

**EARLY MEDIEVAL ARCHAEOLOGY PROJECT (EMAP)  
Report 2.4**

**The Early Medieval Archaeology Project  
(EMAP)**

**Project Progress Report 2008**



**Aidan O'Sullivan, Finbar McCormick &  
Conor McDermott**

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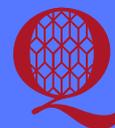


UCD School of Archaeology

An Chomhairle Oidhreachta  
The Heritage Council



Irish National Strategic Archaeological Research  
(INSTAR) Programme 2008



Queen's University  
Belfast



Archaeological Consultancy  
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Margaret Gowen & Co Ltd  
Archaeological Consultants & Project Managers

**Early Medieval Archaeology Project (EMAP) Report 2.4**

**The Early Medieval Archaeology  
Project (EMAP)**

**Project Progress Report 2008**

submitted for

**INSTAR programme 2008**

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Aidan O'Sullivan, Finbar McCormick and Conor McDermott on  
behalf of EMAP Research Consortium

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>EMAP and INSTAR programme grant 2008 .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>EMAP Project Initiation, Management, Staff and Meetings.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>EMAP’s completion of monograph for 2008.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>EMAP’s database of Early Medieval excavations 1930-2004 .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>EMAP’s Early Medieval Archaeological Bibliography.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>EMAP’s Website/Early Medieval Archaeology Portal .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>EMAP ‘scholarships’: PhD and MA enrolment .....</b>	<b>8</b>
Matt Seaver’s INSTAR-supported PhD: ‘Living with the dead: early medieval cemetery/settlements in Ireland’ .....	8
Rob O’Hara’s INSTAR-supported MA: “Early medieval settlement and landscape at Colp west, Co. Meath” .....	9
<b>EMAP public presentations and publications .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Conclusions.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Bibliographical References .....</b>	<b>12</b>

## Introduction

The Early Medieval Archaeology Project (EMAP) is an established archaeological research consortium, currently operating to an ongoing 3-year research project design.

In 2008, it has received generous funding from the Heritage Council Archaeological Research Grants 2008 scheme (Ref: 16358) and from the Heritage Council INSTAR programme 2008 (Ref. 16669).

- EMAP aims to investigate and analyse the history, character and results of early medieval archaeological excavations in Ireland (1930-2004), to enable new understandings of the landscapes, settlements and economy of early medieval Ireland, AD 400-1170.
- EMAP will publish 5 books, several peer-reviewed papers and make available a website with an online database of early medieval sites to help transform unpublished 'data into knowledge' and to support all researchers investigating this iconic period in Ireland's past.
- EMAP has established collaborative research and graduate training links between the university and commercial archaeological sector, with partnerships between UCD School of Archaeology; School of Geography, Archaeology and Palaeoecology, QUB; CRDS, ACS, MGL and is linking to state sector archaeological institutions (e.g. National Monuments Section and EHS).

## EMAP and INSTAR programme grant 2008

In Autumn 2007, EMAP made an application to the Heritage Council's Archaeological Research Grants 2008 scheme for an EMAP Stage 2, following on from the project's successful work in 2007 (see O'Sullivan and Harney 2007). This application was successful and the project was granted a total of €18,000, with a stated proviso that all of this be assigned to staff salaries for the project's research assistant.

EMAP's original application to the HC Archaeological Research Grants Scheme (2008) envisaged that

*"EMAP Stage 2 would a) gather unpublished information (mainly in government, company and NRA archives to update the database on more recent (i.e. for the period 2002-2007) early medieval excavations; b) prepare a written and illustrated monograph on early medieval Ireland; archaeological excavations 1970-2007. C) EMAP will also with the support of UCD ICT officer, Rob Sands work to prepare the EMAP database for online dissemination to Irish archaeology."*

EMAP is delighted to report that it has successfully met – and indeed surpassed – all these key benchmarks/performance indicators in the 2008 project. The **Heritage Council Archaeological Research Grant 2008 of €18,000** was wholly used for the employment of Mr. Lorcan Harney, MA for a period of c.5.5 months (see

attached statement of accounts for details of Gross Salary, PRSI and Employer's Pension contributions).

