

Late Quaternary Landscape Evolution, Palaeoenvironments and Human Occupation in the North of Ireland

QRA/INQUA POST-CONGRESS FIELD TRIP:
1st-4th August 2019

Leaders: Helen Roe, Nicki Whitehouse, Jasper Knight

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Minimum number of participants: 13; Maximum number: 25

1. DESCRIPTION

Extending from the coastal lowlands of Strangford Lough, County Down, through the Lough Neagh basin and the scenic Antrim coast to the lakelands of County Fermanagh, this trip will include a wide variety of sites that will highlight the impacts of regional glaciation on the North of Ireland, the diverse character of landscape evolution during the late-glacial and Holocene, and evidence for human-landscape interactions since the Neolithic period. It will also include a number of peatland and lake sites that have been used to reconstruct mid to late Holocene climate change and to develop regional tephrostratigraphies. During the excursion there be an opportunity to visit the Giant's Causeway UNESCO World Heritage Site and the Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark where issues of geoheritage conservation and management will be explored. A tour of the Bushmills Distillery will be included. Our base for the trip will be the city of Belfast where delegates wishing to stay for an optional fifth day can tour the multi-award winning 'Titanic Belfast' Museum or the Ulster Museum.

Cost per person: **£245** (including all tour travel, site entry to the Giants Causeway, Marble Arch Caves, Bushmills Distillery Tour and Whisky tasting and lunches on four tour days). Note: *accommodation and Titanic Belfast entry fee are not included.*

2. BASE FOR THE TRIP

Delegates will make their own arrangements for accommodation in Belfast where many different types of accommodation are available at a range of prices. A group discount rate (**£75 single; £93 double**) has been arranged at the **Wellington Park Hotel in South Belfast** with a code for discounted bookings (for further details see below). The organisers are happy to provide delegates with assistance with hotel bookings and will supply a list of recommended hotels on request.



Garron Point, County Antrim (Photograph: Jasper Knight)

3. START AND FINISH TIMES / TRAVEL TO BELFAST

Delegates joining the trip have the option to meet at the **Wellington Park Hotel** at 9.30 am on Thursday 1st August (Day 1) or at **Belfast's central station** (Lanyon Place Station) at the later collection time of 10 am. Note: Dublin to Belfast takes approximately 2 hours by train and 2.5 hours by coach so travel to Belfast from Dublin that morning is possible. Pick ups will be made daily from the Wellington Park Hotel and the city centre, at 8.20 am or 8.40 am. The field trip will finish at 5 pm in Belfast on Sunday 4th August. Belfast is served by two airports, George Best City Airport (3 miles from the city centre) and Belfast International Airport (18 miles). Both airports have regular flights to a number of UK and European destinations. Dublin Airport is also within easy reach of the city via a direct shuttle, with a journey time of approximately 2 hours.

4. ITINERARY

Day 1: Belfast and the Ards Peninsula (Thursday 1 August)

Start times: 9.30 am Wellington Park Hotel, South Belfast and 10.00 am Lanyon Place Train Station, Belfast

Themes: *Lateglacial and Holocene landscape evolution, climate change and archaeology in Strangford Lough and the Ards Peninsula*

Stops: Giant's Ring Ballynahatty near Belfast (earthwork site; palaeoecological insights into human impacts); Roddans Port (Lateglacial palaeoenvironments/ palaeoecology); Greyabbey (Strangford Lough foreshore sites – maritime archaeology of the Greyabbey Bay area foreshore; overview of the glacial history of SE Ulster). *Note: ordering of stops will depend on tide times.*

Day 2: The Lower Bann Valley and the Glens of Antrim (Friday 2 August)

Themes: *Holocene landscape evolution and environmental change in the lowlands north of Lough Neagh*

Stops: Newferry near Toome (Holocene diatomites and water-level changes in the Lough Neagh Basin; history of human occupation in the Lower Bann Valley since the Mesolithic); Dead Island Bog (mid to late Holocene climate change and tephrostratigraphy); Cushendun and Glenariff (mid to late Holocene coastal evolution and sea-level change); Garron Point (deglacial processes and landslide instability during deglaciation).



Giant's Causeway UNESCO World Heritage Site, Co. Antrim

Day 3: The Causeway Coast (Sat 3 August)

Themes: *Late Midlandian ice retreat and ice dynamics in NE Ireland and associated geomorphic processes; geoconservation and management at the Giant's Causeway UNESCO World Heritage site.*

Stops: Portballintrae and White Park Bay (late-glacial and Holocene sea-level change and coastal evolution, nearshore sediment dynamics); Giants Causeway (unique assemblage of Tertiary lavas, geomorphic features and management and geoconservation issues). Tour of Ireland's oldest working whisky distillery at Bushmills and whisky tasting.

Day 4: County Fermanagh (Sunday 4 August)

Themes: *The Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark: geoheritage and conservation; Limnological responses to land-use change in Upper Lough Erne; Neolithic occupation of the Fermanagh lowlands*

Stops: Clogher Valley Eskers (glacial depositional features in Fermanagh); Lough Yoan Crannog site, Co. Fermanagh (human-environment interactions in the Neolithic; palaeoecological responses to human occupation); Upper Lough Erne (limnological responses to land-use change, nutrient enrichment, changing water levels and landscape connectivity change); Marble Arch Caves (geoheritage; limestone geomorphology; climate change); guided tour of the Marble Arch Cave system. Finish: 5.00 pm Belfast

Day 5: City of Belfast (optional) Monday 5 August

Optional tours of Titanic Belfast or the Ulster Museum – to be arranged independently by participants. *If sufficient delegates wish to visit the Titanic Museum a group discount rate will be available. Please email Helen Roe if interested.*

5. CANCELLATIONS AND INSURANCE

We urge you to finalise your travel arrangements only after the field trip has been confirmed at the end of March 2019. The QRA is not responsible for any costs incurred by participants due to cancellation of non-viable field trips.

Please note that you will need to buy your own travel insurance to provide cover for any accidents, delayed flights, costs of missing the departure rendezvous etc.

6. ACCOMMODATION – ADDITIONAL INFO

As noted above, delegates are asked to make their own arrangements for accommodation. If you would like to make a reservation at the **Wellington Park Hotel**, please quote the following code to qualify for discounted rates between 31 July and 4th August inclusive: **QUEEN310719** **Please book early to avoid disappointment.**

Hotel Website

<https://www.wellingtonparkhotel.com>

For a list of recommended hotels and other types of accommodation in Belfast (e.g. hostels) please email Helen Roe (h.roe@gub.ac.uk).