closely with the materials their digging has generated. Excavations will be covered (as appropriate) to permit excavation in colder/wetter weather conditions.

Weeks 2, 3 and 4 – Laboratory Protocols: A focus will be placed on the cataloguing and remedial conservation of both artefacts and ecofacts, according to standards set by the *National Museum of Ireland* (NMI). The NMI requires that all finds recovered in archaeological excavations are prepared, and conserved where necessary, according to strict protocols, in advance of submission to the museum. Students are expected to understand these processes and will get the opportunity to work with several different archaeological material types (pottery, glass, metal, bone etc).

** The rotation of students through tasks including excavation, survey and post-excavation is dependent on weather conditions and student numbers; students may be split into smaller groups and rotated through different tasks simultaneously, while changes in the schedule are likely to be made to accommodate poor weather.*

SCHEDULE

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

In addition to working on site, students will be introduced to archaeological field methods and Irish archaeology through a series of lectures/workshops (as outlined below). Students will also be given dedicated research time in Wexford Library to access course readings that may only be available locally.

The normal working day is from 9:00am to 4:30pm with a morning tea break from 11:00-11:30am and lunch from 1:15-2:00pm. Students will have weekends free to explore the area and other parts of the country.

INDICATIVE SCHEDULE IN ADDITION TO SITE WORK*

Week	Day/Date	Time	Event
1	Sunday 3 rd	Afternoon	Students arrival and welcome meeting
	Monday 4 th	Morning	Project Orientation; safety orientation; review of IFR's policies and codes of conduct.
		Afternoon	Field trip 1: Tour of INHP and visit to Carrick Town
	Tuesday 5 th	Morning	Lecture/Workshop: Archaeology of Medieval Ireland/Wexford
		Afternoon	Field trip 2: Ferns Towns - A High Medieval Landscape
	Wednesday 6 th	Morning	Lecture/Workshop: Landscape and Geology
		Afternoon	Field trip 3: The Hook Lighthouse, Bannow Bay, etc.
	Thursday 7 th	Morning	Excavation Orientation
		Afternoon	On site (survey [and excavation])
Friday 8 th	Morning	Meeting to discuss student research	
	Afternoon	On site (excavation [and post-excavation])	
Saturday 9 th	All day	Free Day	
Sunday 10 th	All day	Free Day	
2	Monday 11 th	All day	On site (excavation [and post-excavation])
	Tuesday 12 th	All day	On site (excavation [and post-excavation])
	Wednesday 13 th	All day	On site (excavation [and post-excavation])
	Thursday 14 th	All day	On site (excavation [and post-excavation])
	Friday 15 th	Morning	Quiz
		Afternoon	Independent research time (timing is weather dependent)
	Saturday 16 th	All day	Free Day
	Sunday 17 th	All day	Free Day
3	Monday 18 th	All day	On site (excavation [and post-excavation])
	Tuesday 19 th	All day	On site (excavation [and post-excavation])
	Wednesday 20 th	All day	On site (excavation [and post-excavation])
	Thursday 21 st	All day	On site (excavation [and post-excavation])
	Friday 22 nd	All day	On site (excavation [and post-excavation])

			Independent research time (timing is weather dependent)
	Saturday 23 rd	All day	Free Day
	Sunday 24 th	All day	Free Day
4	Monday 25 th	All day	On site (excavation [and post-excavation])
	Tuesday 26 th	Morning	On site (excavation [and post-excavation])
		Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings to discuss student research • Turn in field journals
	Wednesday 27 th	All day	On site (excavation [and post-excavation])
	Thursday 28 th	Morning	End of program cultural event/'feast'
		Afternoon	Visit to Falconry centre
	Friday 29 th	All day	On site (excavation [and post-excavation])
Evening		Prepare for Saturday departure	
Saturday 30 th (Feb)		Depart	

**Please note: changes to this schedule will occur due to factors beyond our control such as weather, etc.*

MANDATORY READINGS

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

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.

Note: This is to be published in October 2019 and is available for purchase online from Four Courts Press. It is essential that students read as much of this as possible in advance of attending the field-school, but at a minimum should read Chapters 1-7.

RECOMMENDED READING

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.

Shine, D. and Mandal, S. 2017. *Ferrycarrig Archaeological Site Handbook*. Unpublished site handbook, which will be circulated to students after enrolment on the course. Typically 50 pages in length.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Barry, T. B. 1987. *The Archaeology of Medieval Ireland*. Routledge, London. Chapters 1-3.

Bradley, J., Ó Drisceoil, C. and Potterton, P. (eds). 2016. *William Marshal and Ireland*. Four Courts Press, Dublin.

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

Bennett, I. 1989. The Crimean War memorial, Ferrycarrig, Co. Wexford - a precisely dated round tower. *Archaeology Ireland* 3 (2): 58-60.

Colfer, B. 2004. *Wexford: A Town and its Landscape*. Cork University Press, Cork.

Colfer, B. 2013. *Wexford Castles: Landscape, Context and Settlement*. Cork University Press, Cork.

Doyle, I. and Browne, B (eds.) 2017. *Medieval Wexford: Essays in memory of Billy Colfer*. Four Courts Press, Dublin.

Green, K. and Moore, T. 2010. *Archaeology, an Introduction*, 5th Ed. Routledge, Oxford. Chapter 3, Sections 3.3-3.5.

Hore, P.H. 1906. *History of the Town and County of Wexford - The Town of Wexford with Notes of Taghmon and Harperstown*. London

- Jeffry, W.H. 1979. *The castles of Co. Wexford*. Notes presented to Wexford County Library by Old Wexford Society. Unpublished.
- Museum of London. 1990. *Archaeological Site Manual*, 2nd Ed. Museum of London, London.
- Orpen, G.H. 1892. *The Song of Dermot and the Earl*. Oxford.
- Orpen, G.H. 1968. *Ireland under the Normans* 4 vols. Reprint. Oxford.
- Scott, A.B. and Martin, F.X. (eds.) 1978. *Expugnatio Hibernica by Giraldus Cambrensis*. New History of Ireland Ancillary Publication No. III Dublin. Royal Irish Academy.
- Sweetman, D. 2000. *The Medieval Castles of Ireland*. Boydell Press, Suffolk.