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UCC
University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

Treasure Ballybrannigan Beach

Catherine Rooney & Fiachra Mckermott

CARL Research Project
in collaboration with
University College Cork

CARL
COMMUNITY - ACADEMIC
RESEARCH LINKS
University College Cork, Ireland

Name of student(s):	Catherine Rooney & Fiachra McKermott
Name of civil society organisation/community group:	Ballybrannigan Community Group
Name of community group liaison person:	Sean Fitzgerald & Kevin Terry
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Name and year of course:	MA History 2017/2018
Date completed:	11/05/18

What is Community-Academic Research Links?
Community Academic Research Links (CARL) is a community engagement initiative provided by University College Cork to support the research needs of community and voluntary groups/ Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). These groups can be grass roots groups, single issue temporary groups, but also structured community organisations. Research for the CSO is carried out free of financial cost by student researchers.

CARL seeks to:

- provide civil society with knowledge and skills through research and education;
- provide their services on an affordable basis;
- promote and support public access to and influence on science and technology;
- create equitable and supportive partnerships with civil society organisations;
- enhance understanding among policymakers and education and research institutions of the research and education needs of civil society, and
- enhance the transferrable skills and knowledge of students, community representatives and researchers (www.livingknowledge.org).

What is a CSO?
We define CSOs as groups who are non-governmental, non-profit, not representing commercial interests, and/or pursuing a common purpose in the public interest. These groups include: trade unions, NGOs, professional associations, charities, grass-roots organisations, organisations that involve citizens in local and municipal life, churches and religious committees, and so on.

Why is this report on the UCC website?
The research agreement between the CSO, student and CARL/University states that the results of the study must be made public through the publication of the final research report on the CARL (UCC) website. CARL is committed to open access, and the free and public dissemination of research results.

How do I reference this report?
Author (year) *Dissertation/Project Title*, [online], Community-Academic Research Links/University College Cork, Ireland, Available from: http://www.ucc.ie/en/scishop/completed/ [Accessed on: date].

How can I find out more about the Community-Academic Research Links and the Living Knowledge Network?
The UCC CARL website has further information on the background and operation of Community-Academic Research Links at University College Cork, Ireland. http://carl.ucc.ie.

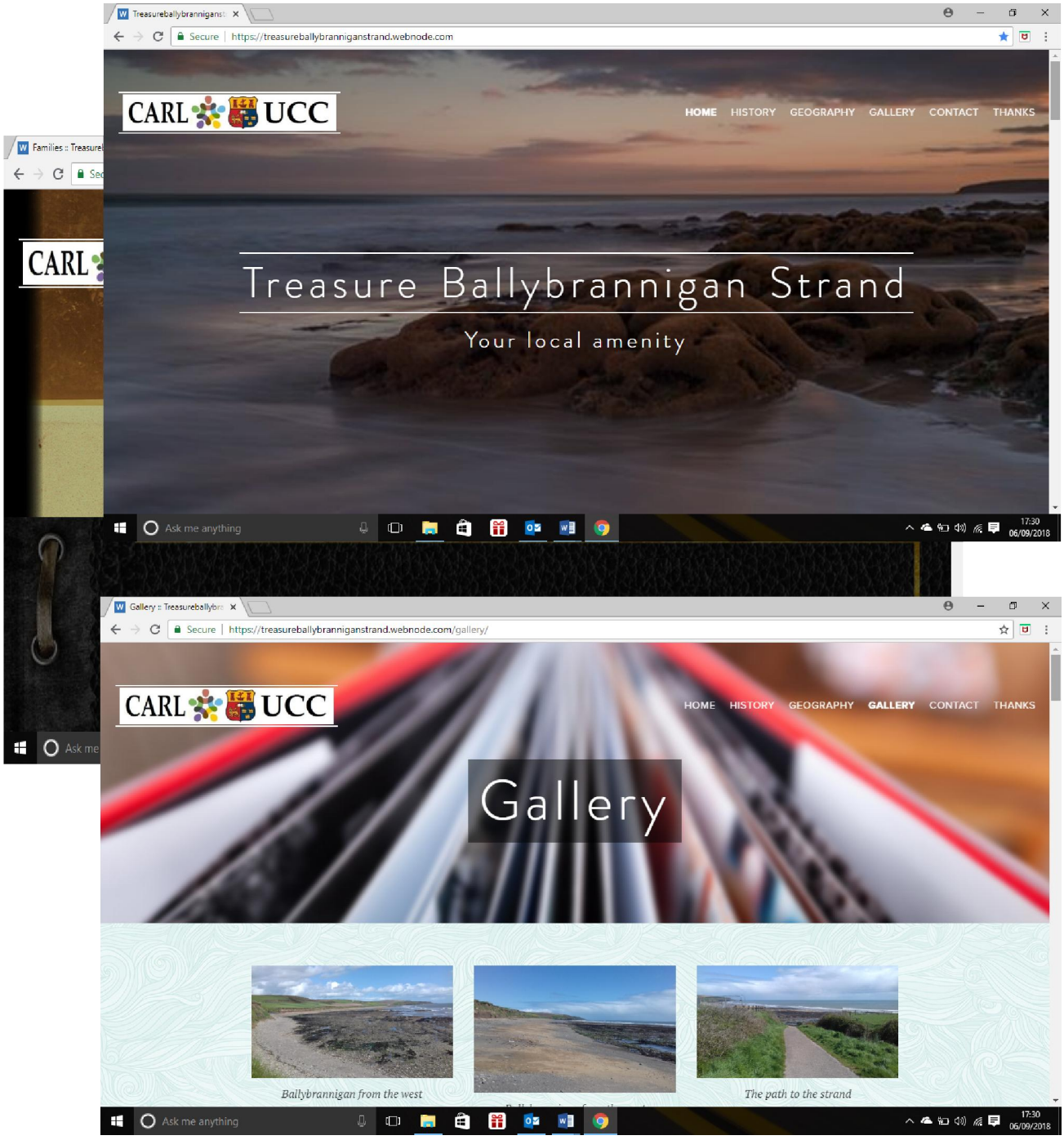
You can follow CARL on Twitter at @UCC_CARL. All of our research reports are accessible free online here: http://www.ucc.ie/en/scishop/rr/.

