

Lullymore Island

Kildare
Map and Guide

Irish Peatland Conservation Council
Comhairle Chaomhnaithe Phortaigh na hÉireann



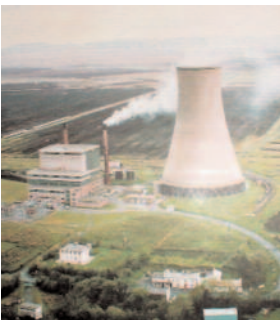
Island in the Bog

Lullymore is a mineral soil island completely surrounded by the Bog of Allen in Co. Kildare. The Island is 93m above sea level and covers an area of 220ha. The population of Lullymore Island is around 150 people in 50 houses. Lullymore Island is located on the R414 between the towns of Rathangan and Allenwood in Co. Kildare. The Island has its own early Christian Monastic Settlement, a rich mosaic of wildlife and a vibrant community of residents.



Air photograph of Lullymore Island in Co. Kildare outlined in yellow. The process of reclaiming Lullymore Bog to farmland is underway along the north-west flank of the island. On all other sides the bog is being milled for peat and used to generate electricity. The route of the Lullymore Loop Walk is shown in orange and blue. Photo: Jim Ryan, National Parks and Wildlife Service, modified by Leoline Tijsma

Lullymore Bog - A Changing Story

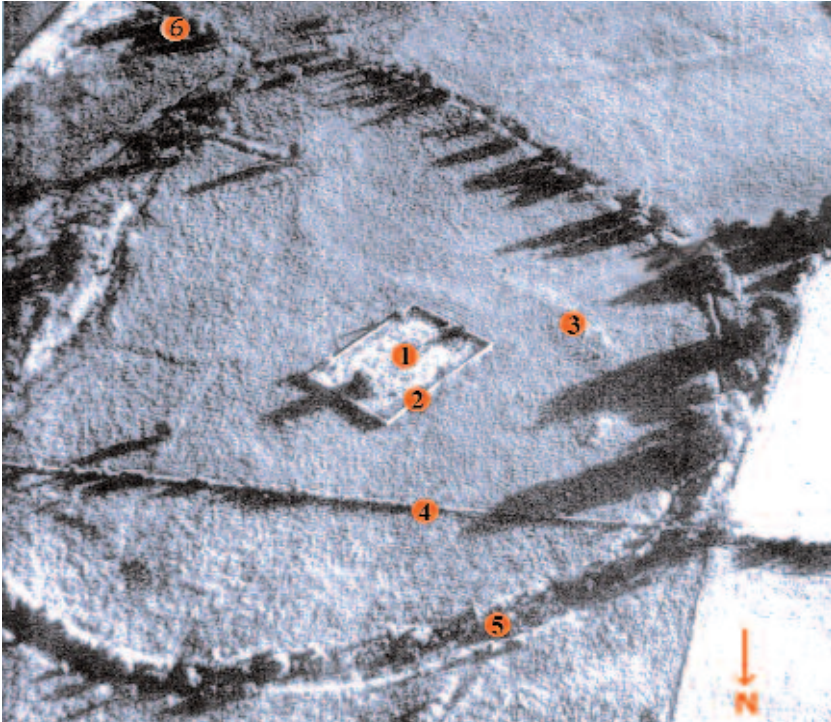


From the left: Lullymore Briquettes, Allenwood Power Station, Industrial peat extraction, Lodge Bog Nature Reserve and wetland habitat creation following completion of peat extraction.

Lullymore bog with an area of 6,575ha was the largest bog in the complex of bogs known as the Bog of Allen and it gives its name to the Island of Lullymore. Lullymore Bog was first developed commercially by entrepreneurs in the 19th century and to this day it continues to provide milled peat which is burned to generate electricity in the Clonbollogue Power Station in Co. Offaly. The first briquette factory in Ireland was set up on Lullymore Island in 1934. In 1939 the Turf Development Board who were responsible for the mechanisation of peat production in the country purchased Lullymore bog and the briquette factory. They set about using the peat from the bog to generate electricity in nearby Allenwood Power Station (built in 1952 and operational for over 30 years) and to produce moss peat for gardening and horticulture in a factory at Kilberry. Today all that remains of Lullymore bog is a tiny area of 35ha which is known as Lodge Bog. This is being protected as a nature reserve by the IPCC. Once all the peat resource has been removed from Lullymore Bog, it is hoped that a programme of wetland habitat creation will be undertaken.

Monastic Settlement

Lullymore Island was chosen as a monastic site due to its remote location surrounded by 6,575ha of bog-land. St. Patrick is believed to have founded the monastic settlement at Lullymore in the 5th Century and to have put it in the charge of Erc, a druid of King Laoghaire's Court whom he had converted. A stone within the monastic site is said to bear the footprint of St Patrick. During various land works, a series of cross-inscribed stones were recovered from the site of the Monastery. Iron slag and a large stain within the monastic site suggest the presence of an ecclesiastical iron works. Two toghers or trackways were found in the bog surrounding Lullymore island, made from wood. These old roads allowed people to travel to and from the island. The Monastery was in existence until 1641.



