



Trees and woods in the Slieve Aughty Mountains
Crainn agus coillte ar Shliabh Eachtaí

TREES IN THE PAST

HISTORY OF WOODLAND IN GALWAY

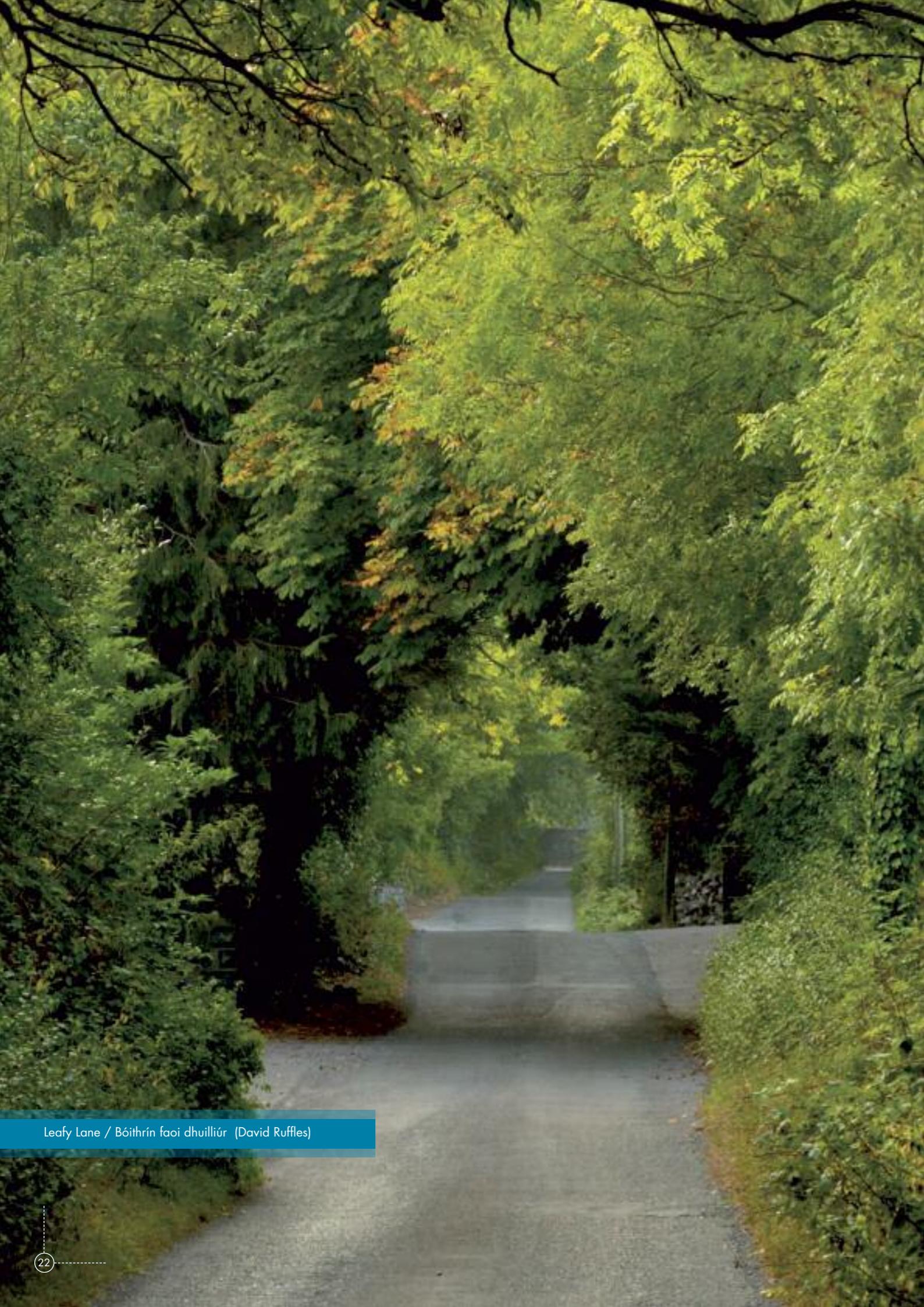
Soon after the end of the last ice age, about 10,000 years ago, Ireland was covered from coast to coast by forest. These primeval woodlands developed over thousands of years and were composed of a mix of trees including Oak, Elm, Ash, Scots Pine, Birch, Hazel, Holly and even Yew. Forest cover started to decline about 6000 years ago after the arrival of the first farmers who cleared the woods to create pastures and cultivate the land. The rate of woodland clearance increased in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, as timber was required for iron-working, glass-working and cooperage industries, and for shipbuilding. Increased pressure for agricultural land and fuel due to increased population size also resulted in woodland decline. The demise of Irish woodland cover continued until recent centuries when woodland cover fell below 2% by the end of the 1800s.

From the mid-18th century onwards, many large landowners, especially those on demesnes and estates, were encouraged to improve their lands by planting trees. Much of this planting consisted of broadleaves, especially oak, however, later in the century more and more conifers were planted.

Most of County Galway was covered by woodland prior to the arrival of farming; even the wilds of Conamara and the Aran Islands. The long and rich history of human activity in Galway led to a steady decline in tree cover but a few important areas of old native woodland remain today, such as at Derrycrag near Woodford, Seanadh Mhónín, near An Spidéal in Conamara and Gortacarnaun near Gort. The decline in woodland cover led to the expansion of blanket bog in areas with acidic bedrock such as Conamara and the Slieve Aughty Mountains. In areas with thinner soils on limestone, such as the Aran Islands and parts of south Galway, woodland clearance led to soil erosion and the exposure of the underlying limestone bedrock.



Walkers in Coole Park
Siúlóiri i bpáirc na Cuile



Leafy Lane / Bóithrín faoi dhuilliúr (David Ruffles)



Seanadh Mhóinín Woods / Coill Sheanadh Mhóinín

CRAINN SAN AM ATÁ CAITE STAIR NA COILLEARNAÍ I NGAILLIMH

Go luath tar éis dheireadh na hoighearaoise deireanaí, tuairim is 10,000 bliain ó shin, bhí Éire faoi chumhdach foraoise ó chósta go cósta. D'fhorbair na coillearnacha cianaosta sin thar na mílte bliain agus bhí siad comhdhéanta de mheascán crann, an dair, an leamhán, an fhuinseog, an péine Albanach, an bheith, an coll, an cuileann agus fiú an t-iúr ina measc. Thosaigh an cumhdach foraoise ag meath tuairim is 6000 bliain ó shin, tar éis theacht na chéad fheirmeoirí, a leag na coillte chun féarach a chruthú agus an talamh a shaothrú. Tháinig borradh faoi leagan na gcoillte i ndeireadh an 16ú haois agus i dtús an 17ú haois, mar go raibh adhmad ag teastáil le haghaidh thionscail an iarainn, na gloine, na cúipéireachta, agus na longthógála. Chomh maith leis sin tháinig meath ar na coillearnacha nuair a tháinig éileamh níos mó ar thalamh talmhaíochta agus ar bhreosla mar thoradh ar mhéadú sa daonra. Lean an meath sa chumhdach coillearnaí go dtí na céadta deireanacha nuair a thit an cumhdach coillearnaí faoi 2% faoi dheireadh na 1800idí.