In March 2008, EMAP also made an application to the Heritage Council INSTAR programme for a much more ambitious task. This was successful and an award of €120,000 was received. In summary, the INSTAR grant facilitated the

- Establishment of a **collaborative, North/South, academic/commercial sector research consortium** between UCD, QUB, Archaeological Consultancy Services, Cultural Resource Development Services and Margaret Gowen & Co. Ltd.
- Employment of **two dedicated EMAP archaeological researchers**; Dr. Thom Kerr (Post-Doctoral Fellow, QUB) and Mr. Lorcan Harney (Archaeological Researcher, UCD) for 2008
- **Establishment of academic qualifications in professional archaeological sector through the enrolment of Mr Matt Seaver** in the UCD School of Archaeology PhD programme.
- **Establishment of academic qualifications in professional archaeological sector through the enrolment of Mr Rob O'Hara** in the UCD School of Archaeology MA programme.
- Facilitation and financial support to 3 companies (CRDS, ACS, MGL) to provide EMAP with **copies of all their early medieval excavation reports**, as a research resource for EMAP in future years.
- **EMAP's research of all early medieval archaeological excavations in Ireland, 1930-2004**, to a total of 2,208 archaeological sites with a complete analysis of settlement, the church, death and burial, crafts and technology and trade and exchange, for the first time in Irish archaeology.
- **The compilation of the most complete bibliography of early medieval archaeology in Ireland, from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to 2008**

EMAP in 2008 has also written and edited the following key documents.

- **O'Sullivan, A., McCormick, F. Kerr, T. and Harney, L. 2008 *Early Medieval Ireland: archaeological excavations 1930-2004***, EMAP Report 2.1, now to be published as a monograph by the RIA, Dublin.
- **Harney, L., O'Sullivan, A., McCormick, F. and Kerr, T. 2008 *A bibliography of early medieval archaeology in Ireland version 1***. EMAP Report 2.2 This is organized here thematically and is also currently held in a database of c.4,500 entries and will be available to download at [www.emap.ie](http://www.emap.ie)
- **Sands, R., Harney, L., Kerr, T. and O'Sullivan, M. 2008 *A database of early medieval archaeological excavations in Ireland, 1930-2004***. EMAP Report 2.3. This 'hard copy' document provides an account of the EMAP Research Portal and Database (on 2,208 early medieval archaeological sites), which will also be available for use at [www.emap.ie](http://www.emap.ie)

## **EMAP Project Initiation, Management, Staff and Meetings**

EMAP, supported by the combined Heritage Council Archaeological Grants Scheme 2008 and INSTAR 2008, was established in early May 2008 (with Lorcan Harney then offered a contract from May-December 2008) and has successfully worked to an

agreed project management strategy, work schedule and a Gantt chart identifying key tasks and deadlines.

- Aidan O'Sullivan (UCD) and Finbar McCormick (QUB) are the project's Principal Investigators.
- Conor McDermott (UCD) as Project Manager monitored the budget and liaised between UCD and project partners for transfer of funds and other expenditures.
- Rob Sands (UCD) as ICT manager, established the project website and supervised Mikie O'Sullivan in developing a redesigned database model for research and online publication.

In May 2008, the following further EMAP research staff appointments were made.

- Lorcan Harney, MA was employed as a research archaeologist at UCD School of Archaeology for the period May-December 2008, largely with the support of the HC Archaeological Research Grants 2008 scheme.
- Dr Thomas Kerr was employed as a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow at School of Geography, Archaeology and Palaeoecology, QUB, May-December 2008.
- Project partners in CRDS and ACS facilitated PhD candidate Matt Seaver (CRDS) and MA candidate Rob O'Hara (ACS) to enrol in their graduate studies.

