



ULSTER
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SOCIETY

Newsletter

Summer 2018

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From the Editor

This has been a great summer for archaeological discoveries! The heatwave that allowed us all to enjoy a summer for a change brought out evidence for monuments long lost into the fields. The remains of formal gardens, Tudor mansions, and prehistoric monuments became visible as crop marks. Within Ireland another massive henge has been discovered near Newgrange. And closer to home, crop marks of elliptical and circular structures in

the fields around Ballynahatty were also visible through drone survey.

There has also been an important excavation of a newly discovered passage tomb in the Boyne Valley, near Dowth, with evidence of artwork on the stones. 2018 marks the 50th anniversary of the start of excavations at Knowth, so we can look forward to learning even more about this amazing complex of monuments.

Duncan Berryman
Editor

Situation Vacant: Volunteer Development & Outreach Officer

The Committee has identified the need for someone to develop the outreach of the Society and increase our profile across Ulster. If you have experience in PR/development/outreach work and have a passion for Ulster archaeology, then you could be the person we are looking for. Contact the UAS President Ruairí Ó Baoill to discuss –

r.obaoill@qub.ac.uk

NB – this is not a salaried post, but all reasonable expenses will be reimbursed

Discovery 2018! Second Annual Review of Archaeological Discoveries in Ulster

This conference will take place at QUB on Saturday 3rd November with a full day of lectures in the main lecture room of the Geography Building. Keep an eye on the website for details of speakers - <http://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/uas/Conference/>

Diary Dates

Lectures

Monday 8pm, Elwood Building, QUB

24 th September	Stefan Bergh (NUI Galway)	The Mullaghfarna and Turlough Hill Settlements: More than meets the eye
22 nd October	Dave Pollock (Archaeografix)	Barryscourt Castle County Cork
19 th November	Stephen Cameron (Antrim County Archaeological Society)	Rediscovering the Lost Sites of East Antrim
10 th December	Karl Brady (National Monuments Service)	Archaeological Investigations of the Spanish Armada Wrecks at Streedagh County Sligo

Other Dates

25th October – Annual Dinner (venue to be confirmed)

3rd November – Discovery 2018! Conference (Elmwood Building, QUB)

Contact Ken Pullin for info on ulsterarchaeolsoc@gmail.com

Survey Group News

Our 2018 survey season has, as usual, thrown up some interesting challenges for us. Having kicked off with two surveys at Mount Stewart in March (discussed in the Spring Newsletter), we returned there at the end of April to survey a collection of buildings, known locally as the Gamekeeper's Cottage. Our safety risk assessment included hazards such as a variety of overhead electrical cables, bee and wasps nests and a partially collapsed outhouse! Thankfully, our procedures meant that we enjoyed a safe and interesting day. Who said archaeological survey is boring?

In May, we were invited by Holywood Historical Society to survey part of Redburn Country Park in Holywood. The survey site had originally been the gardens of Redburn House, once the grand residence of the Dunville family, of distillery fame. Sadly, little of the once impressive estate survives, but the Holywood group hope to restore the gardens to their former glory and encourage local people to participate in this. This was a very large site for us to survey and

made more problematic due to the amount of uncontrolled plant growth for many decades. This may be the first of several visits to this site by the survey group. In June, we made another visit to Mount Stewart. This property has recently been expanding and taking in monuments that have not previously been recorded. This time, our target was a building known as the piggery, another first for the group, but maybe not the most glamorous of sites! Mal certainly keeps us entertained by the wide range of monument types he throws at us.

In July, we escaped from Mount Stewart and answered a request to survey a possible prehistoric barrow at Islandmagee. This is located in the grounds of Kilcoan Gardens, in private ownership and beautifully sited with views over Larne Lough. This feature is not recorded in the Northern Ireland Sites and Monuments Record, but it is in an area rich in prehistoric sites. Our survey led us to believe that this might indeed be the remains of a ring barrow, but we would like to carry out a geophysical survey there to gain further information, particularly any

evidence of a surrounding ditch. Hopefully, we will be able to complete this soon.

In August, the geophysics team, a sub-group of the Survey Group and led by David Craig, visited the site of an excavation at Cathedral Hill in Downpatrick, following a request from excavation Director Brian Sloan of CAF. The results, combined with some spectacular drone images, were nothing short of spectacular and will hopefully inform any future archaeological investigations there. It is hoped that the resulting report will be made available on our website in due course. Also in August, the Survey Group will be taking part in an excavation at Castle Ward in County Down undertaken by the National Trust to locate historic paths in the area of the Temple Water. A survey will be included as part of this project and will add to the work the group have already done in this area (see the UAS survey web page for the relevant reports).