Ó lár an 18ú haois ar aghaidh, spreagadh úinéirí móra talaimh, go háirithe iad sin ar dhíméinte agus ar eastáit, chun a dtailte a fheabhsú trí chrainn a chur. Is crann leathanduilleacha a bhí i gceist den chuid is mó sa chur sin, go háirithe crann darach, ach níos deireanai sa chéad cuireadh tuilleadh crann buaircineach de réir a chéile.

Bhí an chuid ba mhó de Chontae na Gaillimhe faoi chumhdach coillearnaí sular tosaíodh ar an bhfeirmeoireacht; fiú fásach Chonamara agus Oileáin Árann. Tháinig meath seasta i gcumhdach na gcrann le linn stair fhada agus shaibhir na gníomhaíochta daonna i nGaillimh, ach tá corrcheantar tábhachtach den tseancoillearnach dhúchasach fós inniu ann, mar shampla i nDoire Chraigí gar don Ghráig, i Seanadh Mhóinín gar don Spidéal i gConamara agus i nGort an Charnáin gar don Ghort. Bhí leathadh bratphortaigh i gceantair ina bhfuil buncharraig aigéadach, leithéidí Chonamara agus Shliabh Eachtaí, ina thoradh ar an meath sa chumhdach coillearnaí. I gceantair ina bhfuil ithir éadomhain ar aolchloch, mar atá in Oileáin Árann agus i gcuid d'oidhreachta na Gaillimhe, creimeadh an ithir agus noctadh an bhuncharraig aolchloiche faoi de bharr leagan na coillearnaí.



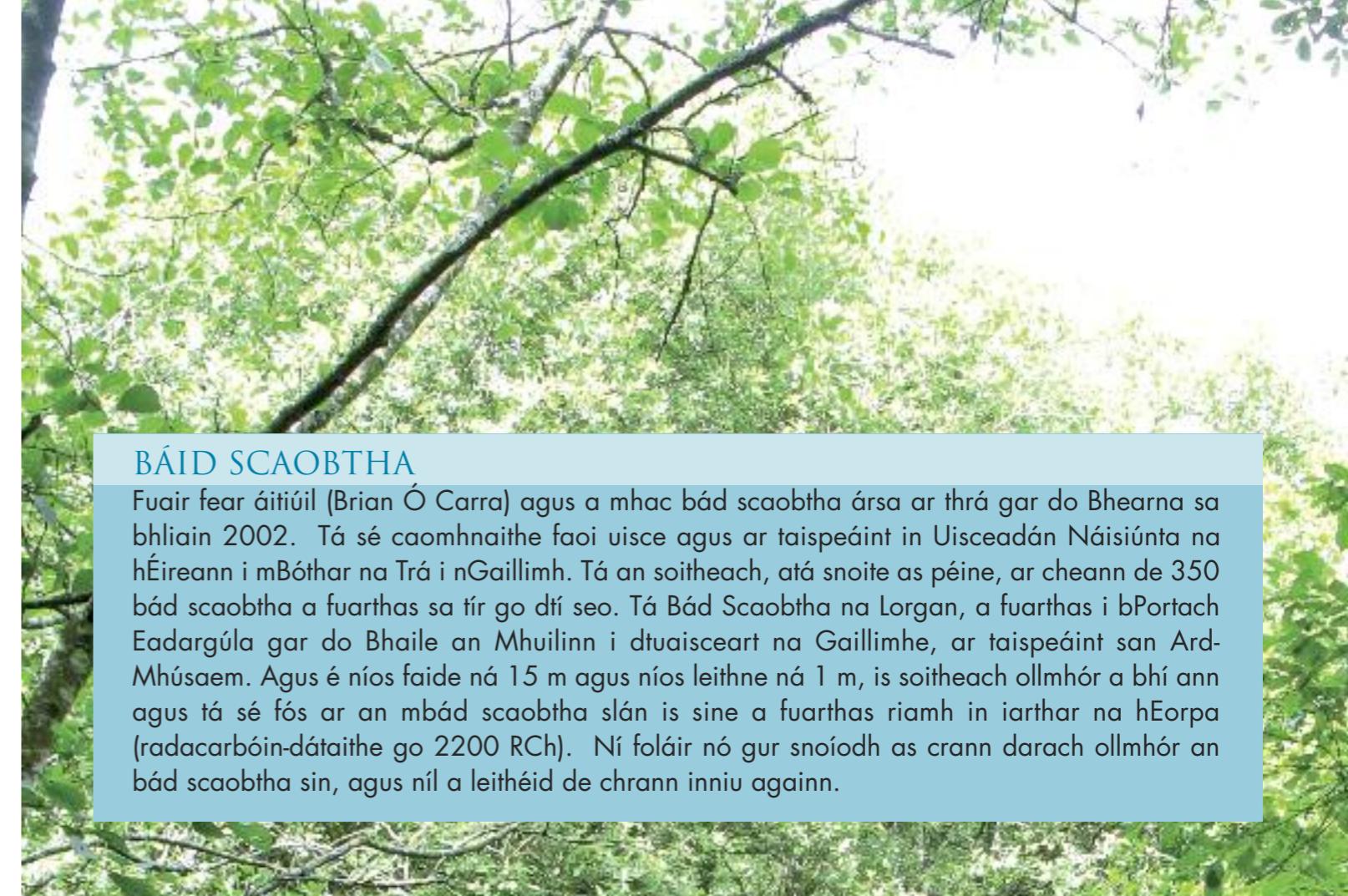
DUG-OUT CANOES

An ancient canoe was discovered in 2002 on a beach near Bearna by a local man (Brian Ó Carra) and his son. It is conserved in an underwater display in the Galway Atlantaquaria in Salthill. The vessel, carved out of pine, is one of 350 dug-out canoes found in the country to date. The 'Lurgan Logboat' found in Addergoole Bog near Milltown in north Galway is displayed in the National Museum. At over 15 m long and over 1 m wide it was a huge craft and is currently the oldest intact logboat ever found in Western Europe (radiocarbon dated to 2200 BC). This logboat must have been carved out of a giant oak tree, the like of which we no longer have today.