EMAP project partners have gathered for 3 key joint meetings to establish agreements on project research, administration, graduate studies and collaboration (e.g. EMAP joint meeting 21<sup>st</sup> May 2008; EMAP meeting with CRDS, EMAP third joint meeting planned for November 2008). EMAP P.I.s have themselves met 3 times in UCD and have had their own weekly meetings with their Research Staff, PhD and MA scholars. A large volume (i.e. literally hundreds) of email correspondence has facilitated all other project management issues.

## EMAP's monograph for 2008

- EMAP has completed its 2008 monograph for publication - **O'Sullivan, A., McCormick, F., Kerr, T. and Harney, L. 2008 *Early Medieval Ireland: Archaeological Excavations 1930-2004***. The monograph includes the following chapters:
  - Chapter 1: Introduction
  - Chapter 2: The history and character of early medieval archaeological excavations in Ireland, 1930-2004.
  - Chapter 3: Early Medieval Dwellings, Settlements and Landscapes
  - Chapter 4: Early Medieval Church
  - Chapter 5: Early Medieval Burials and Cemeteries
  - Chapter 6: Early medieval Agriculture and Economy
  - Chapter 7: Early Medieval Crafts and Technology
  - Chapter 8: Early Medieval Trade and Exchange
  - Chapter 9: Conclusions and Prospects for Research
- In conclusion, this monograph text (c.350 pages, 130,000 words) provides the first major synthesis of early medieval archaeological excavations in Ireland, providing new insights into the practice of early medieval archaeology and a preliminary overview of results of excavation across the period, 1930-2004.

- The RIA Publications Committee has accepted this report for publication as a monograph (Ruth Hegarty, RIA, pers comm.).
- In 2009, EMAP's research will move on to an original and substantive monograph on *Early Medieval Settlement and Landscape* (see Appendix).

## **EMAP's database of Early Medieval excavations 1930-2004**

- EMAP has compiled data for a substantial **database of early medieval excavations in Ireland, 1930-2004**. This database focusing on licensed excavations provides a wide range of data on sites; locational information; archaeological licences; site directors/companies; site types (e.g. ringfort, cave, etc); site categories (settlement, burial, industrial, etc); site 'significance' (e.g. Highly Significant; Significant; General; No Archaeological Significance) publications and a range of site summaries and key excavation results.
- The original EMAP database model has been substantially refined and re-organised, to enable its future use on the project website for all researchers from 2009 onwards. On the basis of research in NMS archives, the original EMAP database has also been edited, focusing on clarification of relative 'significance' of previous excavations (i.e. the character of 'uncertain significance' sites).
- EMAP's preliminary analyses suggest that c. 2,208 early medieval sites were excavated between 1930-2004.
- EMAP researchers have established contacts with state institutions (e.g. EHS, NMS) and with several commercial archaeological companies to begin to analyse unpublished excavation reports.
- A total of 390 unpublished reports have now been obtained as original copies or PDF files from various companies (e.g. CRDS, ACS, MGL). As with the project application, it is envisaged that these reports will be used as a research resource in 2009, 2010.
- In conclusion, EMAP's data collation in 2008 has shown that its long-term research and publication programme 2009/2010 can make a significant contribution to knowledge.

## **EMAP's Early Medieval Archaeological Bibliography**

- EMAP compiled (in May-June 2008, largely with the support of the HC Archaeological Research Grants 2008 scheme) a substantial bibliography comprising c.4,300 publications on early medieval archaeology in Ireland, (c.1900-2008).
- EMAP's bibliography was compiled following an exhaustive and systematic search through a wide range of Irish national, regional and local journals and

international journals, as well as key books, edited books and other publications.

- The bibliographical information was entered into the academic bibliographical database software programme, ENDNOTE, which can be efficiently integrated with word-processing packages such as MSWord. ENDNOTE produces a standardised XML data structure that can be placed as a searchable on-line database.
- This is the first major bibliography produced for early medieval archaeology in Ireland and is available for researchers on-line (on [emap.ie](http://emap.ie)) and in 2009 will be integrated with the EMAP database.

