



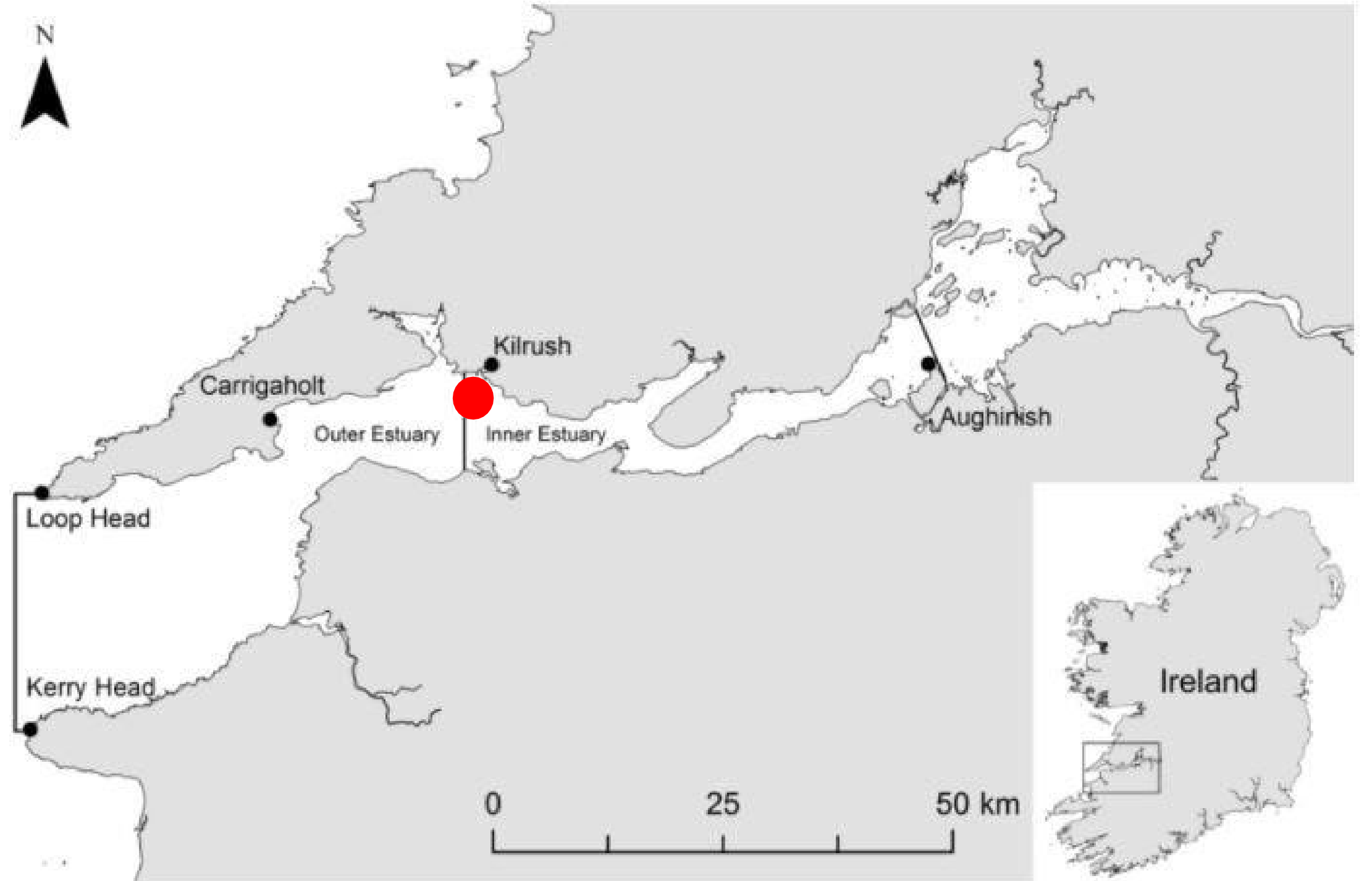
OPW Oifig na
nOibreacha Poiblí
Office of Public Works

