

The Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark Newsletter

Welcome to the fifth edition of our newsletter, your guide to what the Geopark is all about, with updates on the GeoparkLIFE project, events, education initiatives and much more....

320-million-year-old shark tooth fossil discovered

Geopark Geologist Dr. Eamon Doyle made a rare and significant discovery on the Geopark coastline when he found a shark tooth fossil. The tooth belonged to a shark that once hunted during the Carboniferous period in the waters off Ireland at a time when the country was located close to the equator.

Dr Eamon Doyle said: "Fossil sharks teeth of this age are very rare in Ireland and so it extends the known range of fossil sharks in Ireland. Equally significant is the information it gives us about the biodiversity of these ancient seas."



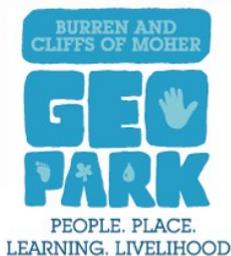
The fossil will be placed on public display on Thursday 25th May at an event, entitled 'There's Life in the Old Rocks of Clare', in Ennistymon Public Library at 11.30am.

The Burren Rocks again!

The Burren Rocks festival is nearly upon us. The festival forms part of the European Geoparks week and takes place from 25th to the 29th May.

Events are taking place in the Ennistymon Public Library, and in the Burren National Park. We have a range of fun and educational events exploring how the

history, culture, flora and fauna of the Burren have been shaped by the region's geology. The full programme of events is on the back page of this Newsletter.



25th - 29th May 2017
The Burren National
Park





Education

Our Geology Evening School

The Geopark Geology evening course ran for the sixth time in February and March this year. The five week course was fully subscribed for yet another year. The course is run by Colin Bunce of the Burren Outdoor Education Centre and Geopark Geologist Eamon Doyle and provides an introduction to the geology of the Burren.

The course always features a guest speaker with Dr. Anthea Lacchia of UCD attending this years course to share her knowledge on fossils found in the Geopark. The course attendees also ventured out into the landscape on a field trip to view the geological features.



Guest speaker Dr. Anthea Lacchia of UCD, (left) demonstrating details of fossil goniatites that swam the seas over 300 million years ago.

On the World Stage at the World Travel and Tourism Councils Global Summit



Two videographers from the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) visited the Geopark in April to film the story of the Burren Ecotourism Network and the positive impact it has had on small businesses in the region. The film crew spent three days following one member (Cathleen Connole, above right) to document the different impacts network membership and the partnership with the Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark has had on her business. The filmed aired to a global audience at the WTTC Global Summit in Bangkok in April. The Geopark was shortlisted as best destination at the summit awards in 2014. Follow the link to watch the film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?>





Uisce Aille on Tour

The Students of Mary Immaculate Secondary School, Lisdoonvarna and their Uisce Aille project coordinator Grainne Barron of NUIG have been very busy showcasing their integrated catchment management project.

The GeoparkLIFE environmental education project aims to engage the wider community in the management of their local water with the secondary school students taking a lead role. The students defined and mapped their catchment identifying threats to its water quality. They then developed a programme to communicate to and engage with their wider community in its management.

NUIG masters Student Grainne Barron is also developing a toolkit from the process that will enable other secondary schools to run the programme. Grainne recently showcased the students work and her coordination of a toolkit at the IAH (International Association of Hydrogeologists) conference in Tullamore and to the European Geoparks Network in March this year.

The students will also be travelling to Dublin on the 23rd of May to showcase their project at the prestigious Young Environmentalist Awards finals.



Above: Students from Lisdoonvarna Secondary school presenting their environmental awareness project to our European Geopark Colleagues. Below: Dr. Tiernan Henry (left), Grainne Barron (centre) and Dr. Gesche Kinderman (right) all of NUIG, with the students after the presentation.



Below: The Students presented their project at the semi-finals of Young Environmentalist awards before being selected to present at the finals on May 23rd.





GeoparkLIFE

Celebrating 25 Years of EU LIFE

EU LIFE is celebrating 25 years of funding and supporting environmental, nature conservation and climate action projects throughout the EU. Since 1992, EU LIFE has co-financed some 4500 projects including our ongoing GeoparkLIFE Tourism for conservation project.

