



<b>1. Title:</b>	Dr
<b>First name:</b>	Michael
<b>Surname:</b>	Potterton
<b>Amount awarded:</b>	€8090
<b>3. Grant programme</b>	Archaeology Research Excavation Grant
<b>4. Year awarded</b>	2019
<b>5. Title of project</b>	Moynagh Lough Project
<b>6. Summary of report (Min. allowed 100 words)</b>	<p>Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, research excavations at the remarkable multi-period crannog site at Moynagh Lough in Co. Meath were directed by the late John Bradley and funded by the Royal Irish Academy. Now, after a twenty-year hiatus, and with renewed funding from the Academy's Archaeology Research Excavation Grant Scheme and support from Maynooth University, work has recommenced on the archive, including the palaeo-environmental samples, some ten thousand artefacts and the incomplete excavation report. Specialist analysis is currently underway on the prehistoric pottery as well as the large assemblage of flint and chert of Mesolithic and Bronze Age date. A scoping exercise will identify priorities for further work, estimate costs, establish a timeframe, and plan for preparing the archive and finds for hand-over to the National Museum of Ireland once the final excavation report has been completed. In due course, the publication of the full report will make a very significant contribution to the archaeological record. Any one of the four major phases at the site – Mesolithic, Early/Middle Bronze Age, Later Bronze Age and Early Medieval – offers an important window onto the past. Combined, there is only a handful of Irish excavations that have yielded such a breadth of information.</p>
<b>7. Date the report was submitted</b>	01-11-2019

8. Please provide two appropriate images which can include photographs of team on site, aerial view, objects found during excavation etc and which can be used by the RIA in grant publications, website etc. The following file types are accepted: gif, jpeg, jpg, pdf, png and the image must be high quality (at least 1200x1800 pixels).



[Moynagh Lough Aerial.jpg](#)



[Moynagh Mesolithic lithics.jpg](#)

9. Please outline the objectives of the project

The objectives of the project are to see the Moynagh Lough Excavation through to final report stage and publication, and to see the excavation archive and finds transferred to the National Museum of Ireland.

**10. Please describe the methodology used in conducting the research**

There were three strands to the works for this year.

1. ARCHIVE ASSESSMENT: A detailed assessment/scoping exercise of the archive has been carried out by Dr Michael Potterton of Maynooth University, with the help of a research assistant.
2. LITHICS ANALYSIS: The Mesolithic platforms at Moynagh were about 60m from the shore, a position that would have been attractive in terms of security as well as affording excellent opportunities for fishing and fowling. Two pits and fifty-six postholes were identified – some of the post-holes formed a C-shape that may represent a shelter or wind-break, or part of a hut. A charcoal sample yielded a radiocarbon date of c.4300–4000BC. On these platforms, approximately 2,000 stone artefacts were recovered – some flint but mostly chert. Roughly 200 are implements. The rest are probably waste flakes from tool-making. Several axe-heads, nine spearheads of slaty sandstone and several rough-outs were present. Similar spearheads were known from around Ireland before these, but this was the first time that they had been identified in a sealed late Mesolithic context. Since the Moynagh excavations, several more have been found on other Mesolithic sites across the country and others have been identified retrospectively in museum collections. These ‘Moynagh Points’, now referred to as ‘ground stone points’, are the subject of a recent PhD from UCC, by Dr Farina Sternke. There is very little evidence at Moynagh for human activity in the Neolithic, but a hoard or cache of 173 flints was found that had been carefully arranged and buried in shallow water, close to the Mesolithic platforms. The flint is light grey and is of high quality. The careful arrangement of the flints indicates that they were deposited deliberately, and not just dropped and lost. Dr Sternke has completed her report on the Neolithic lithic assemblage from Moynagh and she is now working on the Mesolithic material.
3. POTTERY ANALYSIS: Among the pottery assemblage from Moynagh are sherds of Early/Middle Bronze Age decorated, cordoned pottery from at least twelve vessels, and several hundred sherds of coarse pottery of Late Bronze Age date. Helen Roche is currently carrying out a careful study of the pottery, which she notes is ‘a large, important and regionally significant assemblage of prehistoric pottery .... The specific lakeside location and the on-site context of the material, with associated evidence for contemporary metalworking, is of national significance’.

**11. Please outline the findings of your research and/or milestones achieved**

The Scoping Exercise and Archive Assessment has been completed, and a report prepared.  
The Prehistoric Pottery Assemblage has been analysed, and a report prepared.  
The Neolithic Flint Hoard has been analysed, and a report prepared.  
The Mesolithic lithics are currently being analysed and a report is being prepared.

**How will you continue to communicate the results of your project and what are your publication plans?**

In due course, the publication of the full excavation report for Moynagh Lough will make a very significant contribution to the archaeological record. Any one of the four major phases – Mesolithic, Early/Middle Bronze Age, Later Bronze Age and Early Medieval – offers a hugely important window onto the past. Combined, however, there is only a handful of Irish excavations that have yielded such a breadth of information over such a long period. In terms of both the archaeological features and the artefactual assemblage, the findings from Moynagh shed fascinating light onto a wide range of aspects of Ireland's past – trade, craft, technology, society, economy, agriculture and settlement, to name a few. Each step of the journey between now and the production of the final report will be significant, and each will add to our knowledge of the site and its wider context. All strands of this project are working towards a full publication of the Moynagh Lough Excavation.