

# OUGHTERARD'S FIRST SETTLERS



Bill Daly's project on the people who first settled Oughterard 7,000 years ago continues to generate a lot of interest.

On April 27th, a packed Oughterard Courthouse listened to Bill giving an interesting and entertaining presentation. Here is Donal Kelly's account of the presentation:

A few tiny flint flakes were found near the mouth of the Owenriff river decades ago. And small as they are, they linked the area to the period when humans first reached what we now call Ireland: the Mesolithic (8000 to 4000 BC). In his fascinating talk about what the area looked like then, and how the hunter gatherers would have lived, Bill Daly didn't just explain in words: he displayed, using carefully created

models of the houses, boats, and tools, that would have been used.

With farming somewhere in the future, humans would have been highly adapted to living off the land, moving from place to place, choosing locations along rivers and lakes, adept at fishing. Those precious fragments of flint would have been shaped into sharp points and used to create spears to chase fish or axes to cut wood.

As Bill described it, the culture then didn't generate any surplus: people would wake each day with generally no store of food to live off. They would have been in tune with every chirp of their local environment. Imagine waking up in a 20 feet high cone-shaped reed-wrapped tent, in a small clearing by a river mouth surrounded by dense roadless woodland. There is no food in the fridge: there is no fridge. No cereal. No slices of bacon. No car, job, pension, supermarket, hospital, internet, electricity, or rubber soles. But there are a couple of light stone-tipped spears stuck in the ground by the entrance, and a dawn chorus of birdsong and the slosh of

flowing water outside. What will you eat today?

Another insight was how little was left behind. Here was a culture that persisted for thousands of years, yet barely fragments can now be found. Contrast this with our current age where industry and consumption coat the planet in layers of discarded plastic and scars of heavy development. A single year in one city probably leaves more behind than the entire Mesolithic.

Since the initial presentation in April, Bill has presented to Secondary and Primary Schools in the area. The replica Mesolithic House will be positioned on display outside The Courthouse during July and August. Due to popular demand, Bill has agreed to make a second public presentation on 15th September, similar to the first but also introducing new and updated material.



*Presentation to St. Paul's First Year's*

Back by  
popular  
demand!



## OUGHTERARD'S FIRST SETTLERS *A journey into the mists of Prehistory*

**INTRODUCING NEW & UPDATED MATERIAL**

A presentation and display of  
reconstructed material by Bill Daly

**15th September 2018 (Saturday)**  
**at 8.00pm**

**Admission Free - All Welcome**

*Hosted by The Oughterard Heritage Group*



SUMMER PROGRAMME