## **EMAP's Website/Early Medieval Archaeology Portal**

EMAP's ICT Manager Robert Sands (UCD) designed and established a dedicated website ([www.emap.ie](http://www.emap.ie)) for the project in August 2008. The web site will be used for academic and public dissemination and as a future on-line repository for reports, bibliographies and data

Emap.ie is ultimately intended to be more than just a web site and as part of the broader EMAP aims for 2009/2010, it will be developed as an **Early Medieval Archaeology Portal**, with this core set of aims:

- To identify, store and link to early medieval archaeological data and information currently contained in existing digital and paper archives.
- To gather and store sufficient data to allow these various resources to be more easily identified, collated and enumerated.
- To facilitate domain experts (i.e. EMAP researchers, other Irish archaeologists) in adding value to existing data.
- To identify and classify a wide range of bibliographic information (e.g. the EMAP bibliography) as an online resource
- To create a central digital hub for Early Medieval Research in Ireland.
- To enable dissemination to other researchers and interested members of the public.
- To establish mutually beneficial linkages with other major data sources in Irish archaeology (e.g. [Archaeology.ie](http://Archaeology.ie), [Excavations.ie](http://Excavations.ie))

Phase 1 of the on-line manifestation of EMAP has been successfully implemented, a web site has been designed and domain name secured. An on-line database structure has been developed and on-line interfaces produced to allow multiple researchers to accumulate and add value to structured data.

In creating the on-line environment it has been necessary to critically and extensively re-evaluate the underlying data model used during the previous assessment phase for EMAP (financed under Heritage Council grants 2007, 2008). In order for the system to operate it has also been necessary to accumulate and store locally, key data that is also held elsewhere (a combination of key information from [excavations.ie](http://excavations.ie) and [archaeology.ie](http://archaeology.ie)). Longer term, the efficiency of doing this will need to be addressed and discussions have already started with the key data providers in National Monuments. It should be noted that this is a generic issue for all of Irish archaeology.

The potential added value of EMAP extends beyond that simply provided at a period specific level. EMAP is likely to set a precedent whereby projects of other periods or research foci systematically add value alongside centrally held records, with mutually valuable exchange of information between state, commercial and university sectors.

Currently EMAP is designed to combine pre-existing data with re-evaluations and consistent information tagging by domain experts, the system has been developed to track additions and store change history. Crucially the system stores key unique identifiers to external data, in particular license number, SMR number and SMR sub-number, allowing for future adaptation and concordance with National data sets.

The intention is that in 2009/2010 the EMAP portal will develop into more than just an on-line database and to this end a number of other facilities have been investigated; these include an Early Medieval Research Wiki, import and export routines for standard bibliographic formats, reporting tools and data mining routines to integrate existing web resources.

## **EMAP academic 'scholarships': PhD and MA enrolment**

INSTAR EMAP in 2008, working in partnership with two Irish archaeological companies (ACS, CRDS), supported the initial enrolment for university graduate level qualifications for two highly experienced site directors; Mr Matt Seaver MA and Mr Rob O'Hara, BA.

### **Matt Seaver's INSTAR-supported PhD: 'Living with the dead: early medieval cemetery/settlements in Ireland'**

Matt Seaver, MA (Management Director with CRDS) enrolled (September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008) in a part-time, 5-year PhD programme at UCD School of Archaeology. EMAP INSTAR funds are being used to financially support his employer CRDS to release him for 30% of his time, to pursue his postgraduate studies in 2008-2011. CRDS have paid his UCD academic fees for 2008/2009.

Matt Seaver's PhD thesis on early medieval cemetery/settlements can be seen as usefully complementary to the existing *INSTAR Mapping Death, Burials AD 100-800 Project*. Both projects have now established formal links after EMAP's invitation to Dr. Elva Johnston and Dr Betty O'Brien to join Matt Seaver's Doctoral Supervisory Panel (DSP) in UCD School of Archaeology.