TREE LORE

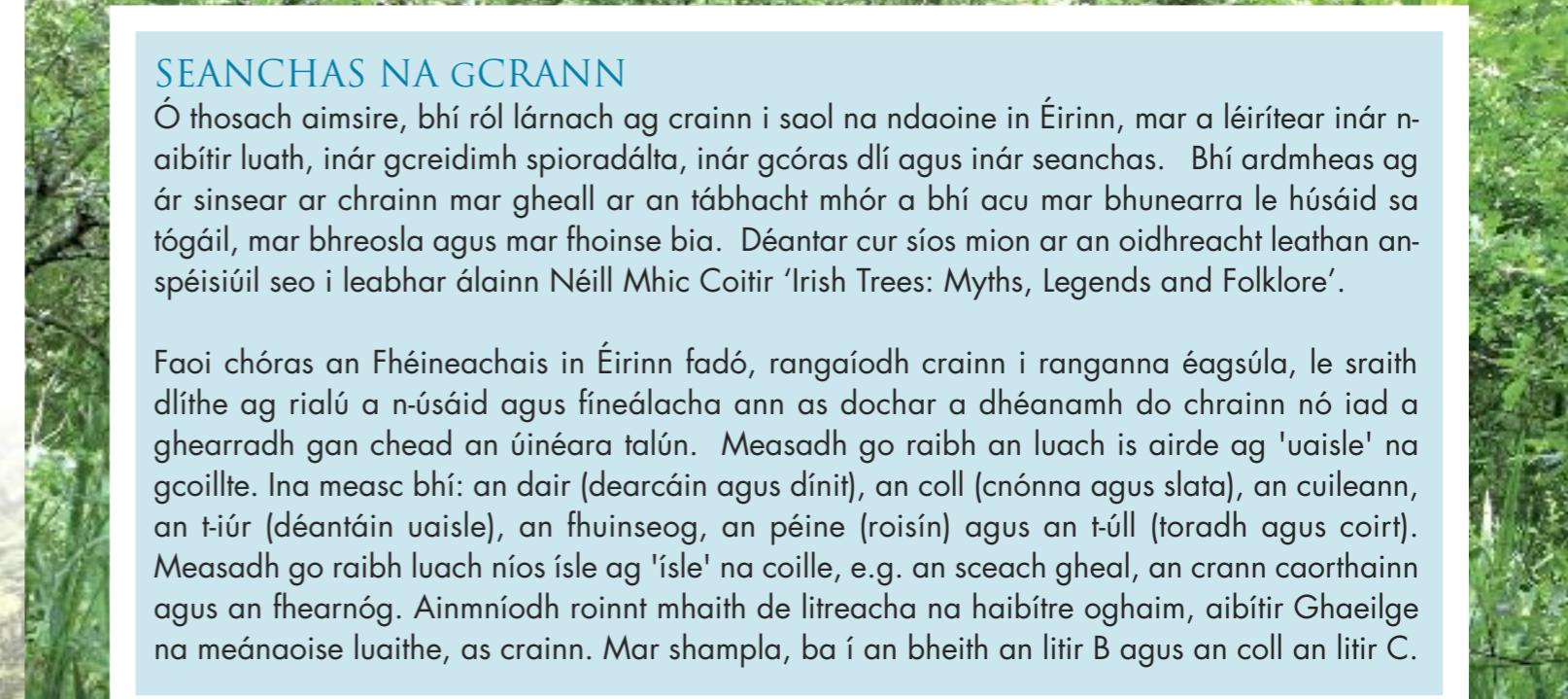
Since earliest times, trees played a central role in people's lives in Ireland as reflected in our early alphabet, spiritual beliefs, legal system and folklore. Trees were highly valued by our ancestors because of their huge importance as a basic commodity used for building, fuel and as a food source. Niall Mac Coitir's beautiful book 'Irish Trees: Myths, Legends and Folklore' describes in great detail this vast and fascinating legacy.

Under the system of Breton Law in ancient Ireland, trees were classified into various categories, with a series of laws governing their use and fines for damaging or cutting trees without the permission of the landowner. 'Nobles' of the woods were considered to have the highest value. These included: Oak (acorns and dignity), Hazel (nuts and rods), Holly, Yew (noble artefacts), Ash, Pine (resin) and Apple (fruit and bark). 'Commoners' of the wood were thought to be of lesser value e.g. Hawthorn, Rowan and Alder. Many characters of the Ogham alphabet, an early medieval alphabet used for writing in Irish, were named after trees. For example, the word for the letter B was Beith (Birch), while C was Coll (Hazel).



BÁID SCAOBTHA

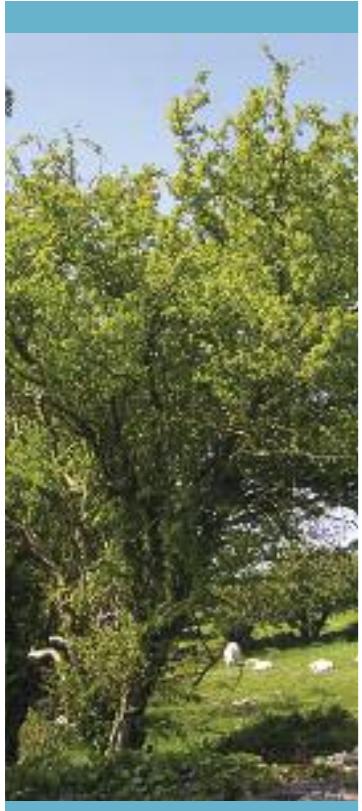
Fuair fear áitiúil (Brian Ó Carra) agus a mhac bád scaobtha ársa ar thrá gar do Bhearna sa bhliain 2002. Tá sé caomhnaithe faoi uisce agus ar taispeáint in Uisceadán Náisiúnta na hÉireann i mbóthar na Trá i nGaillimh. Tá an soitheach, atá snoite as péine, ar cheann de 350 bád scaobtha a fuarthas sa tír go dtí seo. Tá Báid Scaobtha na Lorgan, a fuarthas i bPortach Eadargúla gar do Bhaile an Mhuilinn i dtuaisceart na Gaillimhe, ar taispeáint san Ard-Mhúsaem. Agus é níos faide ná 15 m agus níos leithne ná 1 m, is soitheach ollmhór a bhí ann agus tá sé fós ar an mbád scaobtha slán is sine a fuarthas riamh iniarthar na hEorpa (radacarbón-dátaithe go 2200 RCh). Ní foláir nó gur snoíodh as crann darach ollmhór an bád scaobtha sin, agus níl a leithéid de chrann inniu againn.



SEANCHAS NA GCRANN

Ó thosach aimsire, bhí ról lárnoch ag crainn i saol na ndaoine in Éirinn, mar a léirítear inár n-aibítir luath, inár gcreidimh spioradálta, inár gcóras dlí agus inár seanchas. Bhí ardmheas ag ár sinsear ar chrainn mar gheall ar an tábhacht mhór a bhí acu mar bhunearra le húsáid sa tógáil, mar bhreosla agus mar fhoinsé bia. Déantar cur síos mion ar an oidhreacht leathan an-spéisiúil seo i leabhar álann Néill Mhic Coitir 'Irish Trees: Myths, Legends and Folklore'.

Faoi chóras an Fhéineachais in Éirinn fadó, rangáodh crainn i ranganna éagsúla, le sraith dlíthe ag rialú a n-úsáid agus fíneálacha ann as dochar a dhéanamh do chrainn nó iad a ghearradh gan chead an úinéara talún. Measadh go raibh an luach is airde ag 'uaise' na gcoillte. Ina measc bhí: an dair (dearcáin agus dínit), an coll (cnónna agus slata), an cuileann, an t-iúr (déantáin uaisle), an fhuinseog, an péine (roisín) agus an t-úll (toradh agus coirt). Measadh go raibh luach níos ísle ag 'ísle' na coille, e.g. an sceach gheal, an crann caorthainn agus an fhearnóg. Ainmníodh roinnt mhaith de litreacha na haibítre oghaim, aibítir Ghaeilge na meánaoise luithe, as crainn. Mar shampla, ba í an bheith an litir B agus an coll an litir C.



Hawthorn/ Sceach

Holy trees, rag trees and fairy trees are still found throughout the Galway countryside, and many more have slipped into legend. Fairy trees or 'lone trees' were thought to be where fairies live and/or led to the underworld. Either way, they were to be approached with caution! Fairy trees are usually isolated Hawthorn bushes but sometimes they are Oak, Ash or Crab Apple. There are many stories about people who deliberately or inadvertently damaged a fairy tree and subsequently came to harm as the fairies took their revenge!