CARL is part of an international network of Science Shops called the Living Knowledge Network. You can read more about this vibrant community and its activities on this website: http://www.scienceshops.org and on Twitter @ScienceShops. CARL is also a contributor to Campus Engage, which is the Irish Universities Association engagement initiative to promote community-based research, community-based learning and volunteering amongst Higher Education students and staff.

Are you a member of a community project and have an idea for a research project?
We would love to hear from you! Read the background information here http://www.ucc.ie/en/scishop/ap/c&vo/ and contact us by email at carl@ucc.ie.

Disclaimer
Notwithstanding the contributions by the University and its staff, the University gives no warranty as to the accuracy of the project report or the suitability of any material contained in it for either general or specific purposes. It will be for the Client Group, or users, to ensure that any outcome from the project meets safety and other requirements. The Client Group agrees not to hold the University responsible in respect of any use of the project results. Notwithstanding this disclaimer, it is a matter of record that many student projects have been completed to a very high standard and to the satisfaction of the Client Group.

Screenshots of our completed website – Treasure Ballybrannigan Strand
https://treasureballybranniganstrand.webnode.com/



Summary of the experience gained on this work placement

The main aim of the project was to raise an awareness of the problems that Ballybranigan beach was facing in terms of the erosion damage that had been caused by the sea, and it was thought that if we could gather enough information about the beach, the extended area and how it is still used by the local people and tourists, that the council would be more easily convinced to make the necessary repairs.. Approximately 3 months into the placement we were made aware that the council agreed to begin the repair work in the summer to have the beach re-opened.

The placement began on 5th December 2017 after a meeting between ourselves, Dr. Malgorzata D'Aughton of UCC School of History, William O'Halloran and Martin Galvin from the CARL Initiative and Kevin Terry and Sean Fitzgerald from the Ballybrannigan community. Dr. D' Aughton was our supervisor for this placement, and we also kept in constant contact with William from CARL and Kevin and Sean as well whenever we needed guidance on a particular matter.

Beginning in December 2017 and ending in May 2018 our work on this project lasted approximately 6 months. It was never concentrated in one particular area, as we were not working in an institution or an office every day, rather we were working on the placement from various locations. For example, doing research in the UCC library, at our own homes, taking photographs on the beach itself, and attending meetings with Dr. D' Aughton and William throughout the course of the placement. Likewise, because we were not involved in a placement that had specific, structured hours, we completed work on the project at various times throughout the 6-month period, sometimes spending 2 hours in Boole library doing research, at other times spending an hour at Ballybrannigan beach observing the damage to the cliffs, or visiting individual members of the local community to collect information from them.

It was decided that a website would be the best option for this project as it would mean that the information gathered would be accessible to everyone who had an interest in the beach, and we could

present the information under different categories – historical, geographical and its use as a local amenity. One of the main tasks was the setting up of meetings and interviews with various people we had been advised to contact by Kevin Terry and Sean Fitzgerald. For example, on 8th April we both went to Dublin to meet with John Garde, one of the contacts that we had made, and spent several hours at his home gathering the information that we needed to complete a history of the Ballybrannigan area. Another task was typing up the information that we had gathered for the website. We worked through all the information we had and finally agreed on 14 stories that we would write up and then put onto the site. We divided these stories up between us, and then brought it all together when it came to determine under which heading it would go on the site. It was decided to present the information in chronological order that we had gathered on ship wrecks, placing each one in order that it had happened and making sure that all the dates are accurate.

External organisations that we felt may be able to contribute something to the website we also contacted. For instance, we were made aware of two photography groups that took pictures of the beach, the East Cork Camera Club and Seelight Photography. We had to ensure that any terms and conditions that they required were met with.

These were all tasks that took place throughout the placement, because it was a project that was very much centred around the local people of the area. Therefore, we were constantly being made aware of more people we should be contacting, and more places we might look for information or clarification of research we had gathered.

In terms of the skills that we took away from this placement, a lot of first-hand experience was gained with regards to the professional skills of a historian; doing extra research into not only the beach but the surrounding area and improving analytical skills from having to digest a lot of information in quite a short space of time. In addition, because a lot of the locals that we gathered information from tended to

be elderly people, the information that we received was not always structured in a coherent manner, with gaps in paragraphs if the information was in written form, or if it was oral stories there would be periods when the individual could become unclear about what particular story they were referring to at the time. By dealing with information that was quite scrambled like this we improved our skills in terms of making the stories understandable.

Skills were also improved with regards to technology through the designing of the website.

In addition, because this placement involved working as part of a team, we enhanced our ability to coordinate a team, especially when it came to delegate what tasks we each would be better suited to complete. From this point of view, this placement also gave valuable experience of setting deadlines and sticking to them, without the involvement of university officials or supervisors.

In conclusion, not only was this an invaluable experience in terms of getting to see what it would be like to work more closely with the public within the career of an academic historian, but we also feel confident that we helped provide a useful source of information for the local people at Ballybrannigan, and for tourists who may visit the area.

The only improvement that we would suggest is that there should be a greater effort to encourage students from the School of History to become involved in CARL projects because they will definitely walk away with some valuable skills and experiences that they cannot get inside the classroom.