The monastic settlement of Lullymore Island as seen from the air. This interpretation was undertaken by Martin Kelly as part of a Masters Degree from Queen's University Belfast in 2004.

1. Graveyard restored in 1985 by the local community
2. Wall of the Graveyard built in 1985
3. Stone bearing St Patrick's foot print
4. Hedgerow planted in 1935 and removed in 2006
5. Embankment constructed in 722 and recorded in the Annals
6. Location of iron slag works



Stone reputedly impressed with St. Patrick's footprint in the Monastic settlement at Lullymore.



Fr. Gerard O'Byrne blesses the baptismal font in Lullymore Graveyard following its elevation onto a stone plinth in 2006. Mass is celebrated in the graveyard each year on Cemetery Sunday. Photo: J. Earle



One of 13 cross inscribed stones from the Monastery on Lullymore Island. This stone and another eight are located in the outside wall of the Bog of Allen Nature Centre, another is on display inside the centre and others occur in the walled graveyard on the monastic site.

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Wild Flowers and Animals

In 2005 Marlene Jansen and Ineke Roell, students from the Larenstein University in the Netherlands undertook a Heritage Survey of Lullymore Island at the invitation of the Irish Peatland Conservation Council. They recorded 6 wildlife habitats on the Island, providing a refuge for over 150 different plants, animals and birds.



Frogs breed in ponds, ditches and drains but forage on land for insects.



Speckled wood butterflies on ragweed in summer.



Primroses flourish in roadside hedge banks in spring.



Banded snails are especially obvious on wet days.

Habitat Mosaic

For such a tiny place, the Island of Lullymore has a rich mosaic of habitats for wildlife. These include hedgerows, ditches, grasslands, cutaway bog, intact raised bog and woodland.



Lullymore West Bog grassland habitats are a refuge for the Marsh Fritillary Butterfly.



Woodland habitat at Forans Wood.



Bog cotton-covered cutaway bog.



Endangered raised bog habitat at Lodge Bog.



There are 12km of hawthorn and blackthorn hedges on the island.



Cereal Fields.

A Vibrant Community

The recent history of Lullymore Island is dominated by the Murphy Family. This Dublin-based business family, owned and used Lullymore Island as a country retreat until the 1930's. The surrounding bog was ideal for hunting. They built Lullymore Lodge in 1860 and it is the oldest house remaining on the island. To cross the island a road tax had to be paid to the Family. Following the death of Major Brundell Murphy, the Island was sold to the Land Commission. During World War II the Island was used as a camp for the army who cut turf from the bog. Teagasc (Farm Advisory Board) took over Lullymore Lodge and Farm while they researched the horticultural after use of cutaway bogs from 1955 to 1990. In 2003 the Lodge house was sold privately and the farm buildings were taken over by the IPCC. Today there are over fifty homes on the Island with circa 150 residents. Two local businesses - Lullymore Heritage and Discovery Park and the Bog of Allen Nature Centre are tourist attractions.



From the left: The former President of Ireland Patrick Hillery



visited a memorial erected to Captain John Doorley (1771-1798), the 1798 patriot who was a native of Lullymore. Captain Doorley led the



battalion, which captured the town of Rathangan from Crown Forces during the 1798 Rebellion.



Photo: Leinster Leader

Sean Judge, founder of Lullymore Heritage and Discovery Park - www.lullymoreheritagepark.ie. He played a key role in bringing mains water to Lullymore Island in the 1980's.

The Lullymore Army Camp 1944, temporary accommodation for the men who cut turf from Lullymore Bog during the Emergency.

Lullymore Lodge was built in the 1860's by the family of Major Brundell Murphy.



Photo: Leinster Leader

The IPCC Bog of Allen Nature Centre



The Bog of Allen Nature Centre is located at Lullymore in the heart of the Bog of Allen and is run by the Irish Peatland Conservation Council (IPCC). IPCC are developing a national centre of excellence for peatland education, research and conservation here. Visitors are welcome. We offer educational programmes for schools and special interest groups and the independent visitor. Facilities include a museum, exhibitions about the Bog of Allen, research library, habitats and gardens and the largest garden of carnivorous plants in Ireland and the U.K. IPCC is a charity (CHY6829) campaigning for the conservation of a representative sample of Irish peatlands and is entirely supported by voluntary contributions. Volunteers welcome. IPCC, Bog of Allen Nature Centre, Lullymore, Rathangan, Co. Kildare. T: +353-45-860133; E: bogs@ipcc.ie. www.ipcc.ie.



Above: The Bog of Allen Nature Centre - "one of the Top 10 Eco Projects in Ireland" - Lonely Planet 2008. Left: Carnivorous plants from all over the world growing in the greenhouse at the Bog of Allen Nature Centre.



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