Sustainable Conservation & Visitor Management

Scattery Island, Co. Clare

Michèle O'Dea, Senior Conservation Architect, Heritage Services

29 October 2024

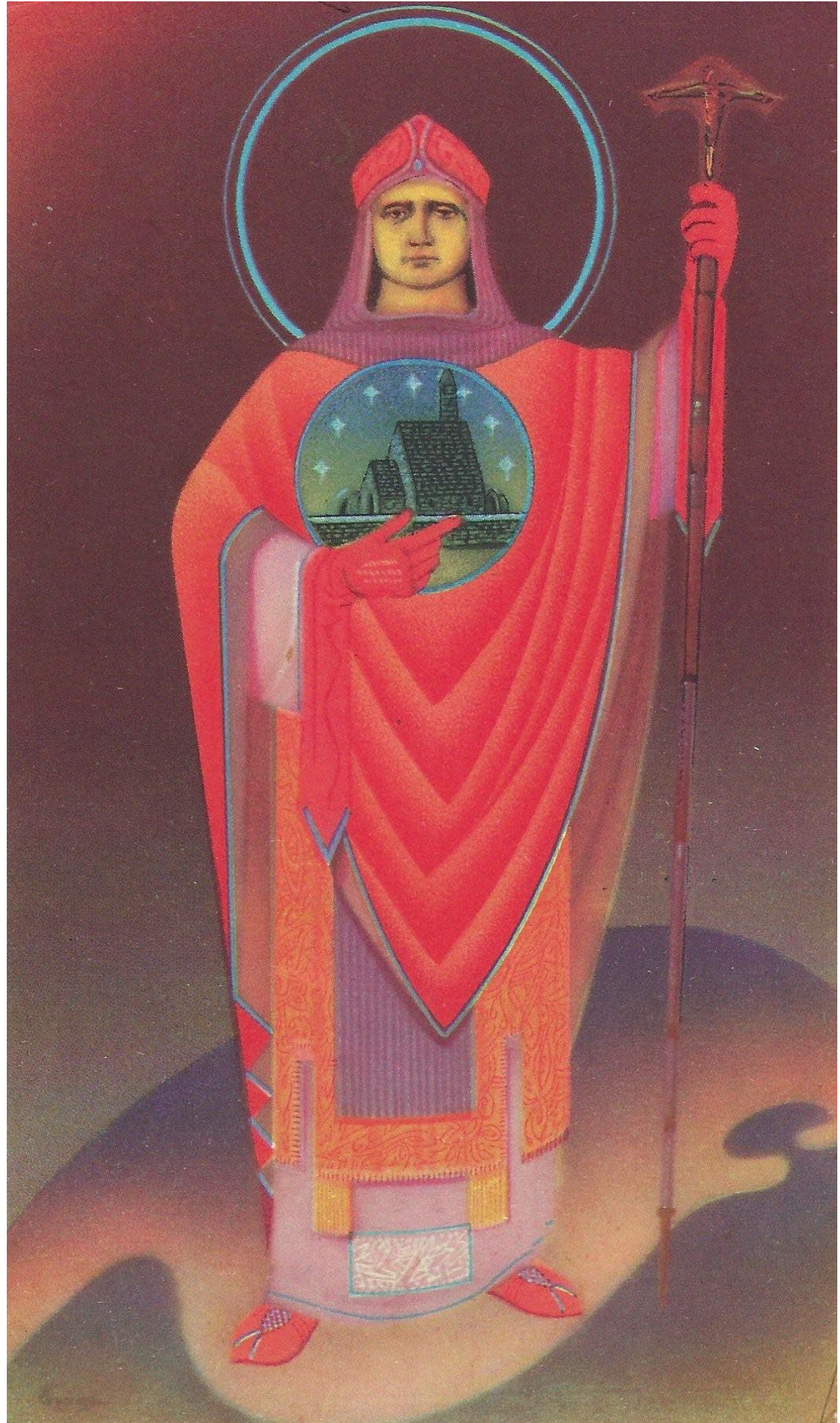


Scattery Island or *Inish Cathaigh* is located some twenty kilometres east of the mouth of the Shannon Estuary and two kilometres south east of Kilrush on the coast of County Clare.





