

Our Homeplace: Ireland

By Megan Hogan and Robyn Johnston



Ireland

Ireland

- ▶ Ireland has many different types of nature areas, varying from mountains to coastlines.
- ▶ Ireland is predominantly covered in grass areas, with the majority of those areas used for farming and agriculture.
- ▶ Woodland areas within Ireland, only take up about 10% of the natural environment.
- ▶ Ireland has very strict rules about what can be done in nature areas, especially in forests. For example, people cannot trespass on private land without consent of the owner, we can only camp in areas that allow it which are usually camp sites for which you must pay a fee.

Dublin

- ▶ Dublin although the capital city, contains various nature areas which can be good to explore when you need a break from the hustle and bustle of the city.
- ▶ Dublin has many parks, mountains, coastal areas, rivers, canals and green areas.
- ▶ The Phoenix Park, home to the President of Ireland, is a large area of grassland located close to Dublin city centre. The Phoenix park which is 1,750 acres in size is home to Dublin zoo and to numerous other wildlife such as deer, foxes and many different types of birds. The park also has many different monuments and structures.

The Phoenix Park



The Phoenix Park

- ▶ Above is a picture of the Phoenix Park and one of the monuments which was built there. This monument was built during the 1800's and it celebrates the victories of the 1st duke of Wellington.
- ▶ The Phoenix Park has many affordances for play in learning, and its variety of nature areas make it a great location for outdoor education to take place. The large grass areas allow children to run at great speeds, to engage in rough and tumble play and to play traditional games.
- ▶ The trees and sculptures dotted around the park, make it an easy place for children to climb on the branches and steps.
- ▶ The Phoenix Park also allows children to interact with their learning as they can look for different types of wildlife and see first hand what it is, instead of just seeing it in a book. The trees are home to many different types of insects and birds.

The Botanic Gardens



- ▶ Contains various types of plants, flowers and trees that grow both in Ireland and other areas of the world. Some of which are endangered or becoming extinct in the world today.
- ▶ Throughout the year there are many different exhibitions held in these gardens. The exhibitions are available for everyone and anyone to visit.
- ▶ We were taken to the gardens for a number of classes throughout the last two college years.
- ▶ There is also a sensory garden, which encourages people to experience its plants with touch, sound, taste, and smell, as well as by sight.
- ▶ *The garden offers many affordances for children's play and learning such as:*
- ▶ There are large green areas which allow children to run around, and afford children the option of rough and tumble play.
- ▶ There are many claimable features in the gardens such sculptures, trees, steps and benches.
- ▶ There are also flat surfaces which allow children to walk, run, cycle and scoot around the gardens.
- ▶ It is a great place for children to get creative and use their imaginations. In the gardens they can work with natural materials to create their own sculptures, which is similar to activities that we have carried out in our own classes within the Botanic Gardens.

Mullingar

- ▶ Mullingar is a large town located in the county of Westmeath in the midlands of Ireland.
- ▶ Westmeath is also known as the ‘Lake County’, this because of its numerous amount of lakes.
- ▶ There is also many wood and bog land areas located in Mullingar. This gives children the opportunity to explore and engage in risky play, such as climbing and bog hopping.
- ▶ There are also many beautiful parks and gardens located in the Mullingar area which are very popular among locals and visitors alike.



The Bog:

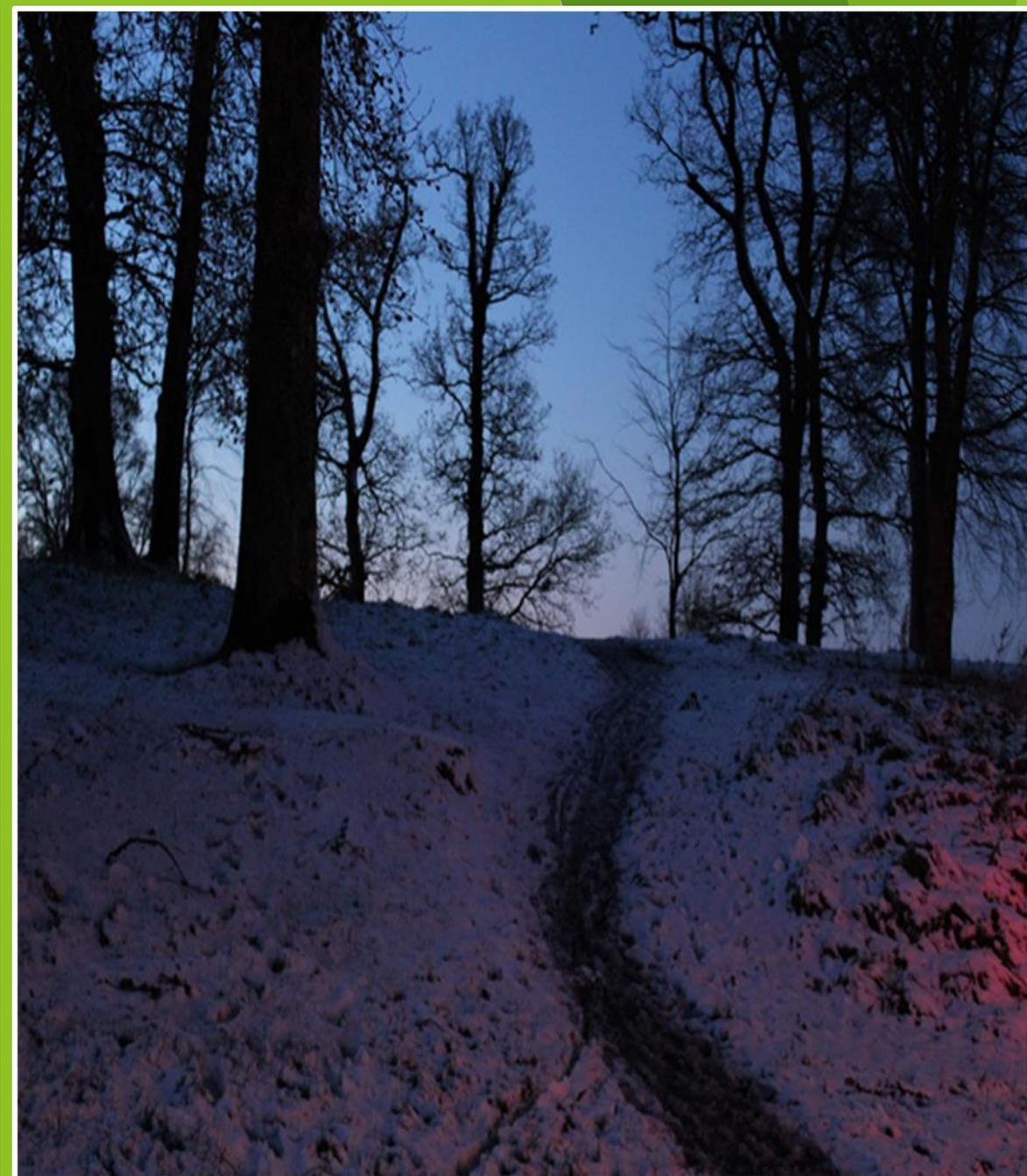
- ▶ A bog is a wetland that gathers peat also known as turf, which we burn on the fire during the winter. A popular activity is to go bog hopping which is when people go and jump into the bog, usually during the summer. It is wet mucky and smelly but really good fun!

Green areas:

- ▶ Offer children the opportunity to run around, play traditional games, ball games, cycle, and rough and tumble play.
- ▶ They can also explore the green areas and see what lives there, they can learn about the different plants, trees and all about their sense.

Woodland areas:

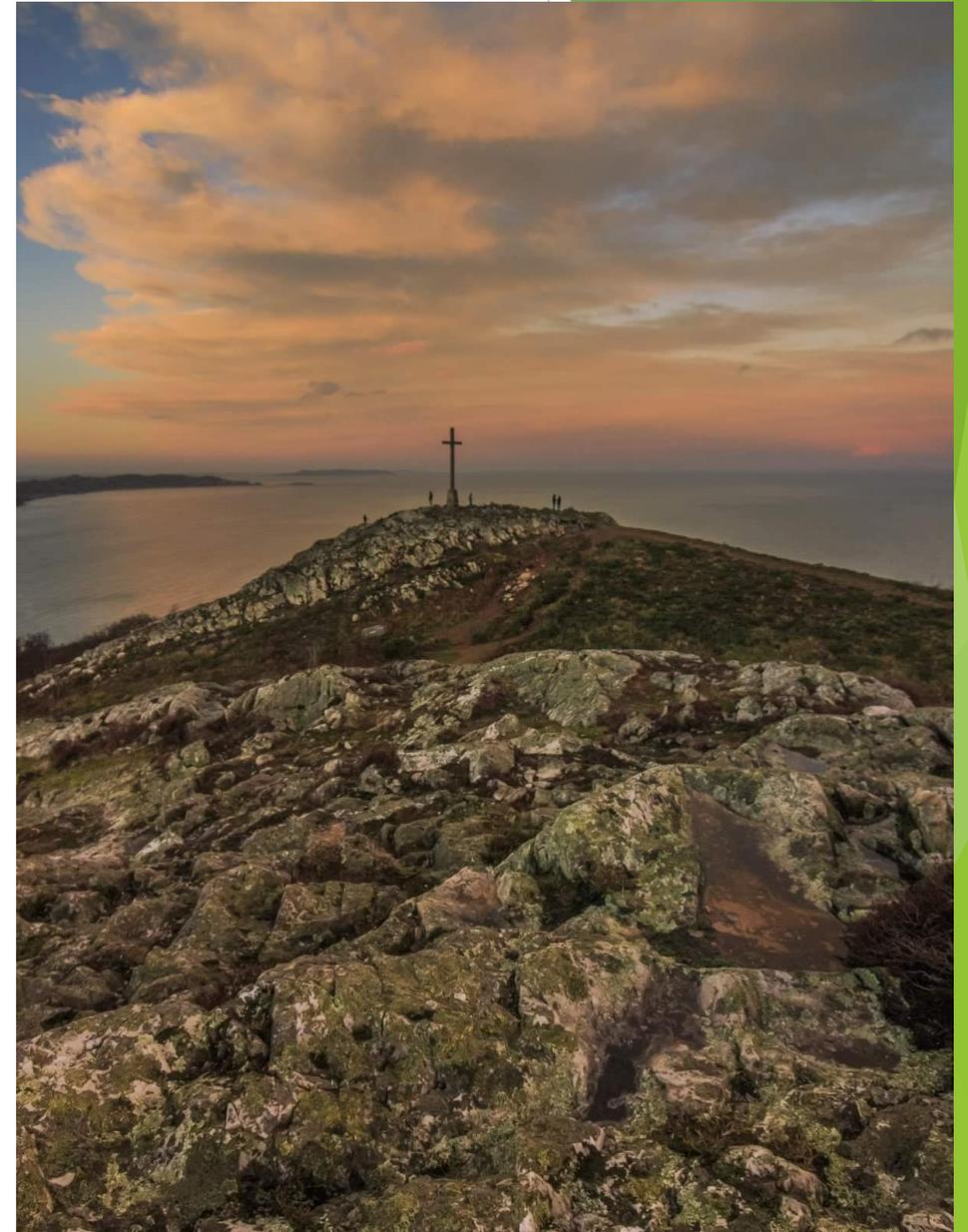
- ▶ Affords climbable feature such as trees, bridges, large fallen branches.
- ▶ Give children the opportunity to be creative and use their imagination. They can do this by building dens or caves using leaves and fallen branches.
- ▶ Children can also swing from the branches and balance on them while walking across.
- ▶ The children could also use sharp tools to cut through fallen branches and trees. Campfires can then be made in areas that suitable.



Bray

- ▶ Bray is a small coastal town that is just south of Dublin, in the county of Wicklow. Wicklow is a very beautiful county and is known as the “Garden of Ireland”.
- ▶ Bray is near to mountains such as the Wicklow Mountains, and a much smaller mountain called The Sugar Loaf.
- ▶ There are also many wooded areas nearby which are nice for going on walks, and are good for children who like to climb.
- ▶ Bray is located on the coast, which provides children with many opportunities for play and learning.