We have several further requests on the books for this season, so it looks as if it might be one of our busiest yet. It also looks like we are going to have plenty to do over

the winter months ahead, so why not join us? Our group has a dedicated and loyal membership and new members are always welcome.

Finally, one of our founding members, Ken Pullin, has recently had a short spell in hospital and we wish him a speedy recovery.

Harry Welsh
Fieldwork Co-ordinator

March Lecture

Our March lecture was given by James O'Neill of Ulidia Heritage Services. O'Neill recently published a book, with Four Courts Press, on the Nine Years' War. His lecture was also on this subject and was entitled 'Miserable and Beggarly War?'

The Nine Years' War, or Tyrone's rebellion, is remembered as a fight of the primitive Gaelic Irish against the English and was marked by violent warfare and many atrocities. However, many of the traditional stories are questionable.

Archaeology and documents indicate that the Irish were just as advanced in warfare as their English and European counterparts, for instance, they had

equivalent firepower to the English. The image of the primitive, noble savage is one that has stuck as it fitted with many political views and harked back to an Irish 'golden age'.

Hugh O'Neill (2nd Earl of Tyrone) introduced firepower to the Irish forces and adapted European fighting techniques to suit the wooded Irish landscape. About 80% of the Irish forces had small calibre firearms, while only about 55% of the English troops had guns. The English also struggled to fight in the landscape. This was organised warfare, rather than guerrilla fighting or hit-and-run. Many of the troops were mercenaries, improving the efficiency of the fighting, but also resulting in difficulties telling the forces apart.

The Irish tried to divert and disperse the English forces. The blockade of Armagh forced the English to gather in the east, allowing the Irish free movement in the west. There was significant support from Scotland for the Irish, supplying guns and powder.

Despite traditional beliefs, the Irish forces were no more brutal to the

English than any other force would have been. English generals knew they were more likely to be taken captive than killed. The Irish helped wounded English troops and were happy to accept deserters. English brutality against the Irish is a common theme in traditional stories, such as creating famine to weaken O'Neill's position. However, there is little evidence that famine was caused by the English; it was felt across Ireland, not just in the war zone. Also, stories of cannibalism are more akin to folklore than history.

O'Neill wanted a palatinate in Ireland and was the first person to create a military force across the whole of Ireland. The war was brutal, but it was not fought without contemporary warfare customs and it certainly was not primitive.

Duncan Berryman

April Lecture

The Society's April lecture was given by Claire Foley, formerly of the Historic Environment Division. She presented the results of the excavation of Creggandevosky

Court Tomb, which were published in the most recent UJA.

The excavation of this large court tomb began in 1979, when a farmer wanted to remove the site to create a quarry. The monument had been surveyed in 1978 and a capstone had been identified, suggesting the pile of stones was a tomb. Excavation began from what turned out to be the back, with the rear chamber initially identified as a small court. It was finally revealed that there were three chambers and a half court at the entrance. The monument has been dated to the early Neolithic, about 3,800 BCE. Today the cairn is 1.35m high, but it was probably at least 1m taller. At 18m long it is relatively short. The first chamber was probably about 2m tall, and each chamber was progressively lower.

The tomb is on a hillside and faces southeast, currently surrounded by bog and lakes. The site is far from roads and housing, which has allowed it to survive undisturbed. It is part of a small group of court tombs in Tyrone, with many more lying to the west in Sligo and to the east in the foothills of the Mourne.

There did not appear to have been any ceremonial blocking of the court. The entrance had two large flanker stones and the walls around the court were made of large vertical orthostats with drystone walling between each.

Some of the artefacts recovered include arrowheads, a javelin head, flint tools and pottery. A chert arrowhead was possibly an indication of trading, as it is not local. Within the first chamber there was a scatter of stone beads, possibly a necklace, with very fine boreholes. The remains of a small carinated bowl, about 25cm across, was found within the court. In total there were the remains of 46 vessels.

Beaker pottery and cremated bone suggests there was reuse of the monument in this period.

Duncan Berryman

May Lecture

The May Lecture, 'The Ulster Scots Archaeological Project' was given by Christina O'Regan of Irish Archaeological Consultancy Ltd (IAC) and Dr Rowan McLaughlin

from the School of Natural and Built Environment, QUB.

Christina began by introducing the background to The Ulster Scots Archaeological Project and summarising the excavations and community engagement. The project was formulated by the former Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) and ran from 2012 culminating in 2017 with the publication of the landmark volume 'An Archaeology of Northern Ireland, 1600-1650'. It was managed by IAC, in conjunction with AECOM and Northlight Heritage and aimed to raise awareness of Ulster Scots history, culture and heritage, providing a clearer understanding of the impact the plantation had on the peoples, landscape and architecture of Northern Ireland. The main objectives of the project included survey and excavation at three key locations, a general reader textbook, an online blog, education packs and the publication of the landmark volume.

