

(A division of the Hunt Museums Trust)

# Craggaunowen -

## The Living Past

"Where Celtic Life is brought to life"

### Craggaunowen Tour Work Sheets

#### Introduction:

Welcome. The accompanying pages are to help you enjoy your visit to Craggaunowen to the maximum. The questions can be answered by reading the information panels around the grounds and by looking at the sites themselves. If all else fails you can always ask one of our Guides for help in obtaining the replies!!

Your Tour around the grounds will start with the Castle and then proceed to the Crannog. As you make your way around the grounds you will see sites such as the Togher and the Fulacht Fiadh, the Megalithic Area will introduce you to how the dead were buried in the Stone Age and later periods. You will find that much of your time here will be spent in the Ringfort- there are about 50,000 of these around Ireland and we have a lot of information on these sites and how the people lived. Finally, you will see Tim Severin's leather boat 'Brendan' and learn how monks from 6th Century Ireland could have travelled across the Atlantic long before other explorers from Europe.

#### CASTLE HISTORY:

Craggaunowen Castle is classed as a Tower House by archaeologists. It is one of about 4,000 which were used as the residences of the Chieftains of Irish Clans and other members of the nobility and gentry.

- 1550 Built by John MacSioda MacNamara, The MacNamara and Lord of East Clancullen. According to The Annals of the Four Masters "He was a man noble and majestic, the favourite of women and damsels on account of his great mirthfulness".

It was he who gave his name to the townland here. Creagan is the Irish for a 'Rocky Place'. Eoin is the form of John, normally rendered as Sean, which is reserved for Saints and Nobles. Creagain Eoin translates, therefore, as The Rocky Place of John, it's a good description of the site chosen by him to build his Tower House, strategically placed as it is upon a large rock outcrop.

What can you discover about the Townland in your own area? Either at home or at school. Try to find out as much as you can. Use the space below-

Anglicised Version of the  
Townland Name: \_\_\_\_\_

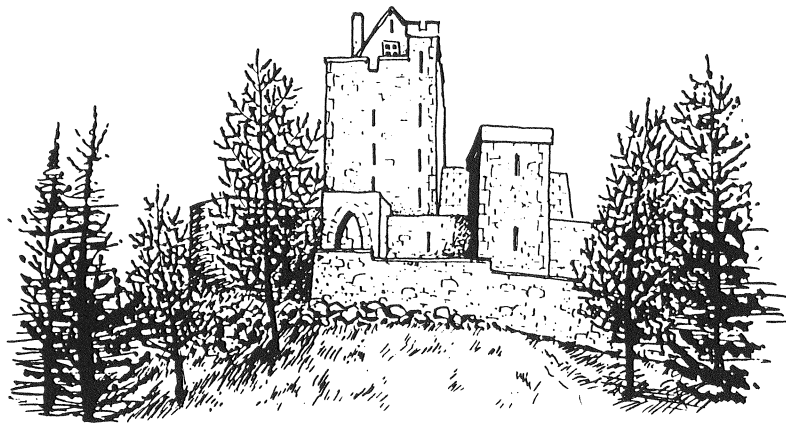
Irish Language Version of  
the Townland Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Translation: \_\_\_\_\_

- 1570 Upon his death the castle passed to various branches of the MacNamaras and onto families such as the O'Hartigans and the Mulchonrys.



- 1653 Rendered indefensible and uninhabitable at the time of the Cromwellian Confiscations when it was taken over by The Commonwealth. It gradually falls into decay.
- 1820 Inherited and partly restored as a summer house by Tom Steele. You can see his initials, T.T.S., on one of the quoin stones on the north-east corner of the castle. A protestant, he was a member of Daniel O'Connell's Home Rule Party- his house, on the shores of nearby Cullane Lake, was the Election Headquarters for the famous Clare By-Election of 1829. He was a loyal and enthusiastic supporter of Catholic Emancipation, working tirelessly alongside O'Connell to improve the lot of the tenantry of Ireland.
- 1849 Steele dies in London. His body is brought back to Ireland where it is laid to rest in the O'Connell Circle in Glasnevin Cemetery, Dublin. The Castle is inherited by cousins who live there, along with their descendants until it is abandoned in the 1920's.
- 1950's The Land Commission acquires the Castle and the lands around it when they buy out the Cullane Estate after the death of the last member of the family to live in Cullane House.
- 1965 Craggaunowen Castle and some of its former lands were purchased by the late John Hunt (1900-1976) who restored it completely and presented it to the nation. It opened to the public in 1975.