Holy trees or rag trees are special trees that are considered to have spiritual properties. Rags, religious icons and items, and other paraphernalia are sometimes tied or hung on the tree by people to help resolve problems and/or cure illness. Sometimes the offering represents a wish or aspiration which will come to pass. In some cases coins are pressed into the bark of the tree. Holy trees are often associated with holy wells. There were also many folk customs and superstitions associated with trees, some of which were considered to have magical powers.

Hazel was considered by our ancestors to be the 'tree of knowledge'. It was a symbol of fertility, wisdom and knowledge. The Salmon of Knowledge, unwittingly tasted by Fionn mac Cumhaill, fed on hazelnuts which had dropped into the Well of Segais. Hazel has been used for centuries for water divining and still is today.

Hawthorn was a symbol of fertility and protection, and strongly associated with the fairies. It was regarded with a mixture of fear and respect, especially the 'fairy trees' or 'lone bushes'. Many people still think bringing hawthorn into the house will bring bad luck. Hawthorn is associated with the Ogham letter 'Uath', which means fear.

One of our few native conifers, Yew was also considered sacred and therefore it was very unlucky to cut a Yew tree down or to damage it. It was also thought to have magical power and druids made their wands and staffs from Yew.

Faigtear fós crainn bheannaithe, crainn cheirteacha agus crainn sí ar fud na tuaithe i nGaillimh, agus tá go leor eile sna finscéalta. Ceapadh gur i gcrainn sí nó crainn scoite a mhair na sióga agus/nó a raibh an bealach go dtí na hamhais tríothu. Pé scéal é, bhíothas le teacht i ngiorracht dóibh go cúramach! Is iondúil gur toim scoite na sceiche gile a bhíonn sna crainn sí ach uaireanta is dair, fuinseog nó fia-úll a bhíonn iontu. Tá scéalta go leor ann faoi dhaoine a rinne dochar trí thimpiste nó d'aonturas do chrann sí agus a ndearnadh diobháil dóibh nuair a bhain na sióga dioltas amach!

Is crainn speisialta, a gceaptar fúthu go bhfuil tréithe spioradálta iontu, iad na crainn bheannaithe nó na crainn cheirteacha. Uaireanta ceanglaíonn nó crochann daoine ceirteacha, samhlacha agus nithe diaganta agus giúirléidí eile ar an gcrann chun deacrachtaí a réiteach nó tinneas a leigheas. Amanna léiríonn an tairiscint toil nó mian a thiocfaidh sa saol. I gcásanna áirithe brúitear boinn isteach i gcoirt an chrainn. Is minic a lúaitear crainn bheannaithe le toibreatha beannaithe. Bhí go leor nósanna agus piseoga ag na daoine a bhí ceangailte le crainn, agus creideadh go raibh draíocht ag baint le cuid de na crainn.

Mheas ár sinsear gur 'crann feasa' a bhí sa choll. Ba shiombail na torthúlachta, na gaoise agus an fheasa a bhí ann. D'ith an 'Bradán Feasa', a bhlais Fionn Mac Cumhaill de thaisme, collchnónna a thit i dTobar Seaghais. D'úsáidtí an coll ar feadh na gcéadta le haghaidh collóireachta agus úsáidtear fós inniu é.

Ba shiombail na torthúlachta agus na cosanta a bhí sa sceach gheal, agus bhí baint mhór aige leis na sióga. Is idir eagla agus urraim an dearcadh a bhí ag daoine air, go háirithe ar na crainn sí nó na toim scoite. Tá go leor daoine a chreideann fós go leanfaidh an mí-ádh an sceach gheal a thabhairt isteach sa teach. Tá an sceach gheal bainteach leis an litir oghaim Uath, a chialláonn eagla.

Measadh gur bheannaithe an tiúr, ceann dár mbeagán crann buaircínéach dúchasach, agus dá bhrí sin leanadh an mí-ádh dá ngearrtaí an crann nó dá ndéantáí damáiste dó. Ceapadh, freisin, go raibh cumhacht draíochtúil aige agus is as an iúr a dhéanadh draoithe a slata agus a lorgaí.