The location of the survey and excavations, were decided in consultation with members of HED and Nick Brannon and the three

sites chosen were Servants Hill, Bangor, Derrywoone Castle, Co. Tyrone and Monea Castle, Co. Fermanagh. Each excavation lasted 6 weeks and involved community engagement and volunteer participation. Servants Hill, outside Bangor was chosen for the first excavation in 2012. It was hoped that traces of tenants' dwellings which are depicted on the Raven Map of the estate would be uncovered - very little archaeological evidence has been found for these structures which is surprising given the number of people that would have come over during the plantation. Unfortunately, no evidence for these structures were found during this excavation either, however the team did uncover possible sand extraction pits and a Bronze Age house. Derrywoone Castle, a fortified house in Co. Tyrone was the location for the 2013 excavation and the objective was to identify tenants houses and trace the line of the bawn wall around the fortified house. The footing of the bawn wall was uncovered and matched the description which was recorded by Pinnar's survey. A cobbled

approach to the house was also uncovered, however, there was no evidence of tenants' housing. Monea Castle was the site of the final excavation in 2014 and again the objective was to find evidence of tenants' dwellings. The castle stands on a small plateau above a lake with a crannog which is the ancient site of the Maguires. Geophysical survey and excavation showed a ditch which was a probable drain running from the castle down to the lake. The excavation at Monea was the most abundant in 17th century artefacts, which included musket balls and pottery. Summaries of the three excavations were amalgamated into one publication which is free to download from <http://www.iac.ie/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/General-Reader-archaeology.pdf>.

An important element of the project was the community engagement with school groups, local volunteers and historical societies. Education resource packs for Keystage 2 & 3 level which were tied into the curriculum were devised with the guidance of teachers and DCAL. Based on the success of the education packs, 11

additional workshops were run in North Belfast and Carrickfergus which were designed to engage groups removed from their own heritage.

Rowan then introduced the landmark volume 'An Archaeology of Northern Ireland, 1600-1650' and began with explaining the problem of choosing a title for the book. The historical event at the centre of the project is the Plantation of Ulster, which was largely focused on the west of Ulster; the project also didn't include Donegal, Monaghan and Cavan so it was deemed more appropriate to include Northern Ireland in the title instead of Ulster. The time period of 1600-1650 was chosen so that the focus would be the plantation of Ulster but sites which dated from before 1600, and after 1650 and had importance in the early 17th century would also be dealt with. In writing the book, the authors were interested in studying the concept of plantation itself, so for example in Co. Down the English plantation is dealt with as well.

A total of 600 sites were surveyed and summarised for the volume.

These were identified using the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), Listed Buildings Database and primary historical sources such as the Raven, Bodley and Down Survey maps. For a 50-year period this is a remarkable number of sites which are also very diverse ranging from traces of earthworks to cathedrals. A rapid site survey was completed for each site, which included a photographic survey and condition assessment completed in the field. This resulted in a large database of photographs and site descriptions which was integrated with the data from the SMR to form a GIS database. The gazetteer of sites is organised by county, then by barony and then by estate/cluster of sites. Each cluster of sites is analysed historically, including what archaeological sites are likely to be present and the archaeological background of each individual site is then briefly summarised.

Rowan then used the Plantation of Ulster to introduce his current research on migration and genetics. Migration to Ireland is well documented historically and Ireland is one of the best

researched places archaeologically. This provides a fantastic opportunity to bring together history, archaeology and genomic analysis and think through some of the consequences of historical migration. Rowan will be publishing an article on this aspect of his research soon.

Grace McAlister

Northumberland Field trip

After assembling at BIA we set off in good spirits on another one of Anne MacDermott's wonderful study tours. After a short flight and a quick coach journey, we arrived at The New Northumbria Hotel in Jesmond. With sunset approaching it quickly confirmed the Geordie myth that 'Newcastle girls don't feel the cold'. Osborne Road was heaving with noisy students, all enjoying the array of outdoor cafes and bars. This was the pattern for the whole week, but they were all good-natured and everything settled down at closing time.

