

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Wednesday, 29 May 2013

Further tremors likely following Irish Sea earthquake

Dublin, IRELAND - The Irish National Seismic Network (INSN) has said that further earth tremors are likely in the coming days in the Irish Sea and in North Wales where a magnitude 3.8 earthquake struck this morning.

INSN Director Tom Blake said the earthquake occurred at 4:16 am (GMT) with an epicentre located approximately 2 km off the coast off the Llŷn Peninsula (Wales) and 97 km southeast of Dublin (Ireland).

The quake was measured at a depth of 8km and was followed FOUR minutes later by a smaller 1.7 magnitude tremor at a shallower depth of 3km. Moderate shaking was felt by residents of the town of Pwllheli on the Llŷn peninsula, while felt reports were also received from Caernarfon, Abersoch, Bangor, Holyhead, Southport, the Isle of Man and in south-eastern counties of Ireland. INSN seismic stations as far away as Valentia, Donegal and Galway recorded the earthquake.

The earthquake location is approximately 15 km west of the magnitude 5.4 earthquake that occurred on the Llŷn peninsula on 19 July 1984. The latter quake was the largest ever recorded earthquake on mainland Britain and was felt throughout Ireland's east coast, Wales and England. Aftershocks from the quake measured up to 4.3 on the Richter scale and some structural damage resulted along the east coast of Ireland.

Mr. Blake from the School of Cosmic Physics in the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies (DIAS) said there has been a significant increase in seismic activity in the area in recent months and that further minor earthquakes are likely.

He suggested however, that today's earthquake was moderate enough to have relieved any pressure built up in the region and that it was unlikely to be a precursor to a stronger earthquake.

Mr. Blake added: "A 2.3 magnitude earthquake struck this very same area on 7 February and since then there have been a number of other tremors building up to this morning's event. In fact, the past two months have seen a concentration of tremor activity right down the west coast of Britain with the most recent (2.9 magnitude) tremor occurring in Acharacle, Highland (Scotland) on May 18th. It is unlikely that the magnitude of today's earthquake will be exceeded in The Irish Sea in the coming days but aftershocks can be expected in the hours and days ahead, although many will be too weak to be felt. We would ask people in Ireland or Wales who may have felt this morning's earthquake to submit felt reports to us online at www.dias.ie."

RECENT SEISMIC ACTIVITY IN IRELAND:

A magnitude 2.7 earthquake was recorded off the northwest coast of Ireland on November 21st last. On June 6th 2012, a magnitude 4.0 earthquake was recorded off the coast of County Mayo, close to the Corrib gas field. The quake happened at 9am, 60km west of Aughleam near Belmullet. The most significant land tremor to be recorded in Ireland in recent years occurred in May 2012 when a 2.7 quake hit Lisdoonvarna in County Clare in May 2010. It also was the first tremor or earthquake to be recorded in the west of Ireland in modern times.

The DIAS began modern seismic recordings in 1978. The Irish National Seismic Network (INSN) now features six permanent stations. 2013 marks 20 years since the beginning of digital seismic recording of the INSN. For more see www.dias.ie.

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CONTACTS:

Tom Blake

INSN / DIAS

087-7980203 / tb@cp.dias.ie