Bray Head

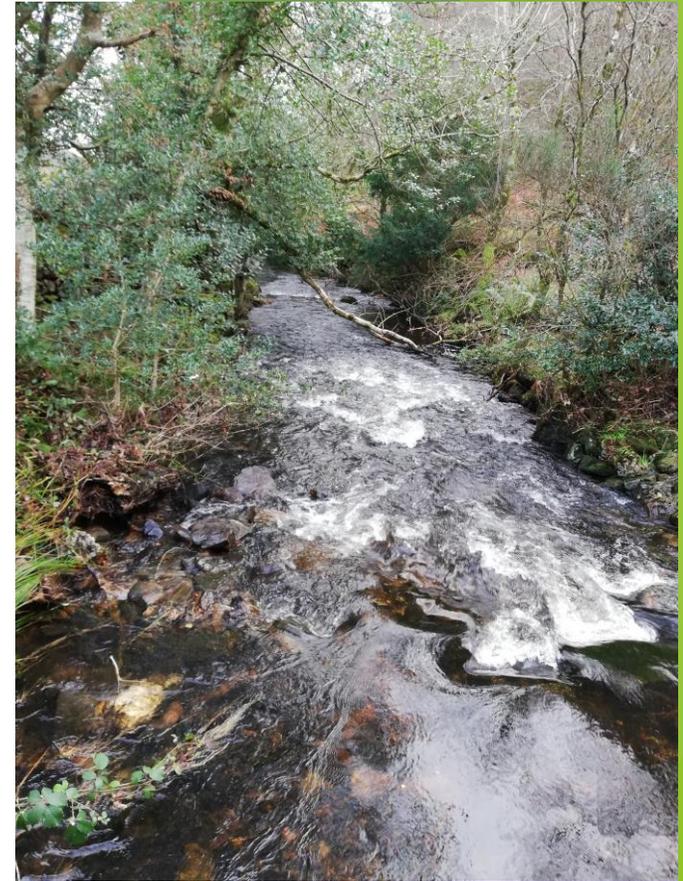
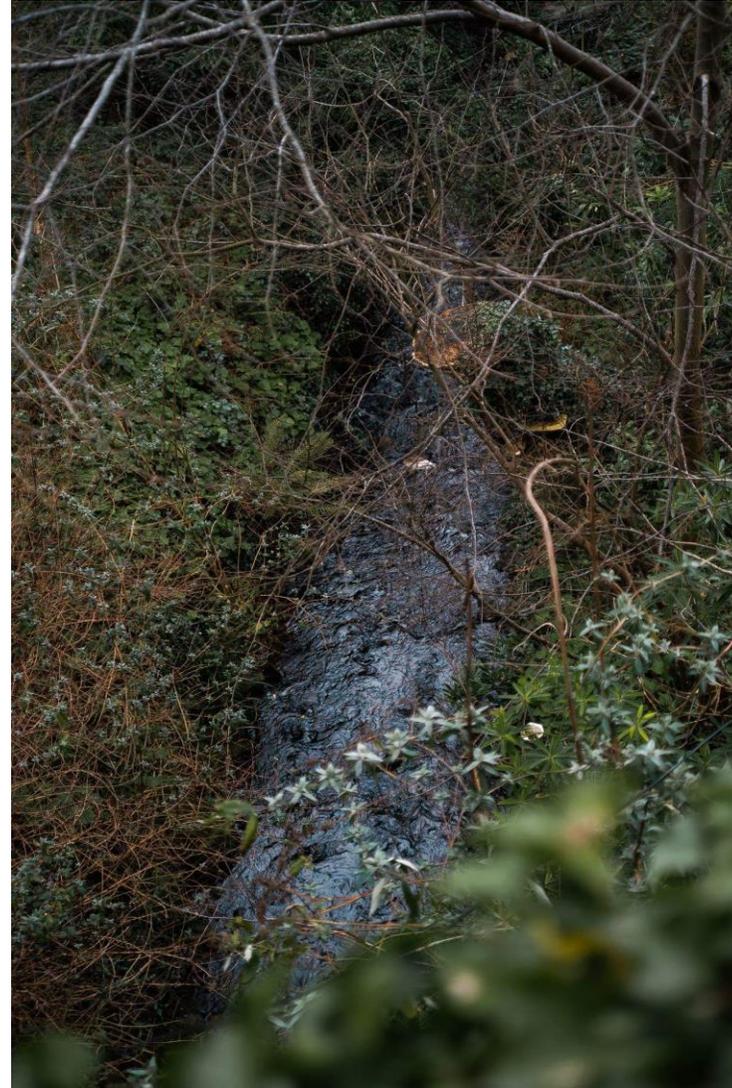


Bray Head

- ▶ This is a hill that is on Bray seafront. This is a great location for a walk and when you get to the top you have a view of the whole town and the surrounding areas.
- ▶ Bray Head allows children many different affordances for play and learning as they can engage in many different risky play activities such as climbing trees, jumping on and off rocks and climbing the steps that lead to the cross on top.
- ▶ Because Bray is located on the coast there are loads of water activities that children can become involved in. Children can go swimming in the sea, pier jumping, fishing, canoeing and kayaking, rowing and sailing. Children can also discover the rock pools in the cove and learn about some of the small fish and other sea creatures that live in the shallow water. Children can also go fishing off of the harbour, and there is a barbecue area where they can cook food.
- ▶ The seafront also contains many climbable structures along the promenade such as walls, climbing frames and railings. The children can also develop their creativity by building structures using the stones or sand that lines the beach.

Rivers

- There are also a lot of rivers near to where I live.
- Rivers can provide children with many affordances for play and learning as they can paddle in the water, look for insects and other wildlife and in bigger rivers they can take part in water sports such as kayaking and canoeing.



Lakes

- There are a lot of lakes in the Mullingar area and most of them have a lot of history behind them. This is a good opportunity for children to interact with the history and they often engage better in the presence of the location.
- The lake affords Swimming, fishing, boating, canoeing and skimming stones.
- Children also like to balance along the rocks that go from the shore into the lake this can help children improve their gross motor skills.
- The children can also jump off the diving boards at the lake or off the huge concrete platforms this is a very popular activity to do during the summer.



Lough Ennel



Glendalough