Monday saw us off to Jarrow to visit St Paul's, a monastic site associated with the Venerable Bede. We were educated and entertained by our wonderful

guide, Jimmy Guy, who regaled us with facts and stories associated with the area. We then strolled over to Jarrow Hall to see an exhibition dedicated to the Venerable Bede. I wasn't over enthusiastic about this site but it gave us a chance to stretch our legs and look around at our own pace. We drove next to view the exterior of St Peter's church at Monkwearmouth before refreshments at the National Glass Centre and a chance to watch a fascinating glass-blowing demonstration and to visit a museum of mainly Roman and Saxon glass. The next stop was to the Roman fort of Arbeia, South Shields, which included a reconstructed Roman gatehouse and Praetorium. Both buildings helped bring the Roman way of life into focus in a way that cannot always be achieved with maps and drawings. We then ventured to the Roman fort at Segedunum in Wallsend to explore the last Roman fort at the eastern end of Hadrian's Wall. This visit prompted a great deal of discussion about the actual route of the wall, and I don't think we ever came to a satisfactory conclusion. Then back

to our hotel at the end of a great first day.

Tuesday had us heading north to Warkworth Castle – it was magnificent! Everything you would expect a ruined castle to be. It dominated the surrounding area, the curtain wall was colossal and it just oozed power and privilege. The Percy family definitely knew how to impress. Then off to Holy Island to visit Lindisfarne Priory and St Mary's Church. Some people found time to visit the castle, but sadly the sands of time frittered away for me, so I'll just have to go back. Our final visit of the day was to Preston Tower, a 14th century Pele tower. Only half of the original structure remains but it was fascinating to be guided around by the current owners (Gillian & Gillie Baker-Cresswell). Gillie took great delight in explaining the elaborate clock mechanism and ringing the hours for us.

Wednesday found us in Tynemouth at the majestic ruins of the Priory and the more austere concrete WWII sea defences. Before we had time to dab on the sun-cream we were off to see the old castle of Newcastle. I fell head over heels just at the sight of where I miss-

spent my youth. This is a great old Norman Keep, still well preserved after a thousand years of turbulent history. Anne then pulled out all the stops and had arranged for us to lunch at Blackfriars Banqueting Hall. This impressive building dates back to 1239, and was initially a Dominican Friary, much favoured by King Henry III when dealing with his troublesome neighbours. After a hearty feast, some of us parted company to shop or recharge our batteries, whilst others surged on to Lordenshaw in search of some quite elusive Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age rock art near an Iron Age Hillfort.

On Thursday we ventured into the deep south to County Durham but stopping for a quick photo-call at the 'Angel of the North' on route. Everyone was amazed at the quiet splendour of Finchale Priory situated on the sleepy banks of the River Wear that turned out to be a holiday home of the monks of Durham Cathedral. We were then off to Durham City and an entertaining guided tour of its famous cathedral and an opportunity to visit the archaeological museum.

We were off again on Friday to Belsay Hall and Castle. I think most of us preferred the 14th century castle to the 19th century hall (although it did have a rather magnificent blue state coach in an outbuilding). Entrance to the castle was via a beautiful woodland walk created out of the quarry used to provide the stone for the hall. We then had lunch in Corbridge before stopping off at the nearby Roman fort, town and museum. (I was astonished to find that I had travelled through Corbridge to school ever day for five years without realising that this very impressive site even existed.) Then travelling on to the 13th century Aydon Castle. It wasn't really a castle, more a fortified manor house with a substantial curtain wall to keep the Scots at bay. It was a great place to explore and to try to understand the various phases it went through.

Saturday had us heading west along the route of Hadrian's Wall to Chesters Fort, then we were bussed to Hexham Abbey for a guided tour by Hugh and Chris; which included stepping down into the Saxon crypt, built with recycled Roman stone. The fascinating

Roman fort at Vindolanda was next, with its extensive collection of artefacts including over 70 shoes, dozens of coins and fragile glass fragments as well as the clearly defined foundations of a traditional Roman fort. Then it was all over and we had to return to the Jesmond for one last evening meal and to pack for our 11.00 am Sunday pick up.

Well-done Anne for all your hard work in organising the accommodation, transport, site visits and those famous notes of yours. Thanks also to Richie, Paul and Clare (our bus drivers); it will be a long time before we forget Clare's very impressive reversing demonstration at Corbridge Fort!

Chris Stephenson

New Books

The Cambridge History of Ireland (4 volumes), edited by Thomas Bartlett
CUP, £100 per volume

The production of these volumes is a landmark in Irish history scholarship, covering the period from 600 CE to the present day. These volumes take a thematic

approach to history, looking at the trends over each period and those that run across the four books. For the first time it is possible to trace themes, like the family, through the past, rather than relying on a narrative of events. The chapters are written with scholarly enquiry, reflecting current research on the topics, but they are also accessible to a non-specialist audience. These volumes describe the social, political and economic context for many of the archaeological sites that we study.