Craggaunowen Castle stands securely on a crag and is protected on two sides by the lake and on the other side by a moat hewn out of solid rock. This rock is fortified by a stone wall with a small bastion.

1. Why might this castle be easily defended against attack?

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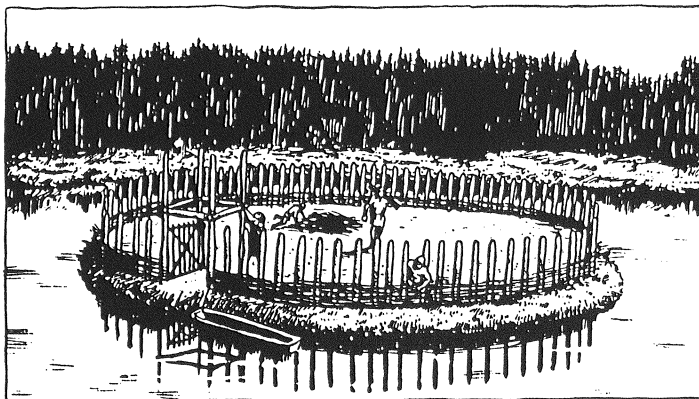
2. What shape is the Castle?

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THE CRANNOG:What is a Crannog?

This is an ancient site where our ancestors lived. It is a man made island on a lake. The name crannog is related to the Irish word crann, a tree. This gives us a clue as to the most important building material used in its construction. This was T \_ \_ \_ \_ \_.



Once a suitable site in a shallow part of a lake was found piles of stones were collected and dropped onto the bed of the lake. This became the foundation of the man-made island. Brushwood and branches from the nearby countryside were then laid on the stones. On top of this tree trunks or planks were laid, this formed the basis for a solid floor. Earth or sand was then laid on this. The Crannogs were roughly circular in shape. Strong stakes were beaten into the lake bed around the edge to hold the material to-gether.



Defensive pallisades were built around the perimeters to aid in the defence of these artificial islands. These consist of strong uprights through which wattles, usually of hazel, were woven.

Look at the pallisade here. How might you defend it? \_\_\_\_\_

Surprisingly enough Crannogs were occupied continuously by people for centuries. From the Late Bronze Age (about 1,200B.C.) to, in some instances, the 1600's. Quite a long time. Can you work out approximately how many years they were in operation? \_\_, \_\_ Years.

The Houses on Crannogs were built using the "wicker wattling and daub" method. This technique was used from the Stone Age through to modern times- over 5,000 years. The houses were round, oval or rectangular and had conical or ridge roofs. Thatch was the preferred roofing material.



### Everyday Life on a Crannog

Information on the people who lived on Crannogs comes to us from archaeologists. They have recovered ornaments, weapons, tools and implements which help us piece together the everyday activities of Bronze Age people.

Many of these weapons, tools and jewellery were very well made. They were of great beauty and outstanding craftsmanship. The metals used were bronze, copper, tin and gold. Some of their jewellery, tools and pottery can be seen in The Hunt Museum in Limerick which was also founded by the late John Hunt.