Matt Seaver's PhD will build on his own extensive experience of directing the archaeological excavations of Raystown, Co. Meath on the N2 Road scheme – essentially a type site for early medieval cemetery/settlements in Ireland. His PhD will attempt to:

- Define cemetery/settlements more closely, while enabling new insights into 'odd' burials in early medieval Ireland (i.e. outside enclosed or ecclesiastical sites).
- Compile a catalogue of all sites. It is already evident that the distribution of

cemetery/settlements is not an east coast phenomenon and radiocarbon dates provide surprisingly long-term evidence on many sites.

- Analyse the spatial organisation and layout of cemetery/settlements, using artefactual and palaeoenvironmental evidence and faunal remains to investigate the social status of the sites' inhabitants and their patterns of agricultural/industrial labour.
- Investigate the territorial (both secular and ecclesiastical) and landscape setting of cemetery/settlements, particularly important at sites such as Johnstown, Balriggeran and Raystown where watercourses were used to power watermills.
- Explore the practice of burial in and around settlements and dwelling places in early medieval Ireland (in its British and northwest European context) and its implications for our understanding of ideology, beliefs and landscape in early medieval Ireland.

It is envisaged that this PhD thesis will be published as a monograph or as a series of papers in a peer-review journal (e.g. *PRIA*), all to be acknowledged as INSTAR EMAP publications.

### **Rob O'Hara's INSTAR-supported MA: "Early medieval settlement and landscape at Colp west, Co. Meath"**

Rob O'Hara, BA, (Site Director with ACS), has enrolled (September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008) in the 2-year, part-time, MA in Professional Archaeological Practice at UCD School of Archaeology. EMAP INSTAR funds are being used to financially support his employer ACS, to release him for his studies in 2008/2009 and with this application, for a second and *final* year in 2009/2010. ACS has paid his UCD academic fees for 2008/2009.

In Year 1 (2008/2009), Rob's MA studies have already required him to attend a full series of postgraduate level, taught modules in UCD (e.g. Landscape Archaeology; ICT; Advanced Fieldwork Skills; Research Skills). In Year 2 (2009/2010), he will write an MA dissertation (c. 15,000 words) on Early Medieval settlement and landscape at Colp, Co. Meath.

Previous excavations at Colp West, Co. Meath have revealed the area to be a highly important early medieval settlement and trading centre (Gowen 1989; Clarke & Murphy 2001; O'Hara 2008), with prehistoric origins (Clarke & Murphy 2001; Clarke 2001; O'Hara 2003a, 2003b). The place is associated with *Inbher Colpdaí*, the port of Colp, as mentioned in the eighth-century-AD text, the *Lives of St Patrick* and it is likely to have been an important early ecclesiastical site. The Colp West complex excavated remains include:

- A substantial, multi-phase, long-term cemetery (ME021:011001) and enclosure (ME021:011002) partially excavated in 1988 by Margaret Gowen. The presence of B-ware and E-ware pottery suggested settlement from at least the fifth to seventh century date (Gowen 1989).
- An extensive early medieval settlement (ME020:043001–043011) excavated in 2001, including a small ringfort with eight additional enclosures, cereal-drying kilns, and other related features (Clarke & Murphy 2001).

- An early medieval enclosed settlement with souterrains at Painestown (O'Hara 2008) with evidence for fine metalworking in the form of crucible and mould fragments. E-ware pottery was recovered, as was a possible B-ware fragment.

The thesis will also explore early medieval settlement in the surrounding landscape, particularly in the baronies of Duleek Upper and Duleek Lower, including the extensive early medieval remains at Laytown (McConway 2003, 2004).

It is envisaged that this dissertation will be published as a substantial paper in a peer-review journal (e.g. PRIA), acknowledged as an EMAP publication and successfully publishing a nationally important early medieval complex.