Dublin and the Viking World by
H.B. Clarke, S. Dooley & R.
Johnson
O'Brien Books, £11.99

This book marks the 25th anniversary of the *Dublinia* museum. This is very much a book for the general reader, with a very attractive design and copious colour illustrations. However, it is also a seriously researched book, describing the development of Viking Dublin, daily life within the town and the warrior culture of the Vikings. This is a great introductory book on life in Viking Dublin and an excellent way to mark the excavations and the subsequent

presentation of the finds in the museum.

Medieval Ireland, by Clare Downham
CUP, £22.99

This book could almost be a companion volume to the History of Ireland volumes. It focuses on the period from the 5th century to the 16th century and tells the story of the island of Ireland. Downham divides the book into two parts, covering 400-1100 and 1100-1500, within these the chapters discuss land use, economy, society, politics, religion, and the arts. The Irish landscape is a constant theme, having a significant influence on events. This book provides a good introduction to medieval Ireland, discussing important themes while attempting to be objective and break away from the effects of periodisation and politics.

Excavation at the 'lost' Mountjoy Fort, Brocagh, County Tyrone

In June 2018 Archaeology and Palaeoecology, Queen's University Belfast, carried out its annual student training excavation at the site of a late-Elizabethan earthen fortification known as 'Mountjoy Fort' at Brocagh, County Tyrone. The site lies in the townland of Magheralamfield, on the south-western shores of Lough Neagh and 4.5 miles/ 7 km east of Coalisland. There are no above-ground visible remains of the monument and the location of the excavation trench was based on a geophysical survey carried out by a team from QUB and the map of the fort drawn by Elizabethan campaign cartographer Richard Bartlett in 1602. The community excavation was directed by UAS President Ruairí Ó Baoill from the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork and was carried out on behalf of the Lough Neagh Landscape Partnership, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Mountjoy Fort (NISMR TYR 047:020) was constructed by English forces in summer 1602

during the final years of the Nine Years War (1593-1603) between the forces of Queen Elizabeth I and the confederation of Gaelic Irish lords led by Hugh O' Neill, earl of Tyrone. The fort took the form, as illustrated by Bartlett, of a seven-sided fortified bawn, protecting an inner citadel located on the edge of the lough. Within the fortification there are also a number of other linked but separate smaller annexes.

The layout of the fort appears to cover quite a large area. It straddles the modern Mountjoy Road (B161) and the road that leads up to the extant stone and brick-built fortified house known as Mountjoy Castle (NISMRY 047: 002) constructed several years after the earthen campaign fort.

The 2018 excavation was a great success. One of the internal defensive ditches within the fort was uncovered along with its accompanying earthen bank. Within the excavated trench the ditch had a recorded maximum width of 6m wide and was 1.5m deep. A small portion of the truncated remains of a red brick building within the fort was also uncovered during the excavation.

Finds associated with the Elizabethan fort included 17th century pottery, animal bone, clay tobacco pipe stems, red brick and glass. A particularly nice find was a fragment of an elaborate stem of a wine glass and the quality suggests that it would have been the property of one of the officers- a common soldier could not have afforded such a beautiful object. A number of interesting military artefacts were also uncovered, including lead pistol and caliver shot. Calivers were a type of light musket which were used by the English army from the early 1600s when Lord Mountjoy revamped the English army in Ireland at the end of the Nine Years War. Exactly the same date as our lost fort!

A number of prehistoric and Medieval artefacts were also recovered from the excavation. The prehistoric finds included struck flint tools such as an incomplete late-Mesolithic Bann flake, a projectile head, a plano-convex knife and an awl. These finds are a testament to the importance of the resources to be found in Lough Neagh to people living in this part of Tyrone from

the time of the first colonists in Ireland onwards. The incomplete nature of many of the flint artefacts suggests that there may have been prehistoric settlements in the area during the late Mesolithic and Neolithic periods. Finds relating to life in late-Medieval Tyrone includes sherds of decorated Medieval Ulster Coarseware, a type of unglazed Irish pottery dating from the 14th-early 17th centuries, and a sherd of 16th-17th century German Stoneware tankard. This type of high-status pottery was being imported into the Gaelic Ulster during the late-Medieval period and sherds were found at Hugh O' Neill's castle at nearby Dungannon during the QUB/HED/ Time Team excavation carried out there in 2007.

Overall the excavation proved that there are significant *in situ* remains of Mountjoy Fort surviving below the fields at Brocagh and bears out the old archaeological maxim that just because you can't see it doesn't mean it isn't there!

Ruairí Ó Baoill

