

THE IRISH SEA

History • Culture • Environment

A Symposium – September 19th-20th 2014
National Maritime Museum of Ireland, Dun Laoghaire

What does the Irish Sea contribute to the lives of the people who inhabit its shores?

How does the sea benefit those communities economically and socially? What role does the Irish Sea play in defining our communities politically and culturally? How do the people who live on its coastlines use, exploit, and imagine the Irish Sea? How do we engage with the Irish Sea as a living ecosystem, or as a means of transportation, or as a distinctive sea-space with its own histories and its own nature? How can we do so without damaging the ability of future generations to live safely and fruitfully on its shores?

The Irish Sea: History, Culture, Environment is a symposium organised by University College Dublin and the National Maritime Museum of Ireland to address these questions about the sea which Ireland shares with Wales, the Isle of Man, England, and Scotland. The symposium brings together a range of academics and independent researchers from the sciences and the humanities to present the findings of their research, and to discuss with scholars and a public audience the values, meanings, and histories of the Irish Sea. The symposium will conclude with a workshop about the possibilities and opportunities for future interdisciplinary research on the Irish Sea.

Organisers: Professor John Brannigan, UCD School of English, Drama and Film
Dr Tasman Crowe, UCD School of Biology and Environmental Science
Richard McCormick, National Maritime Museum Library and Archive

The symposium is sponsored by the UCD Earth Institute, UCD Humanities Institute, and the Atlantic Archipelagos Research Consortium, and the event is being hosted by the National Maritime Museum of Ireland.

The symposium will commence with a free public lecture on 'The Nature of the Irish Sea Coast' in the Museum Friday 19th September at 1900 by environmental consultant Richard Nairn. Entry on Saturday 20th September will cost €10 for the day, payable on registration at the Museum. There will also be an optional €30 dinner for participants in the National Yacht Club, Dun Laoghaire www.nyc.ie on Saturday night payable at registration.

To register to attend the symposium, please go to the registration page at www.irishseasyposium.com, or email john.brannigan@ucd.ie

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UCD Earth Institute
Better understand today's world.
Inform solutions for tomorrow.



UCD Humanities Institute
Instiúid don Léann Daonna UCD



Symposium Schedule

Friday 19th September:

7pm Welcome Addresses by Richard McCormick, Director of Library and Archives, National Maritime Museum of Ireland, and Tasman Crowe, UCD School of Biology and Environmental Science

[Richard Nairn \(Natura Environmental Consultants\)](#)

NATURE OF THE IRISH SEA COAST

This public lecture will focus on the natural environment of the Irish Sea coastline from Antrim to Wexford. From its origins in the last Ice Age, the coastline has been moulded by erosion and accretion with numerous sea level changes over thousands of years. This has created a unique set of coastal habitats including cliffs, rocky shores, shingle barriers, sandy beaches, dunes, saltmarsh and offshore islands. Each of these habitats has its characteristic wildlife with highlights including the large seabird and grey seal colonies on Rathlin and Lambay, huge flocks of wintering birds in estuaries such as Strangford Lough, Dublin Bay and Wexford Harbour and the rich wild flowers on sand dunes in Dundrum Bay and the Bull Island. Rathlin and Strangford Lough both support fascinating marine assemblages while offshore there are porpoises, dolphins and whales. Climate change and its associated impacts are already evident so we urgently need a new approach to valuing the natural features of the coast.

Saturday 20th September:

9.00am Symposium Registration

9.30am Welcome Addresses by Peadar Ward, President of the National Maritime Museum of Ireland, and by Tasman Crowe and John Brannigan, University College Dublin

9.50am **Panel One: The Material Uses and Histories of the Irish Sea (Chair: Richard McCormick)**

- [Jim MacLaughlin \(Political Geographer and Author\)](#)
THE IRISH SEA AND THE ATLANTIC SEABOARD IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT: A TALE OF TWO SEAS
- [Maighread Ni Mhurchadha \(Independent Researcher\), read by Joe Varley](#)
THE IRISH REVENUE BOATMEN, 1684-1765
- [Michael Keatinge \(Bord Iascaigh Mhara\)](#)
THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL VALUE OF FISHERIES IN THE IRISH SEA

This panel will address past and current material benefits of the Irish Sea to the communities around its shores, in terms of fishing, shipping, smuggling, and other kinds of economic activity.

11.10am Tea/Coffee

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11.30am **Panel Two: The Natures and Histories of the Irish Sea (Chair: Tasman Crowe)**

- [Andrew Gibson \(Royal Holloway, University of London\)](#)
'HOPE IS A GEOLOGICAL GRACE': HISTORY AND GEOLOGY IN NORMAN NICHOLSON'S POETRY OF THE CUMBRIAN COAST, 1948-1954
- [Jan Hiddink \(Bangor University\)](#)
THE EFFECT OF FISHERIES AND OTHER STRESSORS ON THE SEA-BED ECOSYSTEM IN THE IRISH SEA
- [David Brett \(Independent Researcher\)](#)
THE IRISH SEA: HISTORY WITHOUT NATIONS
- [Ian Lawler \(Bord Iascaigh Mhara\)](#)
THE IRISH SEA THROUGH COMMERCE & WAR – A WINDOW ON HISTORY AND TECHNOLOGY

This panel will discuss research on the natural characteristics of the Irish Sea, on the histories and impacts of human activities on its shores and seabed, and on the relationship between nature and culture.

1.10pm Lunch

2.00pm **Panel Three: The Cultural Meanings and Values of the Irish Sea (Chair: John Brannigan)**

- [John Mack \(University of East Anglia\)](#)
'FROGS AROUND A POND'? THE IRISH SEA AS LOCAL AND AS GLOBAL
- [Cormac Lowth \(Independent Researcher\)](#)
MARITIME ART FROM THE PRE-PHOTOGRAPHIC ERA
- [Marcus Collier \(University College Dublin\)](#)
MARINE CULTURAL ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

This panel will focus on what values and meanings we place on the Irish Sea, how we have represented and imagined it in the past, and on how we think about the sea as a place.

3.15pm Tea/Coffee

3.30pm **Workshop: Future Possibilities for Research (Chair: Richard McCormick)**

In three workshop sessions, the participants will be invited to discuss the possibilities for future research which brings together the sciences and the humanities to enhance our understanding of the Irish Sea and its economic and cultural benefits to society.

5.30pm Outcomes and Closing Remarks

7.30pm Symposium Dinner: National Yacht Club, Dun Laoghaire (€30 payable on registration at the Museum)

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