

KILTEEVAN HERITAGE TRAIL

Biodiversity ~ Natural Heritage

WELCOME TO OUR NATURAL HERITAGE

If you savour clean, country air and enjoy being alone with nature you are in the right place.

HOW BOGS WERE FORMED

12,000 years ago Ireland was covered with ice. As the ice melted lakes were formed in low-lying areas in the Midlands of Ireland. Plants grew around the edges of the lakes and when they died, they sank and accumulated at the bottom of the lake. After hundreds of years the dead plants filled the whole lake forming a fen. Plants, such as Sphagnum mosses which like these wet and nutrient poor conditions, colonised the surface of the fen and as they died and accumulated, they transformed the fen into a raised bog.

As a result of a dry period in Ireland's climate, approx 4,500 years ago trees colonized the bogs. These later died when the climate became wetter. This explains why we sometimes find trees such as bog oak under many metres of peat. Over the years as the peat accumulated, the centre of the bog grew higher than the surrounding mineral soil and became like a dome. For this reason these bogs became known as raised bogs. Peat can be several metres deep in raised bogs.

DID YOU KNOW?

- The bog where you are standing now was formed many thousands of years ago.
- Our boglands are a living archive of our past climate, ecology and archaeology.
- Doogarymore Bog Kiltveevan has been a rich source of archaeological finds.
- Bogs act as a carbon store reducing greenhouse gases and reducing climate change
- Raised bogs are a valuable wetland habitat that is becoming increasingly rare in Ireland.
- Some Raised Bogs are actively being restored as part of the Coillte Raised Bog Restoration LIFE project, which is funded by the European Union. This Coillte project aims to restore several raised bogs to their natural state mainly by removing planted and non-native trees, and blocking drains in order to re-wet the bog surface and promote active peat growth. There is one such project in this area. See www.raisedbogrestoration.ie

PROBLEMS FOR BIODIVERSITY

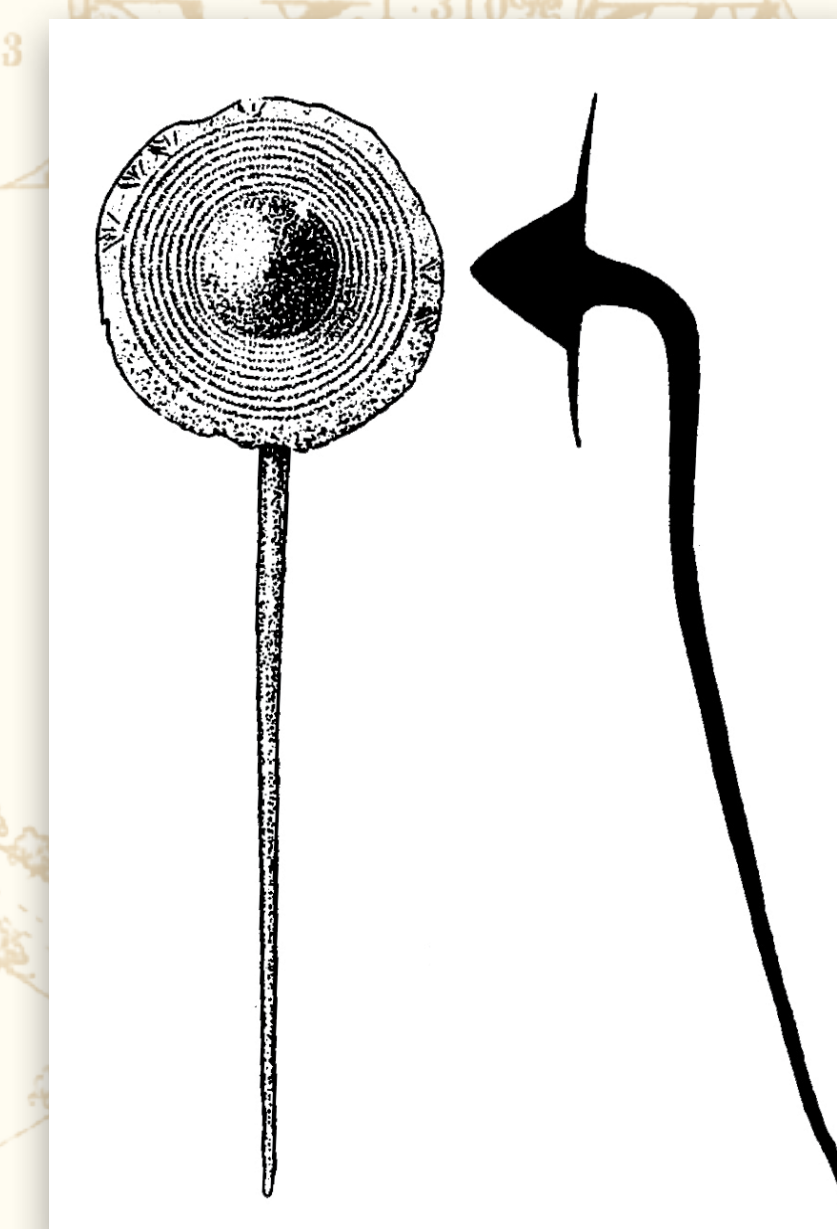
Biodiversity has declined globally in recent centuries due to human activity and exploitation of resources. The price we pay for not taking care of our natural environment is becoming increasingly high- global warming, soil erosion, water pollution, flooding, declining fish stocks, species extinctions, spread of pests and diseases etc. Biodiversity in Ireland is under threat from activities such as development, drainage, pollution, dumping, invasive species and climate change. The price we pay for not protecting our biodiversity, particularly wetlands, has become increasingly obvious in recent years in Ireland as we have had to deal with flooding and pollution of drinking water supplies. Wetlands can act like filters, intercepting nutrients and pollutants before they enter waterbodies, and they can act like sponges, holding water and releasing it slowly. Drainage and destruction of wetlands contributed to a decline in water quality in some parts of Ireland, and a decline in the water-holding capacity of the land, leading to flooding under high rainfall conditions. (1)



• John and Richard Mooney of Doogarymore, at the discovery site in the 1969.