Scattery Island lies within the Lower Shannon Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the Shannon and Fergus Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA).





From the nineteenth century, the ecclesiastical buildings were cared for by the Board of Works; the entire island was acquired for the state in 1991 and is now a National Monument in State Care under the responsibility of the Office of Public Works







Scattery Pilots boarding a ship in the estuary, 1953

Sinon McMahon pictured alongside ships master, as he goes about his duty as a Pilot on the U.S.S.R vessel, in 1966 .

A generation before, Sinon McMahon Senior, pictured on a boat from Cappa with Andrew Ryan of Kilrush.





Island in 1986 prior to coming into State ownership



Cathedral of St. Mary & Senan
Round Tower



Knocknanangel (The Hill of the Angels)



Places of cultural significance enrich people's lives, often providing a deep and inspirational sense of connection: to the community; the landscape; to the past and to lived experiences









There is one full-time OPW General Operative who carries out the routine maintenance on the island and who also skippers the OPW boat

For maintenance, consolidation and repair works, OPW staff travel to the island from the Clare and Galway depots and sub-depots



North Lagoon Farmsteads –before

North lagoon farmsteads – restored



Former Land agent's House / Keane House



Former Land agent's House / Keane House



The Street - Post office



The Street – before works





The Street – before works



The Street – restored







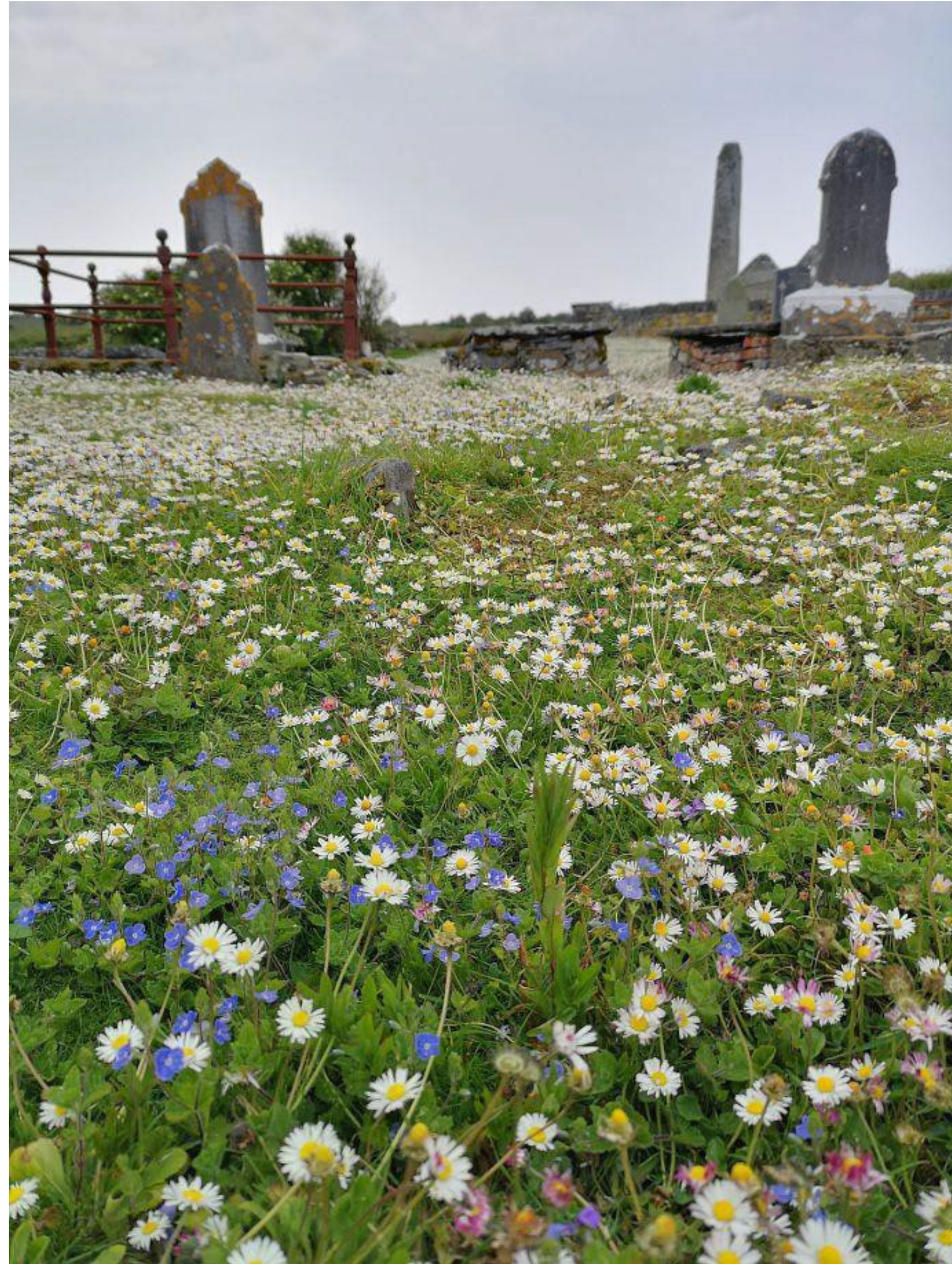












North Lagoon

(credit: Elaine Keegan)

Chough & Kestrel (credit Mike Brown)



Ringed Plover (credit: Stan Nugent)

Hen Harrier

Scattery is also home to a beautiful rare bird-of-prey; the Hen Harrier, which is a protected species. With their disc shaped face Hen Harriers look a bit like an owl. The males are pale grey with black tips on their wings, while the females are brown and bigger than the males. The males and females are so different, that in fact many years ago people thought they were two different species.