## **EMAP public outreach: academic presentations and publications**

### *Public lectures (May-December 2008)*

- O'Sullivan, A., McCormick, F., Kerr, T., Harney, L., Sands, R., McDermott, C., Seaver, M. and O'Hara, R. "Early Medieval Archaeology Project (EMAP): dealing with data and enabling knowledge" *UCD School of Archaeology Research projects 2008 Seminar*, UCD 11<sup>th</sup> December 2008.
- O'Sullivan, A.. "The INSTAR Early Medieval Archaeology Project (EMAP) and researching early medieval Ireland: archaeological excavations 1930-2004" *Dept. of Archaeology research seminars, University of Glasgow*, 29<sup>th</sup> October 2008.
- O'Sullivan, A., McCormick, F., Kerr, T., Harney, L., Sands, R., McDermott, C., Seaver, M. and O'Hara, R. "Early Medieval Archaeology Project (EMAP): dealing with data and enabling knowledge" *Institute of Archaeologists (IAI) Spring New Horizons conference, Sligo*. 17<sup>th</sup> October 2008.
- Sands, R. "EMAP and digital archaeology", *Universitas 21 Digital Humanities Meeting* Charlottesville, Virginia, USA, September 23rd - 26<sup>th</sup>. 2008.
- O'Sullivan, A. and Kerr, T. "The Early Medieval Archaeology Project: A UCD/QUB INSTAR-funded collaborative research and graduate training programme" *QUB-UCD Inaugural research symposium*, UCD Research Centre, June 19<sup>th</sup> 2008.

### *Publications in preparation 2008*

EMAP team members are publishing several papers, which will be acknowledged as receiving support from the Heritage Council INSTAR EMAP research programme.

- O'Sullivan, A. 'Early medieval houses in Ireland: social identity and dwelling spaces', *Peritia* (in press).

- O'Sullivan, A. and Boyd, R. 'Norse houses in Britain and Ireland: ethnicity, architecture and inhabiting social spaces' *World Archaeology* (for submission, January 2009).
- Kerr, T. 2009 'The height of fashion: Raised raths in the landscape of northwest Ulster' *Journal of Irish Archaeology* (in press)
- Kerr, T. '*Mortalitas magna in Hiberniam*'; Could plagues have helped shape Early Mediaeval Irish society?' *Early Medieval Europe* (in press)
- Harney, L. 'Pilgrimage, burial and the organisation of Glendalough' in L. Doran, C. Doherty and M. Kelly (eds) *The City of God: the monastery of Glendalough*, Co. Wicklow (forthcoming)
- Seaver, M. 'Archaeological excavations at the Black Hill, Raystown, Co. Kilkenny', In C. Corlett & M. Potterton (eds) *Life and Death in early medieval Ireland* (forthcoming)
- O'Hara, R. 'Archaeological excavations of a ringfort at Leggetsrath West, Co. Kilkenny', In C. Corlett & M. Potterton (eds) *Life and Death in early medieval Ireland* (forthcoming)

## Conclusions

In conclusion, EMAP, with generous funding from the Heritage Council's Archaeological Research Grants Scheme in 2008 and the INSTAR funding programme for 2008 has made substantial progress in its research in 2008, as part of its 3-year project design.