• Doogarymore Wheel



• Sunflower Pin

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS

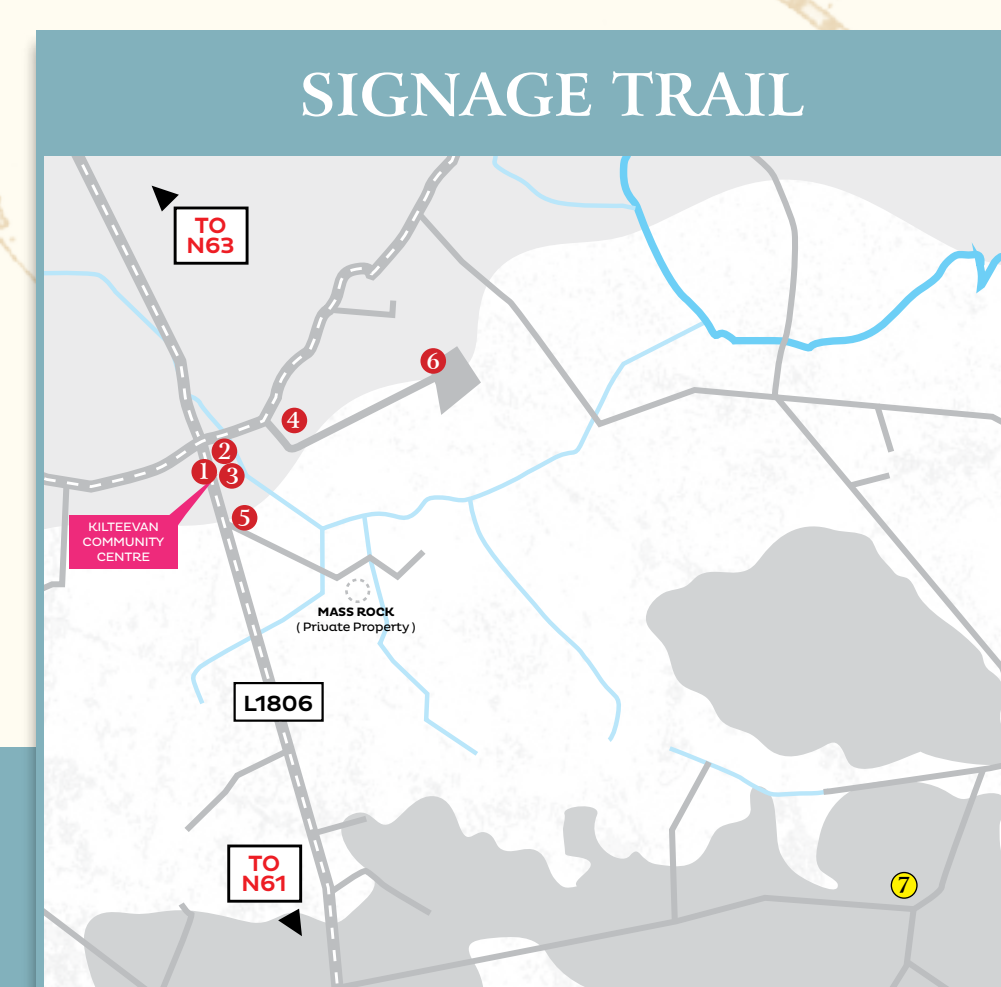
The Doogarymore Wheel and Sunflower Pin

In 1968 and 1969, John and Richard Mooney of Doogarymore discovered Bronze Age wheels, while cutting turf in Kiltveevan. The '68 discovery was left on the surface of the bog and only two warped fragments survived. The 1969 wheel lay flat in the peat at a depth of 2 metres from the surface of the bog. John, now in his hundredth year, recalls digging in the bog on a bank when he became aware that there was something under his grape. He continued digging very carefully around the circumference of the object until he unearthed the wooden wheel. He and his brother Richie placed it on the hollow bank and covered it carefully with heather and grass to protect it. It was transported to the National Museum on 12th June 1969. Both wheels were given radiocarbon dates of c.450 and c.365 b.c. respectively and also confirmed that the wheels displayed very considerable sophistication in construction; the finish indicates signs of social status. 90m from where the wheels were found John Mooney also found a Sunflower Pin or Brooch, which dates to the Late Bronze Age, circa 1200 – 500 b.c.. (2) This is also housed in the National Museum, Dublin.

WALK / CYCLE ROUTE

Have a wonderful time discovering our little bit of heaven

- The Grove Loop - 8.5k / 1.5-2hrs walk
- The Kiltveevan Ring - 16k / approx 4hr walk / 1 hour cycle



¹ ACTION FOR BIODIVERSITY 'NATURE AND WILDLIFE' IN ROSCOMMON. Roscommon County Council. 2012
² Ryan, H.A. (1997), Kiltveevan: a look at a School and its Parish. Kiltveevan. Kiltveevan School Board of Management.
 Additional Source: Eileen Fahey