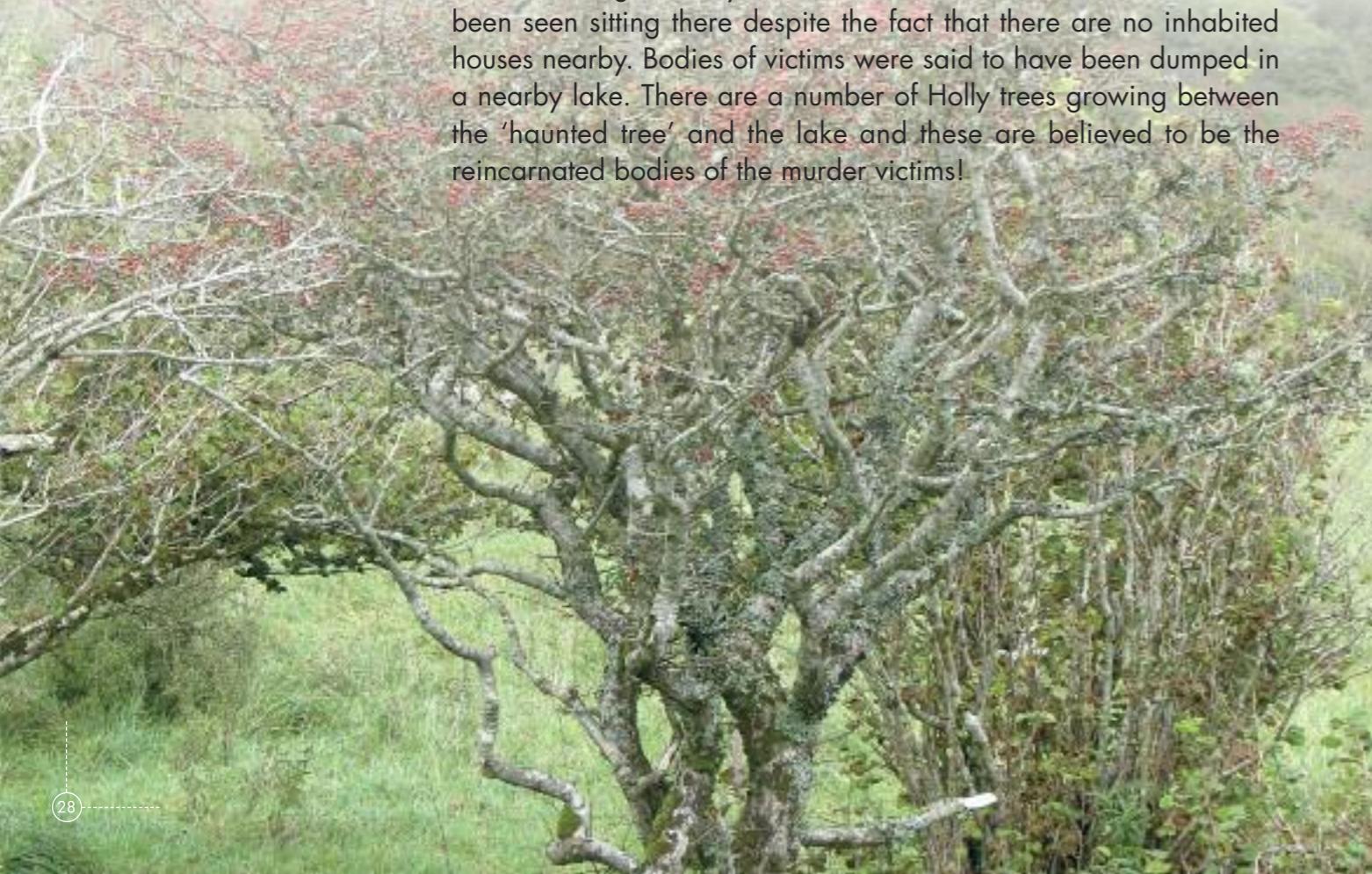


Rag tree in Clonfert
Crann ceirteacha i gCluain Fearta





Yew / An túr



A Blackthorn stick was thought to provide protection against harm and was thought to be a good thing to carry at night. It was also thought by many to be an unlucky tree. In Maigh Cuilinn, it was customary to drink sloe wine at Halloween. In Ireland, Holly was classified as a 'crann uasal' a 'gentle' or 'noble' tree. It was a symbol of strength, magical power and protection.

There are many stories about trees in folklore from Galway. St. Colman mac Duach is said to have been born under the sacred Ash at the well in Kiltartan, Gort in AD 810 (known as St. Colman's well). This tree apparently grew from a stake or staff, which was driven into the ground and miraculously began to grow. St. Colman mac Duach founded the monastery at Kilmacduagh near Gort. Apparently the saint had an extraordinary tree there, Cuaille Mhic Duach or Mac Duach's Stake, which had the reputation for saving people from an untimely death.

There is a macabre story of an ancient Hawthorn growing along the road between Clifden and Cashel, which marks a spot where lone travellers were supposedly murdered by the proprietor of an isolated inn! It is thought locally that the tree is haunted as an old man has been seen sitting there despite the fact that there are no inhabited houses nearby. Bodies of victims were said to have been dumped in a nearby lake. There are a number of Holly trees growing between the 'haunted tree' and the lake and these are believed to be the reincarnated bodies of the murder victims!



Blackthorn / An Draighean

Síleadh gur thug bata draighin cosaint in aghaidh dochair agus gur mhaith an ní a bhí ann le hiompar san oíche. Cheap go leor daoine, freisin, gur chrann mí-ámharach a bhí ann. I Maigh Cuilinn, bhí sé de nós ag daoine fíon airne a ól faoi Shamhain. In Éirinn rangaíodh an cuileann mar chrann uasal. Ba chomhartha nirt, cumhactha draíochta agus cosanta a bhí ann.

Ta go leor scéalta faoi chrainn i mbéaloideas na Gaillimhe. Deirtear gur rugadh Naomh Colmán Mac Duach faoin fhuinseog bheannaithe gar don tobar i gCill Tartan sa Ghort sa bhliain AD 810 (a aithnítear mar thobar Cholmáin). Is cosúil gur fhás an crann seo as cuaille nó bachall a sádh sa talamh agus a thosaigh ag fás go míorúilteach. Bhunaigh Naomh Colmán Mac Duach an mhainistir i gCill Mhic Dhuach gar don Ghort. Is cosúil go raibh crann neamhghhnách ag an naomh ansin, Cuaille Mhic Dhuach, a raibh an cháil air gur shábháil sé daoine ó bhás anabáí.

Tá scéal adhfhuafar ann faoi dhraighean ársa ag fás ar an mbóthar idir An Clochán agus An Caiseal, agus a léiríonn an áit ar dhúnmharaigh úinéir tí ósta iargúlta daoine a bhí ag taisteach ina n-aonair, más fíor. Ceaptar go háitiúil go bhfuil taibhse faoin gcrann mar go bhfacthas seansfhear ina shuí ann, cé nach bhfuil aon chónaí sna tithe máguaird. Deirtear gur caitheadh coírp na n-íobartach i loch gar don láthair. Tá roinnt crann cuilinn ag fás idir an 'crann mallaithe' agus an loch agus creidtear gurb iad sin coírp athionchollaithe na n-íobartach dúnmharaithe.





Majestic beech tree in Runnymeade / Crann Beiche mórga i Runnymeade (Michael Burke)

A large Ash in "The Lawn" at Eyrecourt Castle had a holy well in its bough. The well was reputed to cure warts! The tree had fourteen large roots that were regarded as representing Stations of the Cross by pilgrims. Sadly the tree no longer stands. Seven groves of beech trees were planted in Eyrecourt on the eastern crest of Redmount Hill in honour of the seven daughters of John and Eleanor Eyre. The trees form what became known locally as 'The Seven Sisters'.

Trees were also important as meeting points and as landscape features in the past. The great Ash tree at Duniry, Loughrea, is said to have housed a hedge school and been an important site for gatherings in times past.



GREAT GALWEGIAN WOODS AND TREES



Sessile Oak woodland with Holly understorey and heathy ground layer / Coilleannach Darach Gaelaí le tsraith mheánach Cuilinn agus fódchiseal móinteach.



Alder-Willow wet woodland / Coilleannach fhliuch Fearnóige-Sailí

Woodland cover in Ireland is very low (c. 9%) when compared with the rest of Europe. Much of this is made up of commercial plantations of exotic conifers and the cover of native woodland is only 1.9%.

County Galway, however, has the second highest cover of native woodland in Ireland at 10,780ha (www.npws.ie), most of which is in the east of the county, in and around the Slieve Aughty Mountains. Several native woodlands in County Galway are of high nature conservation value and as such have been designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and/or Nature Reserves (Appendix 2).

There are several different types of native woodland in Galway and where they are found depends largely on the type of soils, whether they are acidic (low pH), neutral or limey (high pH), wet or dry, heavy or free draining. In areas with acidic bedrock, for example, in Conamara (e.g. Derryclare Nature Reserve) or on Slieve Aughty Mountains (e.g. Derrycrag Nature Reserve) in east Galway, Sessile Oak woodland occurs with Holly in the understorey (i.e. the shrub layer below the woodland canopy) and a heathy ground layer with Bilberry. In low-lying areas in the east of the county, on limey soils and deep loams, Ash and Pedunculate Oak woodland with a Hazel understorey can be found (e.g. Garryland Nature Reserve). Scrubby Birch woods can be found on cut-over and dried out bogs. Wet woodland composed of Alder and/or Willow occurs around lakes and along rivers. Hazel scrub and woodland occur on thin calcareous soils and limestone pavement in south Galway.

COILLTE AGUS CRAINN BHREÁTHA NA GAILLIMHE

Tá an cumhdach coillearnaí in Éirinn an-tearc (c. 9%), nuair a chuirtear i gcomparáid leis an gcuid eile den Eoraip é. Is fáschoillte tráchtála de chrainn bhuaircíneacha andúchasacha atá sa chuid is mó de sin agus níl ach 1.9% de chumhdach coillearnaí dúchasai ann.