### Exploring The Crannog

1. What is the approximate width of the area within the Pallisade Fence? Give your answer in metres. \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is the overall diameter of the Crannog's Platform? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What shapes are the houses on the Crannog?  
One is rec \_\_\_\_\_, the other is cir \_\_\_\_\_.
4. What shapes are the roofs? The Rec \_\_\_\_\_ House has a R \_\_\_\_\_ Roof, The Cir \_\_\_\_\_ House has a Con \_\_\_\_\_ Roof.
5. What is the most obvious material used in the walls? C \_\_\_\_.
6. What was used for the roofing here? R \_\_\_\_\_. Apart from this material, what else can you suggest could have been used here for thatching? S \_\_\_\_\_ or R \_\_\_\_\_es.
7. How were the doors made and what materials were used? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What do you think the people who lived here might have eaten?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Can you see anything which might have been used in preparing meals? It is called a S \_\_\_\_\_e Q \_\_\_\_\_.
10. Did you see the implement which would have been used to prepare the soil for growing the grain which would have been ground on the Q \_\_\_\_\_. It is an early P \_\_\_\_\_.



11. Name the three locations of the hearths:  
A. \_\_\_\_\_  
B. \_\_\_\_\_  
C. \_\_\_\_\_
12. Suggest ways in which the smoke would have escaped from the Buildings?  
By the D \_\_\_\_\_ and through the R \_\_\_\_\_.



**FARMING AND COOKING:**

The invention of farming in the Late Stone Age, which is called the Neolithic Revolution by archaeologists, marks the beginning of Civilisation. This is why many people are involved in the study of early crops and ancient breeds of animals such as sheep and cattle.

Archaeological Parks in Britain and on the Continent use small breeds of cattle such as Kerry Cows and Dexters, which are native to Ireland, for study and research purposes. Have you seen any of ours? Ask the Guide to help you with their names. Two are called \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

We also have many different varieties of Sheep including Manx Sheep, which have \_\_\_\_\_ horns and Hebridean Sheep, which come from islands off the coast of Scotland. They give us black wool for weaving with. Also from an island off the Scottish coast come Soays. They are so ancient a variety of sheep that most people mistake them for their cousins, G\_\_\_\_\_. As you go around the grounds here see how many of them you can spot. Each time you see one make a little tick in the box on the right. See if you can spot them all. Your teacher will be able to give you the answer as you leave.

Do you have a cat or dog at home? Does it lose its hair and leave it all over the chairs in the house? This is called moulting. Because sheep are sheared annually modern varieties have lost this ability. However, our Soays are such an ancient variety that they still moult annually, so when we want to use their wool we simply pluck them!!

**MALE SOAY'S HORNS**

**FEMALE SOAY'S HORNS**

Draw in the two different types of horns. The Male uses his as battering rams to drive other sheep out of his territory, so that his young will have enough to eat. The female uses hers as though they were swords to defend her young lambs from predators.

Even with the means of farming to provide sustenance the people of Ireland still relied upon hunting to provide meat for their larders. If a party of warriors went deer hunting the Annals tell us that they usually made use of a Fulacht Fiadh (an Old Irish Name which means 'The Boiling Place of the Deer') to cook the meat.

A Fulacht Fiadh consisted of a pit dug in marshy land, lined with stone flags or timber slabs, which was allowed to fill with water. Huge fires were used to heat stones and after several hours, when the stones were deemed to be hot enough, they were transferred into the pit to bring the water to the boil. Then the meat being cooked, wrapped in Sughan, a twisted straw rope, was placed in the hot water to cook.