With their investment of €8.7 billion since 1992 EU LIFE has created 74,500 jobs, bought a number of species back from the brink of extinction and funded actions on more than 7000 Natura 200 sites.

The Burren has benefited from two EU LIFE projects and as part of the promotion of the anniversary Carol Gleeson, GeoparkLIFE and Brendan Dunford, BurrenLIFE were interviewed on Clare FM.

To Celebrate the significant anniversary the EU Commission has organised a competition for the best projects in a range of categories. All nominated projects have been completed and supported in the last 25 years with Burren LIFE (now Burren Farming for Conservation) programme being one of 15 projects that have been chosen to represent the best of the best. Voting completed on the 3rd May and the awards ceremony will take place on 30 May, in Brussels. We wish all in the Burren LIFE project the very best of luck.

Below: Carol Gleeson, Gavin Grace of Clare FM and Brendan Dunford during their recent interview . Listen Here <http://www.clare.fm/podcasts/north-clare-initiative-line-major-european-award-2/>



25 years of EU supporting Nature, Environment and Climate Action through **LIFE**

GeoparkLIFE Final Conference: Save the Date

The GeoparkLIFE programme has taught us a lot about managing sustainable tourism in an area of high value conservation; over 80% of the Geopark region has special area of conservation status and we host over

a million tourists per annum! We will be sharing this knowledge at our final conference in November 23rd, where we will showcase guidelines and toolkits for people working in destinations that are committed to

conservation and a sustainable approach to tourism. So save the date; November 23rd and keep an eye on our face book page and website for further updates and registration details.

GeoparkLIFE: Balancing Tourism and Conservation

The Falls Hotel, Ennistymon

Thursday 23rd November 2017

GeoparkLIFE Funding Partners

| | | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|-------------------|--|
| Fáilte Ireland National Tourism Development Authority | Clare County Council Comhairle Contae an Chláir | Geological Survey Suirbhéireacht Gheolaíochta Ireland Éireann | OPW The Office of Public Works Oifis an tOmbudsánaire Poblaithe | UCD DUBLIN | |
| An Chomhairle Oidhreachta The Heritage Council | An Roinn Ealaíon, Oidhreachta agus Gaeltachta Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht | NUI Galway OÉ Gaillimh | | | |





Partners in Sustainable Tourism

The Burren Ecotourism Network has been a vital partner to the Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark over the last number of years. The network and its members have played a significant role in the execution of our GeoparkLIFE project and the development of a sustainable tourism code of practice for the region.

To recognise the work of the businesses and their adoption of the Geopark Code of Practice for Sustainable tourism we have invested in plaques and signs that celebrate the care the businesses in the Burren Ecotourism Network show for their region. For more info on the network visit:

www.burren.ie

Above left: Geopark Partner sign.
Middle left: Aillwee Cave Tour Guides Cathal Murray, Aileen Byrne and Justin O'Regan with the Geopark Geosite sign.
Below right: Spela from the Burren Smokehouse with the new sign at the visitor centre
Below: The new Geopark Geosite sign at the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre





Sustainable Tourism



Hosts to the European Geoparks Network

Earlier this spring we hosted the managers and geologists from 68 of our fellow European UNESCO Global Geoparks for the annual European Geoparks Network meeting.

The international delegates spent five days here in our Geopark visiting many of our sites and local businesses to get a flavour of what the region has to offer. The group also held meetings and discussions on sustainable tourism. The Network has partnered with the UN International Year of Sustainable Tourism Development and the group discussed the significant role UNESCO Global Geoparks can play in sustainable tourism. The GeoparkLIFE project was presented as an example of sustainable tourism in a Geopark.

On the final day of the European Geoparks meeting the group went out and about. During the day long trip

they visited some of our Geosites including the Cliffs of Moher and Poul nabrone. They experienced a Cliffs of Moher cruise and a sheep dog demonstration at Caherconnell Stone Fort. The group stopped at Carron where they attended a talk on the Burren Farming for Conservation project by Dr. Brendan Dunford. They also stopped in Lisdoonvarna to hear about the Uisce Aille Hydrology project.



Above: Pat Dowling, Chief Executive Clare County Council addressing delegates at the Geoparks conference





Hosts to the European Geoparks Network



Above: Katherine Webster (Far right) hosting to our Geopark colleagues during their visit to the Cliffs of Moher.