Tá an dara cumhdach is forleithne de choilleannach dhúchasach in Éirinn i gContae na Gaillimhe, áfach, is é sin 10,780 ha (www.npws.ie), agus an chuid is mó de in oirthean an chontae, ar Shliabh Eachtaí agus máguaird. Tá ardluach maidir le caomhantas dúlra ar roinnt coilleannach dhúchasach i gContae na Gaillimhe agus dá réir tá siad ainmnithe mar Limistéir Chaomhantais Speisialta (LCSanna), Limistéir Oidhreachta Nádúrtha (LONanna) agus/nó Anaclanna Dúlra (Aguisín 2).

Tá roinnt cineálacha éagsúla coilleannach dhúchasach i nGaillimh agus braitheann a suíomh go mór ar an gcineál ithreach ina bhfaightear iad, más aigéadach (pH íseal), neodrach nó aolmhar (pH ard), fliuch nó tirim, trom nó saorshilteach é sin. I gceantair le buncharraig aigéadach, i gConamara (e.g. Anaclann Dúlra Dhoire an Chláir), mar shampla, nó ar Shliabh Eachtaí (e.g. Anaclann Dúlra Dhoire Chraige) in oirthean na Gaillimhe, faightear coilleannach na darach gaelaí i gcuideachta cuilinn sa tsraith mheánach (i.e. an torscair faoi cheannbhrrat na coillearnaí) agus fódchiseal móinteach le fraochán. I gceantair ísele in oirthean an chontae, ar ithreacha aolmhara agus ar dhúrabháin dhoimhne, is féidir teacht ar choilleannach fuinseoige agus darach gallda le tsraith mheánach den choll ann (e.g. Anaclann Dúlra Ghairealáin). Is féidir teacht ar choillte scrobarnaí beithe ar phortaigh réitithe agus triomaithe. Faightear coilleannach fhliuch den fhearnóg agus/nó den tsailleach timpeall ar locha agus ar bhruacha aibhneacha. Faightear scrobarnach agus coilleannach coill ar ithreacha éadoimhne cailcreacha agus ar léibhinn aolchloiche i ndeisceart na Gaillimhe

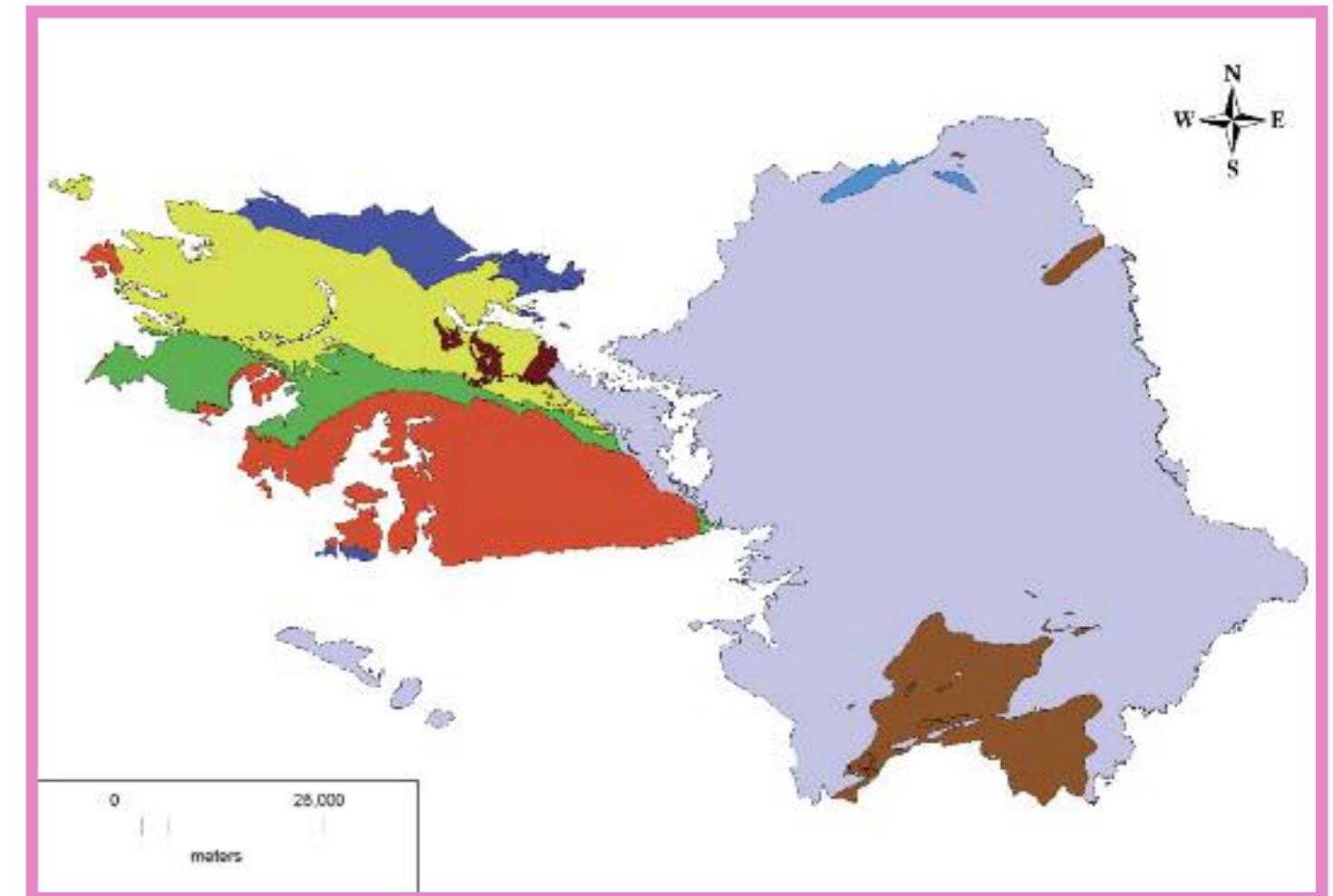


TREES AND SOILS IN GALWAY

Most plants have a preference for the type of soil they like to grow in but many will tolerate a wide range of soil types. A few, however, are restricted to particular soils. The main features of soils that influence plant growth are whether they are acidic, neutral or limey; wet or dry; heavy (and possibly prone to waterlogging) or free-draining (and possibly prone to drought). Soil type is largely influenced by the rocks from which the soil is formed (bedrock geology or glacial deposits - sand and gravel), as well as climate. Limestone (a sedimentary rock laid down during the Carboniferous period) underlies most of east Galway and as a result much of the soils (apart from the raised bogs that dot the landscape in east and north Galway) are lime-rich. Igneous and metamorphic rocks (like granites, schists and quartzite) dominate in the west of the County, producing acidic soils and promoting the development of blanket bogs. Old Red Sandstone forms the Slieve Aughy Mountains in south Galway.