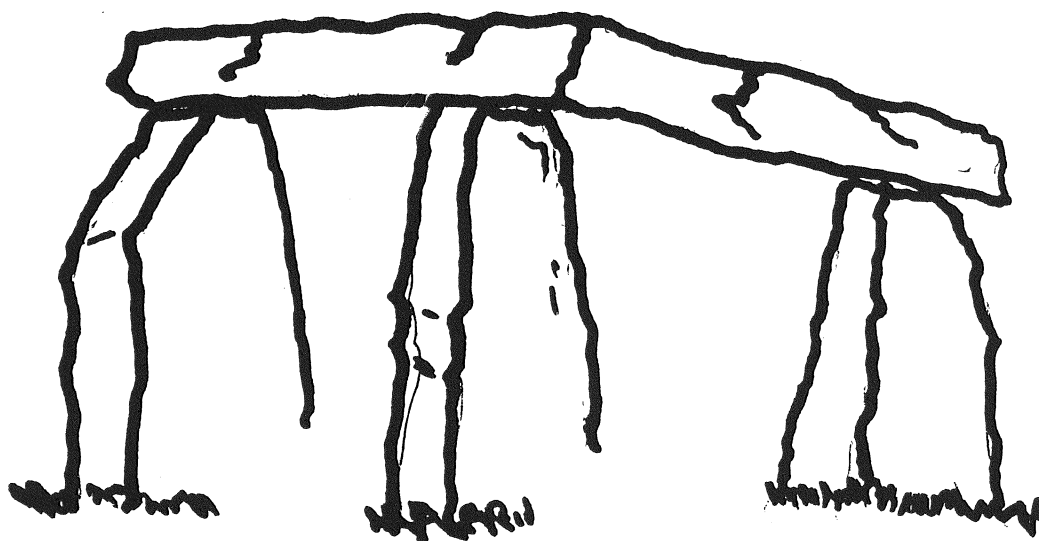
The pit in our Fulacht Fiadh is 100cms. wide, it is 200cms. long and about 100cms. deep. Can you work out how many litres of water is contained in the pit when it is full of water? \_\_\_\_\_.



**MEGALITHIC TOMBS:**

You are probably familiar with the word 'Mega!'- you might use it yourself to describe something as being great. It's a Greek word which means 'BIG'. Lithos is another Greek word which means 'Rock'. Put the two together and you have, in English, 'Big Rock'. So the word Megalithic is just a fancy way which archaeologists have of describing tombs built of Big Rocks.

You know, Dolmens are possibly the most commonly recognised archaeological structures in the world. Yet what we see today is only the skeleton of the original tomb. Below is a drawing of a typical Dolmen as you would see it in a field today. Using the example of a classic Dolmen built here draw in the features which are missing.



**THE CRAGGAUNOWEN DOLMEN**

Missing from the drawing were:

The S \_ \_ \_ S \_ \_ \_ , which defined the sanctuary area at the tomb's entrance;

The C \_ \_ \_ , which covered the tomb;

The R \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ S \_ \_ \_ \_ , which held the C \_ \_ \_ \_ material in place.

Also missing are the Side Slabs along the edges of the Capstone which prevented material from falling into the tomb and the Closing Slab from the entrance.

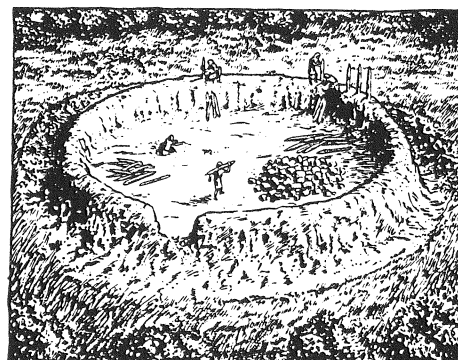


**THE RINGFORT:**

Like the crannogs, Ringforts were lived in over a very long period of time. Despite the huge numbers found in Ireland only about 100 have been scientifically excavated. Though their origins can be traced back through the Bronze Age into the Stone Age it was only in the Iron Age and Early Christian Period that they were built used in large numbers.

**Place Names and Ringforts**

Ringforts in old Irish were often called rath, lios, dun, caher and caiseal. The rath and lios were often small earthen rings while the dun was a larger fortification. The caiseal and caher described stone walled forts. A number of Irish place names contain these words—Mountrath, Cahir, Cashel, Dunmore, Dundalk, Lisdoonvarna. Can you list some used in your own home area?