Opposite page top: Delegates from the 68 European Global Geoparks gathered on the steps of the Falls Hotel, Ennistymon where their network meetings took place. For a list of Geoparks in Europe see www.europeangeoparks.org

Below left: Patrick McKeever, UNESCO, Carol Gleeson, Manager Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark, Ger Dollard, Clare County Council, Kristin Rangnes and Nickolas Zouros EGN Coordinators

Below right: Maria Delgado, Lanzarote Global Geopark, Spain, John Galloway, Copper Coast Global Geopark, Waterford and Mojca Kavcic, Idrija Global Geopark, Slovenia enjoying the Sunshine at the Falls Hotel, Ennistymon during the conference.





Thursday 25th May to Monday 29th May 2017

Thursday 25th May

11.30 -12.30: There's Life in the Old Rocks of Clare.

A talk in Ennistymon Public Library by Geopark Geologist Dr. Eamon Doyle about the fossils to be found in Clare. This event is in collaboration with the Bealtaine festival and Clare County Libraries.

Friday 26th May

12.00 – 16.00: Walk this (Burren) Way.

A 4 hour - 20km walk along the Burren Way from Corofin to the Burren National Park with Rural Recreation Officer Eoin Hogan. This walk is largely along public road with some off-road sections including modest inclines. It's a marathon not a sprint, so only suitable for those with appropriate levels of fitness. Return to Corofin using the Burren National Park bus from Gortlecka. **Meet:** At the National Parks Info Point, Corofin. **Bring:** Appropriate footwear essential. Water and snacks. Sunscreen. **Important!** Numbers are strictly limited to 25;

Booking essential at edoyle@clarecoco.ie

Saturday 27th May

11.00 -12.30: Reading the Burren landscape.

Discover the ancient and more recent life of the Burren with Geopark geologist and National Park Staff guides. Suitable for families but the rough surface is not suitable for buggies. No dogs please. Dress appropriately for the terrain and weather, including sunscreen. **Booking:** burrennationalpark@ahg.gov.ie

14.00 – 15.30: Bug hunt for children. Explore the beauty and fascination of some of the smallest and often overlooked creatures in the Burren National Park. Numbers are strictly limited so book early.

Bring: Enthusiasm and a willingness to learn! Dress appropriately for the terrain and weather, including sunscreen.

Booking: burrennationalpark@ahg.gov.ie

Sunday 28th May

09.00 – 10.30: Bird call identification walk

with staff of the Burren National Park. **Bring:** Binoculars optional **Booking:** burrennationalpark@ahg.gov.ie

14.00 – 15.30: Reading the Burren landscape.

A walk through time with Geopark geologist and National Park Staff guides. Suitable for families but the rough surface is not suitable for buggies. No dogs please. Dress appropriately for the terrain and weather, including sunscreen. **Booking:** burrennationalpark@ahg.gov.ie

Monday 29th May

10.30 – 13.30: National Schools Burren Quiz at the Burren Outdoor Education Centre. An opportunity for schools to showcase their amazing depth of local knowledge about our fantastic Burren. Sponsored by the Burren Outdoor Education Centre

15.00 – 16.00: Turning the first sod on new archaeological investigations in the Burren by Dr. Ros O'Maolduin, Dr. Ger Dowling and students from NUI Galway fieldschool: The Irish Fieldschool of Prehistoric Archaeology .

The excavation aims to gain a better understanding of the burial rituals, beliefs and social structures of those who built and were buried in Parkabinnia wedge tomb.

Meet: Parkabinnia (Kilnaboy-Carron road) at 3pm, no parking at site, park to the north and walk 10 minutes to site.



Clare Local Development Company
Comhlacht Forbartha Áitiúil an Chláir



Printed on recycled paper



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Burren and
Cliffs of Moher
UNESCO Global Geopark

The Burren & Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark supports people and organisations to work together to ensure a cared-for landscape, a better-understood heritage, more sustainable tourism, a vibrant community and strengthened livelihoods

Follow us on Twitter and Facebook

Web: burrengeopark.ie

Email: lcotter@burren.ie

Tel: 065 7072295