The Hen Harrier population is declining mainly due to loss of habitat, which traditionally was upland heath, bog and rough grassland. In 2022 the estimated number of nesting pairs in Ireland was between 85 and 106. They usually nest in upland areas such as the West Clare hills and the Slieve Aughties. With less predators, Scattery Island provides a safe place for these ground-nesting birds. Sometimes home to between 3 & 6 pairs, Scattery is a very important site nationally for the Hen Harrier.

In March and April the Hen Harriers begin their courtship. The male shows off his ability in a display flight called the "sky dance". If the female is impressed they will pair up, decide on a safe place and start to build their nest.

In late April or early May she will lay 4-5 eggs. Once on eggs, she cannot leave the nest for long, so the male provides food. Hen Harriers mainly eat small birds and rodents. On Scattery they also eat Rabbits. When the male brings food back they perform a "food pass". The male calls to the female, she flies up below him, she turns upside down and catches the food he drops to her in mid-air.

Typically in July the chicks will be big enough to start to fly. They spend a few weeks learning with their parents before they head off on their own. Hen Harriers disperse over the countryside in the winter months.



Male Hen Harrier (credit: Mike Brown)

Female Hen Harrier (credit: Mike Brown)

The Wildlife of Scattery Island

Scattery Island is a remarkable haven for wildlife. Just 70 hectares in size it contains a myriad of plants, animals and built heritage structures all surrounded by the vast expanse of the River Shannon Estuary.



Tower (credit: Stan Nugent)

Please leave no trace and protect Scattery and its heritage for many generations to come. Thank you.

Further information:
National Parks & Wildlife Service
www.npws.ie

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Photographs: Special thanks to Mike Brown & Stan Nugent for the use of their images.





Male Hen Harrier

(credit: Mike Browne)



Female Hen Harrier





Skellig Michael, Co. Kerry

Scattery Island Visitors

Visitor numbers:

2021 = 6,104

2022 = 4,758

2022 = 4,713

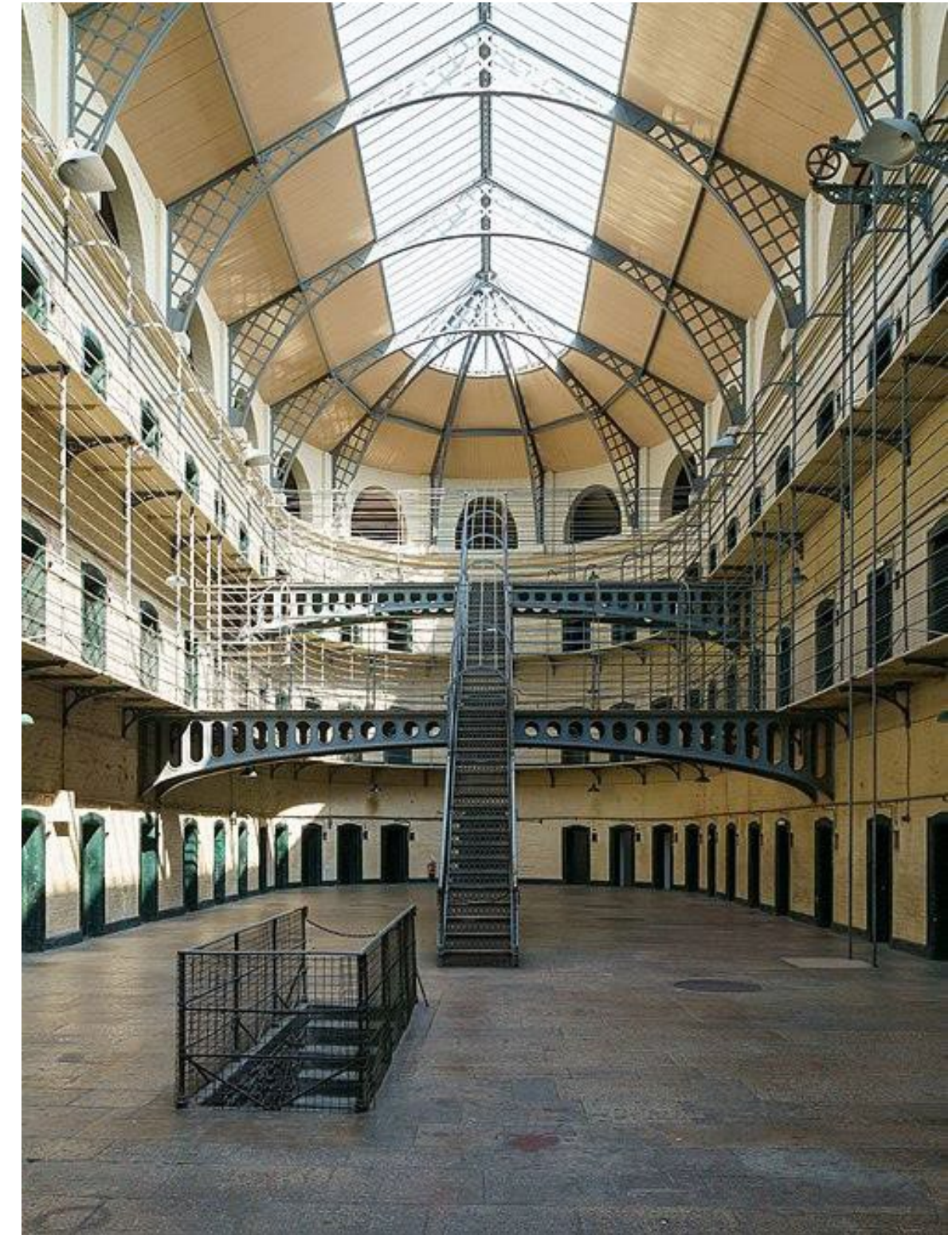




Castletown House, Co. Kildare



Kilkenny Castle, Kilkenny



Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin

Clonmacnoise, Co. Offaly



Charles Fort, Kinsale, Co. Cork



Rock of Cashel, Co. Tipperary







Senan's Well



Senan's Church & Senan's Bed





Inis Cealtra, Co. Clare



Carrigaholt Castle, Co. Clare

Vandeleur Gardens



Loop Head Lighthouse





Teampall na Marbh (The Church of the Dead)



Napoleonic Battery



View of the battery over gun emplacement showing magazine and later pilot's house from 1930s



Magazine



(credit: Mike Browne)



View from Pier, showing 'The Street' on the left (National Library of Ireland – Lawrence Collection)

Thank you