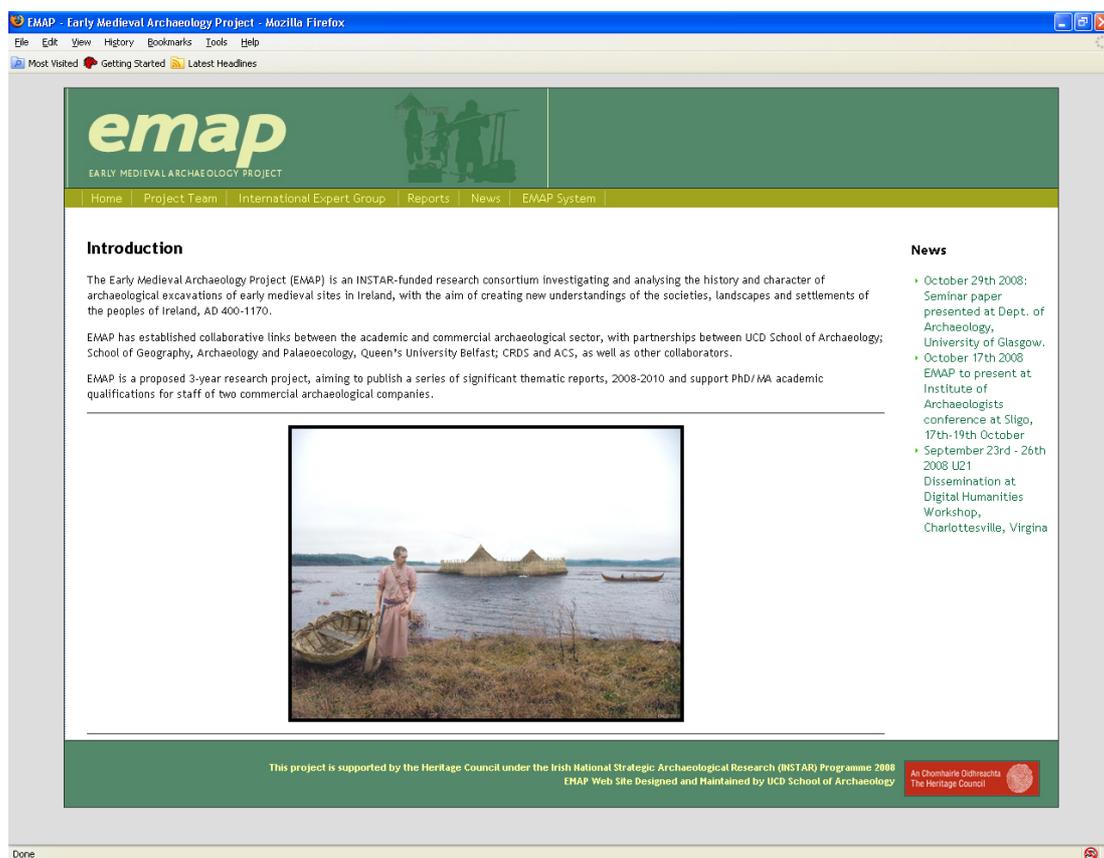
EMAP's key achievements in 2008 included;

- A significant work of archaeological synthesis in O'Sullivan, A., McCormick, F., Kerr, T. and Harney, L. 2008 *Early Medieval Ireland: Archaeological Excavations 1930-2005*.
- Preparation and editing of a substantial database of Early Medieval excavations 1930-2004.
- Compilation of a substantial bibliography of early medieval archaeology.
- Establishment of the EMAP dedicated website – [www.emap.ie](http://www.emap.ie) - to be developed as a research portal for all researchers.
- Enrolment of two professional archaeologists in PhD and MA programmes..
- Preparations started – through research and bibliographies - for EMAP's major research volume on *early medieval settlement and landscape* for 2009 (and also EMAP's subsequent thematic volumes in 2010, 2011).

With ongoing INSTAR support, it is hoped that EMAP will make a significant contribution to our knowledge and understanding of this fascinating period in Ireland's past.

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- O'Hara, R. 2008 *Report on Archaeological Excavations at Painestown, Co. Meath*, Unpublished report prepared for ACS Ltd.



**Figure 1:** EMAP's website – www.emap.ie - currently provides a range of early medieval archaeological resources for researchers and the public, providing public access to all aspects of the projects research.

Currently, it publishes details on EMAP's aims and the project's team, partners and the international expert group. Various downloads include copies of previous reports as well as EMAP's extensive early medieval bibliography, provided free to download by any user. News items list recent public lectures and other key EMAP events. The 'EMAP system' will be the location of the main public online data resources, including the 1930-2004 EMAP database and future Wiki' facilities (a means by which researchers can enter the site and edit site summaries, upload articles and sites images, etc), an exciting means of creating online knowledge from data.

EMAP envisages the [emap.ie](http://emap.ie) website as a key element in its dissemination and communication plan (see INSTAR guide for applicants, no. 31) to provide research findings to policy makers, the research community and the public to maximise the potential for knowledge transfer.



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