CRAINN AGUS ITHREACHA I NGAILLIMH

Taitníonn cineálacha ithreacha áirithe le formhór na bplandaí agus iad ag fás ach tá roinnt mhaith ann a chuireann suas le raon leathan de chineálacha ithreach. Tá roinnt bheag, áfach, a bhíonn teorannaithe d'ithreacha ar leith. Is iad seo a leanas príomhthréithe na hithreach a bhfuil tionchar acu ar fhás planda - an bhfuil sé aigéadach nó neodrach nó aolmhar; fliuch nó tirim; trom (agus b'fhéidir claonadh leis an leathbhá aige) nó saorshilteach (agus b'fhéidir claonadh leis an triomach aige). Ta tionchar nach beag ag an gcineál carraige as a ndéantar an ithir ar an gcineál ithreach (cineál buncharraige nó sil-leagan oighreach - gaineamh agus gairbhéal), chomh maith leis an aeráid. Is cloch aoil (carraig dhíodair a sil-leagadh le linn na tréimhse carbónmhaire) atá faoin gcuid is mó d'oirthean na Gaillimhe, agus dá bharr tá cuid mhaith de na hithreacha ar mhórán aoil (seachas na portaigh ardaithe a bhfuil an tírdhreach in oirthean agus i dtuaisceart na Gaillimhe breactha leo). Is iad na carraigeacha bruthacha agus meiteamorfacha (leithéidí eibhir, siostaí agus grianchloichtí) atá i réim in iarhar an chontae; táirgeann siad ithreacha aigéadacha agus cuidíonn le forbairt na mbratphortach. Is í an tSean-Ghaineamhchloch Rua a rinne Sliabh Eachtaí i ndeisceart na Gaillimhe.



Galway Bedrock / Buncharraig na Gaillimhe

Sandstone/Shale (Silurian)	Limestone (Carboniferous)
Gaineamhchloch/Sceall (Siolúrach)	Cloch Aoil (Carbónmhar)
Sediments/Volcanics (Ordovician/Silurian)	Sandstone/Shale (Carboniferous)
Dródair/Bolcánaigh (Ordaiviseach)	Gaineamhchloch/Sceall (Carbónmhar)
Oughterard Granite (Ordovician)	Old Red Sandstone (Devonian)
Eibhear Uachtar Ard (Ordaiviseach)	Sean-Ghaineamhchloch Rua (Deavónach)
Connemara Metamorphics (Ordovician)	Galway Granite (Devonian)
Meiteamorfaigh Chonamara (Ordaiviseach)	Eibhear na Gaillimhe (Deavónach)
Connemara Quartzites, Schists & Marble (Dárladian)	
Grianchloichtí, Siostaí & Marmor (Dálriadach)	

Hedgerows make up somewhat for the lack of woodland cover in Ireland by providing a refuge for some of our woodland flora and fauna. Hedges are invaluable for wildlife because they provide an abundant source of food, cover and shelter through all the seasons. Hedges criss-cross much of the Galway countryside, often in close association with old dry stone walls, and they facilitate the movement of wildlife through the landscape. Birds, bats, badgers, stoat, hedgehogs and butterflies all take advantage of hedgerows to move about. Walk along the sunny side of a hedgerow in summer and you'll often see butterflies flitting about as they go in search of food. County-wide hedgerow surveys were conducted in Galway in 2006-2008. These surveys identified the extent, composition and structure of the vast hedgerow network in Galway

(www.galway.ie/en/Services/Heritage/NaturalHeritage/Hedgerows/Hedgerow).

In Galway we are lucky to have several wonderful woodlands that are excellent for walking and exploring including the flagship sites, Coole Park, Portumna Forest Park and Rinville Park. There are, however, many other accessible woodlands and parks in the county, which are very pleasant places to walk and explore. These include a number of Coillte properties, Nature Reserves, and public parks.



Go pointe áirithe is cúiteamh iad na fálta sceach in Éirinn ar an nganntanas sa bhrat coillearnaí, mar go dtugann siad tearmann do chuid dár flóra agus fána coillearnaí. Tá fálta an-luachmhar don fhiadhúlra mar go gcuireann siad foinse fhlúirseach bia, cumhdaigh agus foscaidh ar fáil ar feadh na séasúr ar fad. Trasnaíonn fálta cuid mhaith de thuath na Gaillimhe, go minic i ndlúthcheangal le seanbhallaí cloiche fuara, agus cuidíonn siad le gluaiseacht fiadhúlra tríd an tír. Baineann éin, ialtoga, broic, easoga, gráinneoga agus féileacáin tairbhe as fálta sceach chun bogadh thart. Má shiúlann tú le taobh na gréine d'fhál sceach sa samhradh, feicfidh tú féileacáin go minic agus iad ag scinneadh thart ag cuardach bia. Cuireadh suirbhéanna ar fhálta sceach ar bun ar fud Chontae na Gaillimhe in 2006-2008. Shainaithin na suirbhéanna sin fairsinge, comhdhéanamh agus struchtúr an lónra fálta sceach i nGaillimh

(www.galway.ie/en/Services/Heritage/NaturalHeritage/Hedgerows/Hedgerow).

Tá an t-ádh orainn i nGaillimh go bhfuil roinnt coillearnach iontach againn inar féidir tabhairt faoi shiúlódí agus faoi thaiscéalaíocht, ina measc na suíomhanna eiseamláireacha - Páirc na Cúile, Páirc Foraoise Phort Omna agus Páirc Rinn Mhíl. Chomh maith leo sin, tá go leor coillearnach agus páirceanna sa chontae ar féidir teacht orthu go héasca, agus ar láithreacha breátha iad le tabhairt faoin tsiúlódí agus faoin taiscéalaíocht. San áireamh tá roinnt talaimh de chuid Coillte, anaclanna dúlra agus páirceanna poiblí.



Hazel scrub / Scrobarnach Coill



Long-tailed Tit (Colin Stanley) / Meantán Earrfada

WHERE TO ENJOY WOODLANDS IN GALWAY

Derroura Mountainbike Trail, near Oughterard	Coillte property with mountain biking trail
Portumna Forest Park	Coillte property with walking and biking trails
Ard na Gaoithe, near Cong	Coillte property with walking trails
Monivea Woods, Monivea	Coillte property with walking trails
Clonbur Wood, Clonbur	Coillte property with walking trails
Cong Forest, Cong	Coillte property with walking trails
Newvillage Forest Recreation Area, Oughterard	Coillte property with walking trails
Mountbellew Forest Park	Coillte property with walking trails
Aghrane in Ballygar	Coillte property with walking trails
Lackavrea, near Maam Cross	Coillte property with walking trails
Castletaylor, Ardrahan	Coillte property with walking trails
Rinville Park, Oranmore	Galway County & City Council Park with walking trails
Garryland Nature Reserve, Gort	Nature Reserve with walking trails
Coole Park, Gort	Nature Reserve and Park with walking trails
Derrycrag, Woodford	Nature Reserve with walking trails
Pollnaknockaun, Woodford	Nature Reserve with walking trails
Rosturra, Woodford	Nature Reserve with walking trails; also millennium forest site

See www.coillteoutdoors.ie for location details and maps of walking trails in Galway.
www.npws.ie has information on National Nature Reserves such as Garryland and Derrycrag.
www.galway.ie provides details on public parks in the county such as Rinville Park.

GALWAY'S SIGNIFICANT AND CURIOUS TREES

Galway is home to lots of magnificent trees, many of which were recorded by the Tree Council in their national survey of 'champion' trees (www.treecouncil.ie), and the County Galway Significant Tree Survey (www.galway.ie/gis/gmaps).

The Significant Tree Survey was conducted in east Galway (Loughrea and Ballinasloe electoral areas) in 2004 to identify notable trees (in terms of size, age, unusual growth form, historical and folklore interest). Two hundred and eighty trees or groups of trees were recorded. Many of these trees are located in the remnants of old estates and demesnes. In many case these trees were planted as landscape trees in the immediate vicinity of the houses or in the pastures in front of the houses (described as 'aspect planting'). The main tree species used in aspect planting

NA HÁITEANNA LE SULT A BHAINTE AS COILLEARNACHA I NGAILLIMH

Conair Rothair Sléibhe Dhoire Abhra, gar d'Uachtar Ard	Talamh Choillte le conair rothaíochta sléibhe
Páirc Foraoise Phort Omna	Talamh Choillte le conairí siúlóide agus rothaíochta
Ard na Gaoithe, gar do Chonga	Talamh Choillte le conairí siúlóide
Coillte Mhuine Mheá	Talamh Choillte le conairí siúlóide
Coill na Fairche, An Fhairche	Talamh Choillte le conairí siúlóide
Coill Chonga, Conga	Talamh Choillte le conairí siúlóide
Áit Áineasa Fhoraois an Bhaile Nua, Uachtar Ard	Talamh Choillte le conairí siúlóide
Páirc Foraoise An Chreagán	Talamh Choillte le conairí siúlóide
Achadh Raithin i mBéal Átha Ghártha	Talamh Choillte le conairí siúlóide
Leic Aimhréidh, gar don Teach Dóite	Talamh Choillte le conairí siúlóide
Caisleán an Táilliúraigh, Ard Raithin	Talamh Choillte le conairí siúlóide
Páirc Rinn Mhíl, Órán Mór	Páirc Chomhairle Chathair & Chontae na Gaillimhe le conairí siúlóide
Anaclann Dúlra Ghairealáin, An Gort	Anaclann Dúlra le conairí siúlóide
Páirc na Cúile, An Gort	Anaclann agus Páirc Dúlra le conairí siúlóide
Doire Chraigé, An Ghráig	Anaclann Dúlra le conairí siúlóide
Poll na gCnocán, An Ghráig	Anaclann Dúlra le conairí siúlóide
Ros Dora, An Ghráig	Anaclann Dúlra le conairí siúlóide; láthair fhoraois na mílaoise, chomh maith

Féach www.coillteoutdoors.ie i gcomhair sonrai logánta agus mapaí na gconairí siúlóide i nGaillimh.

Tá eolas ag www.npws.ie ar Anaclanna Dúlra Náisiúnta, amhail Gairealán agus Doire Chraigé. Tá sonrai na bpáirceanna poiblí sa chontae, amhail Páirc Rinn Mhíl, ar www.galway.ie.

CRAINN SHUNTASACHA AGUS AITE NA GAILLIMHE

Tá go leor crann breá i nGaillimh, agus thaifead Comhairle Crann na hÉireann cuid mhaith díobh ina suirbhé náisiúnta ar 'scoth na grann' (www.treecouncil.ie), agus sa County Galway Significant Tree Survey (www.galway.ie/gis/gmaps).

Cuireadh an Significant Tree Survey ar siúl in oirthean na Gaillimhe (Toghcheantair Bhaile Locha Riach agus Bhéal Átha na Sluaighe) in 2004 chun crainn shuntasacha a aithint (ó thaobh aoise, méide, cuma neamhghnáiche fáis, staire agus seanchais de). Taifeadadh dhá cheád agus ochtó crann nó grúpa crann. Tá go leor de na crainn sin lonnaithe in iarsmaí seaneastát agus diméinte. I gcás chuid mhaith de na crainn sin cuireadh iad mar chrainn tírdhreacha cóngarach do na tithe nó sna féaraigh os comhair na dtithe (a dtugtar 'cur dreacha' air). Ar na príomhspeicis a



include Beech, Oak, Horse Chestnut and Common Lime. Others include Spanish Chestnut, Cherry, Drooping Ash, and Holm Oak. Yew trees are also to be found planted close to these old big houses, often found in pairs planted each side of the building.

One of Galway's most famous trees is the 'Autograph Tree' in Coole Park, Gort. This beautiful Copper Beech (*Fagus sylvatica atropurpurea* group) grows in the walled garden of the Park (21 m height and 3.5 m girth). When Lady Gregory lived in Coole Park, her friends including W.B. Yeats and his brother Jack, George Bernard Shaw, John Masefield, Sean O'Casey and others signed their names on the trunk of this magnificent tree. (Please note: carving your initials into a tree trunk is not recommended as it can cause serious harm to a tree!). Yeats was inspired by the beauty of the seven woods in Coole Park and immortalised them in his poetry.

One of Ireland's greatest Beech trees, located in Gortnamona, Ballinasloe, is a staggering 26m high with a girth of 7.46m! The largest Whitebeam (*Sorbus aria*) in terms of girth in Ireland and Britain grows in the grounds of Crumlin Park House, Ardnasodan, Ballyglunin (height 13m and girth 3.14m). Another exceptional specimen tree is a Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) growing in Clonbrock, Ahascragh, Ballinasloe. This tree has attained a height of 16m and has an amazing girth of 9.2m (only the third largest in the country!). For more stats on amazing trees in Galway see www.treecouncil.ie/heritagetrees or www.galway.ie/gis/gmaps.



úsáidtear i gcúr dreacha, tá an fheá, an dair, an crann cnó capaill agus an teile choiteann. I measc na gcrann eile bíonn an castán Eorpach, an silín, an fhuinseog speirthe agus an dair thoilm. Faightear crainn iúir curtha in aice leis na seantithe móra sin, agus iad go minic curtha i bpéirí gach aon taobh den fhoirgneamh.

Ar cheann de na crainn is cáiliúla i nGaillimh, tá an 'Crann Sínithe' i bPáirc na Cúile, An Gort. Tá an fheá rua álainn seo (*Fagus sylvatica*, grúpa *atropurpurea*) ag fás i ngarraí daingean na páirce (21 m ar airde agus 3.5 m timpeall). Nuair a bhí an Bhantiarna Gregory ina cónaí i bPáirc na Cúile, shínigh a cairde, W.B. Yeats agus a dheartháir Jack, George Bernard Shaw, John Masefield, Sean O'Casey agus daoine nach iad, a n-ainmneacha ar thamhan an chrainn iontaigh seo. (Tabhair faoi deara, le do thoil: ní mholtar d'inisealacha a ghreanadh i dtamhan crainn mar gur féidir leis dochar mór a dhéanamh don chrann!). Spreagadh Yeats le hálle na seacht gcoill i bPáirc na Cúile agus bhuanáigh sé iad ina chuid filíochta.

Tá ceann de na feánná is mó in Éirinn, lonnaithe i nGort na Móna, Béal Átha na Sluaighe, 26 m ar airde agus 7.46 m timpeall! Tá an fionncholl (*Sorbus aria*) is mó in Éirinn agus sa Bhreatain, maidir lena thimpeall, ag fás i dtailte Theach Pháirc Chromhghlinne, Ard na Sodán, Béal Átha Glúinín (airde 13 m agus 3.14 m timpeall). Crann taispeántais eisceachtúil eile is ea an castán Eorpach (*Castanea sativa*) atá ag fás i gCluain Broc, Áth Eascrach, Béal Átha na Sluaighe. Tá airde 16 m bainte amach ag an gcrann seo agus tá timpeall dochreidte de 9.2 m air (ar an tríú ceann is mó sa thír!). Chun tuilleadh toisí crann iontach i nGaillimh a fháil, féach www.treecouncil.ie/heritagetrees nó www.galway.ie/gis/gmaps.



Greenfinch / Glasán Darach (Tom Cuffe)