**Building a Ringfort**

Where soil was plentiful, and deep, a bank was made of earth—archaeologists classify these as being Rathes. On the other hand, where stone was easily quarried, or was plentiful, a wall was built. These are classified as Cashels today.

The aim of the Ringfort builders was to create a structure within which the inhabitants and their animals would be protected from raiders and wild animals such as wolves and boars. A ditch was dug and the excavated material was piled inside to form the bank. A fence would very often be erected on top in order to increase the security.



Craggaunowen's Ringfort gives you a good idea of what the dwellings of some Iron Age Irish farmers looked like. They varied in size—some are a mere 20 metres across, others have diameters in excess of 65 metres. Estimate for yourself the approximate diameter of our Ringfort, measuring from the bottom of the inner bank face: \_\_\_\_\_.

How high is the bank? \_\_\_\_\_. Where is the most convenient place to measure this? While there, work out how wide the bank is at its base: \_\_\_\_\_.

How many family houses are in the Ringfort? \_\_\_\_\_. It is R \_\_\_\_\_ or C \_\_\_\_\_ lar in shape with a C \_\_\_\_\_ cal roof. The walls are built of \_\_\_\_\_ . The roof is supported by a \_\_\_\_\_ and the roofing is of R \_\_\_\_\_ .

How many Outhouses and Work Sheds are there? \_\_\_\_\_ What are their uses?

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# SOUTERRAINS:

Another fancy word used by archaeologists! This time it is the French language which is used as the source. Sous is the word for 'under', do you want to guess what the word terrain means- \_\_\_\_\_? Put them together and you have a word which we in Ireland know means "An under- \_\_\_\_\_ passage".

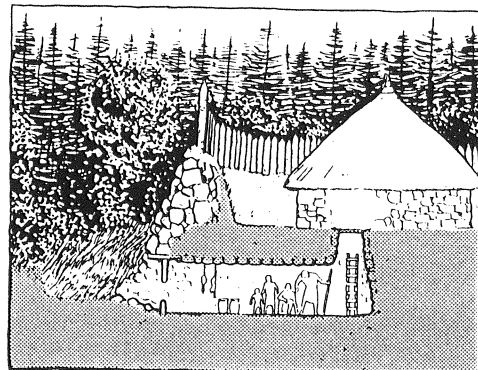
After the Craggaunowen built in the mid-70's were shown to experts make comments on it. good, and the stone- their craft, that most were looking at one and only recently



Souterrain was photographs of it so that they could The design was so masons so expert in of them thought they built in antiquity discovered.

Souterrains were used, it is thought, for three main purposes. First and foremost, they were served as refrigerators- perishable foodstuffs such as milk, meat, eggs and poultry could be stored there until needed for cooking. A well built souterrain maintains a constant temperature of 4 Centigrade year round. See what temperature is in your 'fridge at home and write it in here- \_\_\_\_\_. This constant temperature has led some people to suggest that Souterrains were used as sleeping chambers- with all the family present the heat would quickly build up and make it very cosy. What do you think? \_\_\_\_\_

Most people think that the third main use of Souterrains was that of places of refuge or as means of escape during periods of war or times of unrest. Many of the souterrains around Ireland have secondary chambers which were very difficult to locate in the first and very difficult to get into. This meant that people hiding there would be relatively safe from foes.



Can you draw a plan of the Craggaunowen Souterrrain here?







How long did the Brendan Voyage take?

\_\_\_\_\_

What places did the crew of the 'Brendan' visit on their journey to North America?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Can you give reasons why the crew of the 'Brendan' took the course they did?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



Tim Severin

Can you name any other voyages or adventures which Tim Severin has taken part in since the Brendan Voyage? Ask for help if you need it.

\_\_\_\_\_

Imagine you are a modern day scholar. You too want to do a voyage of exploration to a far off place to show how such a journey could have been done in the past. Where would you go?

\_\_\_\_\_

What would you bring with you?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\* \* \* \* \*

HERE IS SOME SPACE FOR YOUR OWN NOTES AND DRAWINGS: