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IAI NEWS



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Something that struck me on foot of the Fixed Price Contract Workshop was the repeated references by both speakers and attendees during the discussion session to the need for 'high quality' in the delivery of archaeological contracts. There was a real concern that the combination of the recessionary economy and the introduction of Fixed Price Contracts was creating a downward momentum in the 'quality' of archaeological work undertaken; that 'good enough' to meet the basic requirements of the contract is replacing 'good' archaeology (instead of striving for 'best practice' approaches we are settling for 'good enough' approaches).

Some of the problem with this debate is the actual use of the term 'quality' in relation to standards of professional practice. In general, concern about the lowering of professional standards has been expressed, by archaeologists, generally, as an issue of the 'quality' of the archaeological work undertaken. I would dispute this – we do not lack 'high quality' archaeology, what we have in many cases is too much low grade archaeology, which is an entirely different problem. Making the debate about the 'quality' of the archaeological work rather than the grade or standard of the work, highlights a fundamental misunderstanding of what 'quality' means and may serve to obscure the real issues, which exist and need to be addressed to improve archaeological work (or at least ensure that a consistent and acceptable standard is met).

We do not use the term 'quality' appropriately, treating it as a well-defined concrete entity rather than the ephemeral and variable concept it is in practice. ISO 9000:2000 defines quality as 'the degree to which a set of inherent characteristics fulfils requirements'. Variations on this definition can be found in other discussions of quality and quality management. The common ground between them, is that the adjudication of quality is inherently linked to a well-defined standard, grade of service or deliverable; 'quality' cannot be quantified or adjudicated independent of these and how 'quality' is quantified or adjudicated depends directly on the set standard or grade of service or deliverable.

In essence most definitions of the scale of 'quality' (from low to high) are founded on the concept that a product or service should consistently adhere to or conform with a defined standard. 'Low quality' occurs when defined standards are not met, or are not met with consistency; 'high quality' occurs when the defined standards are consistently met. There is a common perception, amongst the archaeological profession, that exceeding the standards set is a mark of 'high quality'; this is not so – this is 'gold-plating'.

This idea that we need to 'gold-plate' to exceed set standards to deliver 'high quality' archaeological work is something we need to move away from. It is not helpful on a number of levels. Firstly, it lacks clarity; if we need to exceed standards to achieve 'high quality' how do we know when we succeed? Is it enough to exceed by a small amount or does it need to be a large amount – how can we adjudicate on it? Secondly, it devalues the work of those who have simply met the standards set; such approaches to archaeological work are frequently viewed as 'low quality', when – technically – this is not the case. Thirdly, it devalues the standards themselves – if current standards must always be exceeded by random (and undefined) amounts in order for the work to be recognised as 'high quality', then how can those standards have any real meaning or value?

The best illustration of the relationship between set standards or grades of service and 'quality' is in the services industry. Hotels provide a variety of different service standards or grades ranging from one-star to five-star; a one-star hotel provides a completely different standard or grade of service to a five-star hotel and yet both establishments can equally and simultaneously be 'high quality'. The key to this is that customers have a clear understanding of the grade of service that is provided by each establishment, and, on that basis, select the establishment that is appropriate to their needs or requirements; in matching that customer expectation or requirement, the hotel delivers 'quality'. A one-star hotel with a Spartan bedroom (no 'luxuries' such as TVs or tea-making facilities) but with clean, smart bed-linen and friendly helpful staff could be described as 'high quality'. However, the same experience in a five-star hotel would not be described as 'high quality'; a five-star rating implies adherence to a much higher standard or grade of service. A hotel claiming a five-star rating, with facilities (or a lack of facilities) similar to our 'high quality' one-star hotel, would actually be of very 'low quality'.

I think this clearly demonstrates the link between standards (or defined grades of service) and 'quality'. We cannot deliver 'quality' in any meaningful way without a clear underpinning set of standards or grade of service from which it can be adjudicated.

So the first challenge we have, if we are to aspire to creating a professional environment where 'high quality' archaeological work can be delivered, is to establish what standards should be set or what grade of service should pertain. Continuing the hotel analogy; arguably, at the moment, the applicable sets of standards or grades of service that are currently available to us as archaeologists are frequently one or two-star standards. However, as a profession, when we think of 'high quality' archaeological work, what we are probably envisaging are four or five-star standards.

The introduction of Fixed Price Contracts exacerbates this pre-existing conflict between aspiration and reality. The contracts, in general, can only require works that meet currently defined standards, even if those same contracts require, or those who manage them seek, 'high quality' in the delivery of the service requirements. There is no enforceable mechanism within the contract structure to require the contractor to 'gold-plate' service requirements; nor is it realistic to expect this, even if the economic climate were significantly improved. We must accept that Fixed Price Contracts (as with any other form of contract) can and will deliver 'high quality', in as much as the contractor can be expected to meet the service requirements of the contract, in an appropriate and effective manner, but it will not deliver aspirational five-star archaeological works, unless such standards or grades of service are clearly defined within the contract structure or within the external standards to which they refer.

So if we accept that 'quality' is not a directly quantifiable or definable concept but relies on the independent definition of a clear set of standards or grade of service, then we must accept that to deliver the 'high quality', five-star archaeological work to which we aspire, we must first clearly define the standards and/or grade of service required, in a way that is concrete, transparent and can be effectively costed for and planned for.

We also need to decide if the standards and grades of service for archaeological works should be a 'one size fits all' model or a graded model. Should we have a single grade of service or set of standards that apply to all aspects of archaeological work, at every level and in every circumstance? Would it be more flexible to have a two or three-star grade of services as the minimum standard to which all works must adhere, with four or five-star grades of services limited to specific conditions (such as size or scale of works) or to be invoked by regulatory authorities or included within specific contract terms. We already employ broadly graded responses in practice – EIA, for example, is only required for developments that meet a certain threshold. Even remaining wholly within the realm of archaeological practice, decisions are made that archaeological monitoring is sufficient to identify and mitigate any impact archaeological in some cases, while in other instances a full gamut of desk-based assessment, geophysical prospection and test excavation could be deemed necessary. Whether or not such distinctions are appropriately or consistently employed is a separate issue (reflecting an absence of standards and guidance in this area, as well as poor communication and integration of archaeological knowledge and input into planning decisions, which is probably a topic for an editorial all by itself), but the fact remains that we do distinguish and grade archaeological responses.

The analogy with the hotel-sector also demonstrates that we can have multiple sets of standards or grades of service operating in parallel and, depending on which set of standards or grade of service is required or specified, delivering 'quality' may require quite different levels of work or investment. However, this does not negatively effect the delivery of 'quality'; so long as the applicable set of standards or grade of service is defined at the outset, then a project can be designed to meet those standards and deliver that grade of service (and thus achieve 'high quality').

However, if we accept the 'one size fits all' model then the question arises should that standard be a 'one-star' standard or a 'five-star' standard or somewhere in between. If we want a better standard of archaeological works, should we be developing standards and grades of service based on a five-star grade of service? Particularly in the context of Fixed Price Contracts standards or grades of service must be concretely defined and clearly deliverable – they cannot be in anyway vague or aspirational; and, having defined those standards or grades of service, we must be prepared to stand over them, to enforce them equally and to justify the investment necessary to deliver them. Otherwise 'high quality' archaeology, as is currently misunderstood, will continue to evade us.

Teresa Bolger

Editor

Fixed Price Contracts Workshop: 24 September 2010

On Friday 24th September, the IAI Board organised an informal workshop on Fixed Price (lump sum) Contracts, at the Maldron Hotel, Portlaoise. In order for archaeologists to successfully address public markets in Ireland, it is essential that they have an understanding of public sector procurement and how to respond to that sector's requirements. The main purpose of this workshop was to give IAI members an introduction and better understanding of procurement, or the 'buying of services' in the public and semi-state sectors. Recently, methods of procurement have undergone some changes with the wider use of what have become known as Fixed Price (lump sum) Contracts. Session 1 had an introduction by Tracy Collins and two representatives from public sector bodies; Michael MacDonagh senior archaeologist with the NRA who gave an introduction on how the NRA implements these contracts and Dr Charles Mount who spoke about his experiences as project archaeologist for the Irish Concrete Federation (ICF). Session 2 had 4 speakers, Colm Moloney Headland Archaeology Ltd, Kate Taylor TVAS (Ireland) Ltd, Dr Stephen Mandal CRDS Ltd and Milicia Rajic TVAS (Ireland) Ltd, archaeological contractors who candidly spoke about their experiences of these contracts. The afternoon session was an open forum and discussion which included presentations from Margaret Keane senior archaeologist with the National Monuments Service and Dr Andy Halpin of the National Museum of Ireland. Speakers and attendees actively participated in a lively discussion of the main issues.

The purpose of workshop's introduction was to provide a backdrop for the origin of this type of contract generally and a context for later discussions. As far back as 2006, the notion of fixed price contracts (FPC) was first mooted in documentation issued by the Government's Department of Finance. This is the government department that has overarching responsibility for the state finances, in all arenas. In that Department's document *Public Financial Procedures An Outline* (2008) www.finance.gov.ie/documents/publications/guidelines/pfdec2008.pdf the genesis of this new type of contract is explained. Section D, in particular, provides the background for the FPCs introduction. Entitled 'An overview of financial management and the value-for-money framework', this section explains in point format why value for money is essential in all of the government's procurement, whether it is purchasing stationery or archaeological services. 'Value for money', 'efficiency' and 'effectiveness', are key terms in this section of the document. Economy, including economies of scale, effective use of resources and the ultimate responsibility of the government to the tax payer are essential at all stages of any project where tax payers' money is being spent. This is not an aspiration; it is a legal requirement for the Department of Finance under several pieces of legislation, not least the Public Service Management Act 1997 <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1997/en/act/pub/0027/index.html>, and the Comptroller and Auditor General Amendment Act 1993 <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1993/en/act/pub/0008/>. EU law and directives also matter in this regard.

In addition to the *Public Financial Procedures* (2008) there are numerous guideline documents and training manuals available on how public sector bodies implement the FPCs, in how to obtain value for money in the procurement of services and goods including procedural matters for each project. For instance, all projects must go through 4 phases; Appraisal, Planning, Implementation and Post-project review. These documents, while not all specifically for the contractor, do provide some insights into how contracts are considered and assessed http://www.etenders.gov.ie/guides/guides_list.aspx?Type=2.

How can value for money and, ultimately, savings for the country be achieved? If the country is viewed as an 'entity' and a single body, it has the capacity for huge 'purchasing power'. At the time when these contracts were first discussed, the government was purchasing goods and services on an individual departmental basis and so its purchasing power was severely fragmented. Obviously, if bigger purchases are made on a wider basis, economies of scale would dictate that savings could be made on a number of levels.

A national public procurement policy framework was established to progress this under which government departments and public bodies must develop and implement a corporate procurement plan. In addition to this, a national public procurement policy unit (NPPPU) was set up to aid the realisation of the framework. The basic principle is that competitive tendering should be used to procure goods and services, other than in exceptional circumstances. Government department and public bodies must 'apply fixed price contracts as the norm in procurement of all ... projects' (Dept of Finance 2008, D2, paragraph 43). These contracts are intended for all types of goods and services and as such do not specifically detail archaeological works or services. An underlying principle in all these procurement contracts, is the concept of risk transfer, '... contracts are structured in a way

that allow public bodies to clearly identify risks that are appropriate to transfer to contractors and to seeks competitive tenders that incorporate these risks on a fixed-price lump-sum basis ... with appropriate sharing of the risks between the client and contractors' (Dept of Finance 2008, D2, paras 46 and 47).

Tenders can then be assessed in one of two ways: lowest price or the most economically advantageous tender (MEAT). The former is assessed on the basis of price *only*, while the latter assesses tenders on a number of weighted criteria, which includes price. At tendering stage, the type of assessment of the contract is made very clear so that tenderers can price accordingly and are clear on the assessment method.

Leading on from the NPPPU, the National Public Procurement Operations Unit (NPPOU) was established, under the aegis of the OPW and Minister for State at the Dept of Finance M. Mansergh TD. Its objectives were set out in a Paper for the Special Group in April 2009 on Public Procurement Policy www.finance.gov.ie/documents/pressreleases/2009/bl100vol1.pdf and <http://www.finance.gov.ie/documents/publications/other/2009/boirdsnippap09/pubpurement.pdf>. The NPPOU will establish a national framework to: centralise all procurement operations; advise government and the public sector; provide training and education; further develop web-based e-tendering procurements such as e-auctions; and introduce savings targets. It immediately implemented an 8% reduction on all public sector contracts, where feasible.

It is estimated by the NPPOU that public procurement averages €500 million per annum. There is also no reason why Irish goods and service providers can not expand into other EU countries, specifically Northern Ireland and Britain. The unit also intends to produce a database of analysis for public spending as part of post-project reviews. In relation to e-procurement the NPPOU intends to further standardise documentation across procurement, while being careful not to 'crowd-out' small and medium-sized enterprises (www.etenders.gov.ie). (Indeed a recent Department of Finance directive has stated that SMEs must be actively encouraged in the tendering process http://www.etenders.gov.ie/guides/Guide_Download.aspx?id=2964.) Unsuccessful bid feedback will be introduced so that tenderers can make improvements to their submissions and 'meet the buyer days' will be arranged for specific service providers.

The FPCs were first introduced in the construction sector in 2007 and have been used for archaeological works since 2009. From the background review undertaken, it is likely that this type of contract will permeate through to all types of procurement in Ireland in the coming months. The 'new' Form of Contract is now widespread, being used by all Local Authorities for National Road schemes as well as increasingly by Local Authorities, Public Bodies and private developers for other projects. Unfortunately, these projects are often procured and run without the presence of a Project Archaeologist to advise and manage for the Client.

Tracy Collins

Session 1: First Principles of FPCs

The first session of the day focused on the clients perspective on Fixed Price Contracts, presented by the two speakers – Michael MacDonagh (NRA) and Dr Charles Mount (ICF). There was a strong contrast between both presentations – the NRA are bound by the requirements of the Department of Finance, whereas the ICF (and by extension its members) as a private body has much more flexibility in its approach to structuring Fixed Price Contracts.

One theme, which was introduced during this session and recurred throughout the day, was how Fixed Price Contracts – particularly as operated by the public sector – expose the lack of clear and binding standards in many areas of professional practice within archaeology.

Charles Mount, in providing an overview of his experience with private sector Fixed Price Contracts emphasised the importance of ensuring that adequate pre-planning and assessment studies were carried out to ensure that project briefs could be appropriately specified, at a level of detail that ensured that the contract could be properly

costed and delivered. It was also clear that private sector Fixed Price Contracts tend to be restricted a single stage of works (such as testing or excavation).

By contrast the public sector Fixed Price Contracts are commonly multi-stage contracts extending from testing through to post-excavation and publication. Though stage (iii) of these 4-stage contracts is done on a rates basis (effectively making it a remeasurable contract), under Dept. of Finance regulations this revisiting of the tender price can only be done once in any contract, so it is not an option for pricing post-excavation costs as well, hence the fixed percentage generally used in these contracts.

Contact Stage	Summary of Works	Cost-Basis
Stage (i)	Test excavation & related evaluations	Fixed Price
Stage (ii)	Pre-excavation Services (Stripping & Defining sites)	Fixed Price (but remeasurable up)
Stage (iii)	Excavation (also includes preliminary reporting)	Rates-based (but spec determined by client at end of stage (ii))
Stage (iv)	Post-excavation and Dissemination (can include publication such as scheme monograph)	Fixed percentage of stage (iii) costs

Structure of NRA-style FPCs

However, increasingly the NRA are breaking up these contracts and using combinations of 1-stage/3-stage and 2-stage/2-stage divisions. This is partially to combat speculative tendering, but also reflects the new directive from the Dept of Finance, which requires that tendering by small and medium enterprises should be facilitated.

These contracts are challenging for the client and require a high level of engagement on their part to ensure effective management; it also requires consistency in policy and management within departments of public sector bodies (such as NRA) who are responsible for managing the contracts. NRA has also introduced a programme of 'Consultant Performance Assessment' as part of their contracts; this is done in consultation with the contractor, with the aim of ensuring the quality of work undertaken as part of the contract.

The discussion during this session touched on a number of issues, in particular the process of costing post-excavation works within these contracts. Valid fears were expressed by many attendees that the percentage basis for costing post-excavation works within these tenders was going to lead to long-term problems. Commonly the percentage allocated for post-excavation is in the region of 10% which appears to many (including those who represent clients' interests) to be very unrealistic. A number of attendees highlighted instances where they had included more realistic percentages for post-excavation, but were unsuccessful in obtaining tenders – NRA tenders (and commonly those that have adopted the same model) are awarded purely on a lowest price basis; this creates a disincentive to insert a high percentage for post-excavation costs.

It was highlighted that while the NRA interpretation of the 'Most Economically Advantageous Tender (MEAT)' guidelines from the Dept. of Finance have focused on cost as the primary method of adjudicating the award of tenders, other sectors within the public service, notably the Dept. of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, use a weighting system that includes evaluations of quality as well as cost in adjudicating tenders.

It was quite clear from the discussion that no-one was satisfied with the percentage method of costing post-excavation works. Though (in practice) it is difficult for clients to exclude tender proposals on the basis of an excessively low price, they can query specific low price elements; however, it is extremely difficult to query the percentage allocated for post-excavation as there is no clear, quantifiable specification within the contract to adjudicate it against.

Many of the topics discussed within this session carried over into the Session 2 and 3 discussions.

Teresa Bolger

Session 2: FPCs in practice

The second session focused on the contracts perspective with very frank presentations from Colm Moloney (Headland Archaeology (Ireland) Ltd), Kate Taylor (TVAS (Ireland) Ltd), Stephen Mandal (CRDS Ltd) and Milicia Rajic (TVAS (Ireland) Ltd).

The year 2008 saw the beginning of a slow-down in construction projects and a deterioration in the Irish archaeological workplace prompted by economic reversals and the inception of the 'new' form of Fixed-Price Contract by the National Roads Authority (in conjunction with the Department of Finance). Archaeological consultancies involved in tendering for National Road Schemes (and, increasingly, other projects, which are now using this Form of Contract) have a number of issues with the Contract Documents. These include:

- the documents being referred to as 'Fixed-Price' though they contain re-measurable elements
- perceived ambiguities in the contract documents (this can apply to the extent of trenching required during Stage (i) Testing and Survey Services to establish the horizontal extent of sites, what is required to complete Stage (i) Services and what may or may not be done during the Stage (ii) period)
- perceived ambiguities in the application of the Documents from NRDO to NRDO or organization to organization
- The problem of sites being left open between Stage (ii) and Stage (iii), potentially for extended periods
- excessive transfer of risk to the Archaeological Consultant
- The perceived 'downgrading' of Archaeological Consultancies to 'archaeological contractors'
- the difficulty of pricing for Stage (ii) Pre-Excavation Services (this Stage was created to allow all to gain a full understanding of the site and to avoid demobilization of a company or site team between Stages (i) and (iii))
- the difficulty in pricing for Stage (iii) Excavation Services (specifically as this involves the production of preliminary excavation reports for each site)
- the fixed-price percentage method for pricing Stage (iv) Post-Excavation and Dissemination Services (whereby post-excavation and dissemination Services are carried out for a fixed percentage of Stage (iii) overrun costs. This percentage figure is nominated by the Archaeological Consultant at tender stage. It is argued that this pricing method removes the incentive to find interesting and complex sites at Stage (i), to be more efficient at Stage (iii) and may lead to a post-excavation programme that is undeliverable)
- the considerable investment of time and resources required to produce documents required for the 'Suitability Questionnaire'.

A number of solutions to these problems were proposed by the various speakers:

- split the Contract and advertise for Stage Services independently (even to the point of having four competitions per Contract). This proposed process of procurement has strengths (there is sufficient information to allow for an informed fixed price, clarity on what is required, no variation in price and the risk is managed) and weaknesses (it involves additional time, resources and finance on the part of the Project Archaeologist / Local Authority to procure multiple Consultants)
- the Client to produce a specification to cover both Stages (iii) and (iv) and provided this to the Archaeological Consultant at the end of the Stage (ii) period
- amalgamate Stages (i) and (ii) and carry out Stage (iv) Services based on a schedule of rates
- carry out Stage (ii) tasks at the end of the Stage (i) period or at the start of the Stage (iii) period with Stage (ii) formally done away with
- carry out Stage (iv) Services under an hourly rates basis and not as a fixed percentage of Stage (iii)
- an allocation for fieldwork at Stage (iii) and, separately, an allocation for tasks to produce the preliminary

report at Stage (iii)

- include a provision in the Contract for the supervision of open sites
- a relaxation of the documentation required under the 'Suitability Questionnaire' at tender period (a full suite of documents can be requested from a preferred bidder)
- clear oversight through a Project Archaeologist (outside the NRA / RPA bodies the Client should retain an independent Project Archaeologist).
- consistency in the approach to the Contracts by the Client and clarity on what is required. Those monitoring compliance to standards, especially the NRA Project Archaeologists, must be consistent in their approach to the Contracts (the NRA, through the various Client's Representatives, will continue to enforce the Contract. To fail to do so would be facilitating low tenders through a perceived willingness to allow standards to slide). The NMS, NMI and IAI need to be more involved in setting standards within which all must operate to ensure that there is clarity of approach and that financial concerns are not the primary driving force.

Martin Jones

Session 3: Open Forum and Focused Discussion

The final session of the day was introduced and chaired by Frank Coyne, opening with a series of short presentations. To begin a statement was read from the Irish Palaeoecology and Environmental Archaeology Network (IPEAN) (who were unable to send a delegate) outlining their broad support for aspects of the new contract structures (particularly the requirement to involve palaeoenvironmental specialists from stage (ii) onwards). IPEAN noted the need to ensure that all developers were required to manage archaeology to the same standard and for realistic pricing structures within tender contracts. They expressed their willingness to provide advice to those developing contracts. IPEAN noted issues surrounding the (inaccurate) costing of specialist analyses – which would have a detrimental effect on the quality and extent of work which could actually be undertaken or render specialist analyses undeliverable within the context of the contract – and also the frequent failure to cost for specialist contributions to scheme monographs and publications (the unreasonable expectation that these contributions would be written in the specialists own time, without payment). They welcomed the introduction of a requirement in Stage (iv) for production of an additional overview of environmental work undertaken, in some cases, combining the results from a range of analyses. Such an integrated approach would be progressive and better inform our understanding of past activity. An overview will sit well within the monograph publication style envisaged by the NRA and other public bodies. IPEAN noted that this overview can only take place AFTER completion of all initial specialist reports and the excavation report and that production of the overview must be costed accordingly.

Margaret Keane (DoEHLG) spoke on behalf of the National Monuments Service, outlining their approach to tendering, which uses a weighting system to evaluate tender proposals rather than just focusing on price. Lowest price has not, to date, been used as a deciding factor in awarding a contract (only 25%-35% is allowable to cost with the remaining points split between past performance, experience and quality of Method Statement). Previously only contracts with a value in excess of €25,000 had to be advertised on the etenders website. In response to the Dept of Finance directive to facilitate small and medium enterprises, from now on all DoEHLG tenders will be offered on etenders on an open tender basis. Margaret also highlighted the importance of a legislative backing for any guidance and standards to ensure that they have real weight. In the application of the Fixed Price Contract to other areas where there is no Code of Practice in place a Project Archaeologist (or equivalent) is essential and maintenance of standards may be difficult (especially where the Client is not invested in the process). Guidelines, except where these are statutory, are difficult to enforce.

Andy Halpin spoke on behalf of the National Museum of Ireland; he expressed his concerns about under-costing within contracts, particularly as it pertains to post-excavation costs and emphasised that the NMI will both set and enforce standards in relation to the treatment of archaeological objects. He emphasised the importance of responsible attitude in the costing and management of Fixed Price Contracts. The National Museum of Ireland has serious concerns about the rollout of Fixed Price Contracts and their application as well as the issue of the Stage (iv) fixed-price percentage; creating a system which incentivises undercosting is dangerous. The National Museum

Formation of Workgroup

is concerned with risk to archaeology and, by extension, risk to the NMI (in the event that funding is not available to carry out the required post-excavation tasks in relation to artefacts). The NMI has revised its *Advice Notes For Excavators* and the requirements of this document need to be fully met. In the past the NMI had 'rescued' people or accepted material that was not presented in a suitable condition but the Museum is now determined not to do this any longer. The Museum is conscious that Consultants may feel they are stuck between a rock and a hard place but the NMI will insist on standards being met. Those finding themselves unable to meet the requirements of their consents will receive no lee-way.

The IAI board has decided to create a short-term workgroup, comprising all the stakeholder groups from this workshop. The workgroup will produce IAI documentation that could be used by public sector bodies in the procurement of archaeological services and works. It will gather together important experiences on the formulation and working of these contracts, which can be disseminated for the benefit of IAI members and procurers of archaeological services alike. This workgroup is in development and all IAI members will be kept informed of its progress.

The discussion which followed revisited themes which had been touched on in the earlier sessions as well as expanding into other areas.

The debate around standards of practice and the 'quality' of archaeological works delivered under Fixed Price Contracts was recurrent. A number of contributors noted that there was a potential role of IAI in the development of more comprehensive codes of practice and more exacting standards and guidance documents. In particular it was noted that a Code of Practice in relation to FPCs themselves might be warranted, under the auspices of IAI. While it is difficult for IAI to enforce any standards it might set (its only prescriptive power is to expel a member), standards and guidance documents which it produces can be cited in FPCs, with the requirement to adhere to them forming a condition of the contract. This would give them a binding force (within the structure and scope of the individual contract). Representatives of NRA indicated that as a publicly funded body it would be open to approaches and representations where there are genuine concerns. It is in the interest of the NRA to see archaeology dealt with as effectively as possible and the organisation would be supportive of the development of more detailed standards and codes of practice in relation to the management of archaeology to facilitate this.

There was further discussion of post-excavation and the percentage method of costing for these within FPCs. It was acknowledged by NRA representatives that there was a real potential, in contracts for stage (iii)-(iv) works only, that post-excavation costs could be determined on a rates basis, since the stage (iii) excavation costs in such contracts would be undertaken as a fixed price (as the scope and scale of works would be known at tender stage). There was a measure of agreement that companies/individuals tendering for these contracts should be responsible in pricing for tender and that those drawing up the contracts on the client's side should be realistic in structuring the tender documents and specifications to ensure that the desired archaeological service(s) can be priced for and delivered within the framework of this new form of contract.

It was noted that while there was good attendance at the workshop from the commercial sector and representatives of some organisations that are creating FPCs (such as NRA and DoEHLG), there was a notable lack of engagement from many sectors within the public services where FPCs are in use for archaeological tenders. In the majority of cases (in contrast to the NRA) these contracts are being developed, circulated and managed with no input from archaeologists on the client's side. The potential pitfalls of this were highlighted and the need to engage with these sectors and organisations was recognised as a live issue.

Related to this was a genuine concern expressed that some FPCs advertised are not fit-for-purpose and that when such tenders are identified they should be flagged to IAI or the statutory authorities responsible for the regulation of archaeological work. There needs to be the ability to ask are Tenders properly drafted or implemented without fear of recrimination.

This session and the workshop closed with a brief address from the current chair of IAI, Fin O'Carroll who noted that, within the structure of the contract, there is an appreciable downgrading of professional status - the commercial archaeological company is effectively a contractor rather than a consultant. She also outlined how the FPC structures amplify and exacerbate the existing problems within the profession; many of the issues we face are exacerbated by the FPCs, but not created by them. The issues are historic. The existing 'light-touch regulation' needs to be addressed even though it may go against the grain to draw attention to a bad job. Above all we need to get serious about standards across the broad spectrum of professional practice and we need to act on it.

Teresa Bolger
Martin Jones

Making an exhibition.

DIG @ the Complex Gallery, Smithfield, 21-28 September 2010

The plan

The editor asked me for a piece on the staging of a recent exhibition of archaeological drawings and photographs from a site I excavated in Smithfield several years ago. She asked me to write something about what the experience had been like, about what exactly was involved and what I'd learned in the process. She also wondered if it were something I'd recommend others to do.

The idea of the exhibition came from a chance meeting last June on a sunny beach north of Skerries where we bumped into playwright Anthony Goulding (aka Boo, a football acquaintance), theatre director Vanessa Fielding and their three children. I'd just started a job monitoring groundworks in Smithfield and I knew that Vanessa, Boo and several others had started a gallery and theatre space in one of the central blocks on the western side of the square. I'd figured beforehand that the gallery was located directly over the site of an early eighteenth-century inn, one of the structures we'd excavated and drawn back in 2003.

Vanessa and Boo immediately warmed to this accident of historical geography and suggested the possibility of assembling an exhibition on an undefined aspect of the dig, perhaps towards late August. Now, I've always loved galleries. I'd worked in the Douglas Hyde as a student in Trinity and had hung a few exhibitions in various venues while working with theatre companies in Vienna, schlepping huge canvasses and objects around the city, forever waiting around for somebody's paint to dry. I'd liked that sort of work and I knew these people.

At a meeting the following week we, thankfully, dismissed an exhibition of artefacts or maps. For a start, I didn't expect it would be easy to extract a selection of finds from storage in Collins Barracks. The very idea of even considering an array of material showing the diversity of Smithfield's past was a non-starter. Besides, this was an art gallery surely, and not a museum? At this point I'd realised I didn't want an exhibition about the archaeology of the site or about what we'd found; I wanted rather to articulate something of the process of creating the archaeological record itself and the mentalities of those who formed it.

Margaret Gowen & Co. Ltd. had transferred the huge Smithfield paper archive to the *Dublin City Archaeological Archive*, now held in the Gilbert Library and curated by Mary Clarke and Ellen Murphy. Here, in secure storage and undergoing conservation, were the hundreds of drawings and sketches, executed in the field as it were, mostly multi-authored, traditional working site drawings at 1:20. These images were strikingly obvious candidates for further attention; all of them negotiating something of the meaning of a multi-layered assemblage of half-recalled facts and stratigraphical memories that persevered outside the finished text, our own considered official narrative of the site's historical morphology.

Yet, I also wanted to show something of the evident disjuncture between the images when considered as art, and what they actually represented as functional drawings. These drawings had been at my side for several years through a succession of four offices, eventually to be archived in a newly-painted metal plan cabinet we picked up on a free-trade listserve. Hardly a week went by without rummaging through them and finding something depicted in pencil directly from memory: a brick feature perhaps replicated in the Liberties or on some back plot along the river. If the exhibition wasn't to be about the archaeology, there would have to be the possibility to enter into that world, if only by engaging with the drawings somewhere beyond their own intrinsic beauty.



At a meeting with Anne Marie Kilshaw, artist in residence and Sonia Haccius, set designer at *the Complex*, I talked about the drawings and about my friend and comrade Simon Dick, who was responsible for their diversity as much as their accuracy. These, he had argued, were beautiful, striking works, stark pencil on permatrace; yet, as Gabriel Cooney later and not unkindly observed, they remained fundamentally 'working drawings, competently executed, unsentimental.' The ground covered between these comments became central to the meaning of the exhibition.



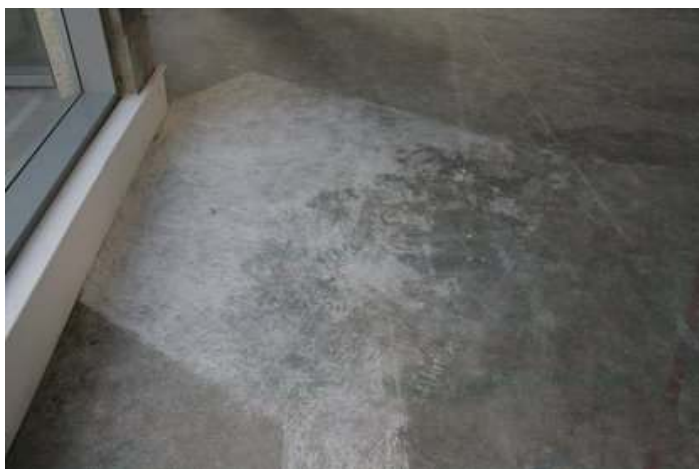
The process

The *Archive* staff went out of their way to facilitate the idea of the exhibition and Anne-Marie and I went through the folders of drawings one morning to make an initial selection. I'd given Vanessa a CD of slides from a talk I'd given to the Antiquaries in 2006 and she suggested printing up some of the images for the show. I was flattered but immediately reluctant to exhibit photographs taken with my first digital camera, a Nikon E885, shots which were neither composed nor significantly exposed enough for my liking. In addition, the higher-resolution files had been removed from the system once they'd been uploaded; my own copies at home were long since the victim of a nasty virus. My limited Photoshop skills weren't going to enhance much what was left. Still, I liked the idea of large exposures that complimented the drawings: colour images, which might give shape and context to what were, to the uninitiated, quite complex transactions of knowledge, practise and experience.

A final selection of pictures was made and we established criteria based on drawings with a initial visual impact, yet images with a strong archaeological narrative running through their display – drawings with stories. Looking at them again, I remembered the dreary afternoons we signed off on the dripping plans, drying them off with dirty tea towels and filing them away in a variety of media in preparation for their travels through the booming city.

We decided to extend the area depicted on the drawings to an approximate 150m radius of the gallery, which provided the opportunity to display to full effect the pinnacle of the planner's art, the skeleton. We also had the *White Swan*. As a more personal engagement with the exhibition I suggested I'd chalk out its walls on the grey concrete floor at 1:1. This was greeted with much enthusiasm by the gallery and a quick bit of bog-surveying located the *White Swan* to within 600mm site accuracy. I liked the idea of people walking over the chalk, perhaps not noticing it at first (its presence wasn't advertised) but spreading it nevertheless around the floor with their feet, perhaps eventually creating a ghost image, a double negative of what had been there before and what was now long gone.

I also wrote an essay about the exhibition, which made much of the fact that the planners' art was in its death throes, that our present economic crisis was contributing to the death of the skilled digger whose craft had sustained this activity for years and whose work was displayed all around the walls.



The hanging

The exhibition was designed by Sonia and hung by Roger O'Neill, Steve Doorley and myself the weekend before the Tuesday opening. We all contributed to the discussion around which group of drawings went with which. Again, this dialogue allowed a narrative to emerge which strengthened the impact of the images without detracting from their meaning as works in their own right.

We used the original cardboard plan hangers and attached the plans to the wall or white screen. We then attached large Perspex sheets over the



drawings at 50mm out, affixed to the walls with stainless steel screws and threaded kitchen cabinet connectors. Funding for the hanging was provided by Dr Ruth Johnson, Dublin City Archaeologist, who launched the exhibition on 21 September. Preparations in the gallery were ritual and predetermined: the floors swept and mopped, the windows professionally cleaned, screens and batons painted white, pictures on the walls. Panels with brief explanatory texts were carefully mounted alongside the pictures. I enjoyed the silent walk-around the empty gallery just before the doors opened to the 200 people who attended the preview.

One image was displayed on its own; Plan No. 1, a schematic drawing of the central portion of the site at 1:50, was hung at the farthest end of the space across from the entrance. Framed on *Fabiano* paper against a bare breezeblock wall, it was actually two sheets of Permatrace held together with yellow masking tape, somewhere in size between A1 and A0. People continually walked past the other drawings directly across to this one without any guidance apart from the pull of the image. This, from a distance, appeared as a rolled out parchment or perhaps an architectural sketch from the '20s in faded pencil, pen and ink. And so within the gallery was echoed the daily trudge of diggers through the site hut to be dispatched from the drawing to various numbered latrines and cess pits, in the days when Plan No. 1 graced the wall of a portacabin.

The photographs made better sense on a large screen in a recessed space facing the main square outside. Here, passers-by would pause and look in at the images of the site showing people, both the living and the dead, digging, drawing and lying about. People were invariably drawn into the gallery by the skeletons on the screen, victims of the hangman who had lain in the ground for over 300 years barely 50 meters away, just 3m below their feet.

Peoples' reactions were mostly thought-provoking and engaging. Several artists sailed through and became engaged with the archaeology; several archaeologists sloped in and engaged with the art. The architects liked the *White Swan* with its unfeasibly small spaces. The artists for their part preferred their traditional white gallery space to our part-exposed industrial fabric, bare concrete and steel. Many thought the archaeology was still underneath and were discomforted at the fact that 26m of car parking lay below. Others just came in to enjoy wandering around what became a bright, peaceful space, just doing nothing in particular.

When the drawings were taken down and the monitor switched off and dismantled, the walls of the *White Swan* were still quite evident, albeit blurred under a week of over 2000 footsteps. I liked the idea of the chalk dust making it into kitchens, bedrooms and Hoover bags all over the city. The *White Swan* will live on in some form as the set for a production of John Gay's *The Beggars' Opera*, a play depicting a similar tavern of the 1720s.

Lessons learnt

I took on board several lessons of which perhaps two are important. Continue to care for your early digital files; it's impossible to print low-resolution professionally to A4, even after photographing the original print. Secondly, if you're going to insist on doing your own installation, make sure to make use of a cushion or kneepads.

Would I do it again? The exhibition was uniquely site-specific and I think this contributed to the level of interest shown by local residents in particular. Where the chalk walls of the *White Swan* could easily be replicated in another gallery space they were especially significant *in situ*, providing a more physical interaction for the viewer, whether they knew it or not. On another level, I see the experience as constituting an alternative means of disseminating information to a hungry public who deserve a better engagement from the profession. Fundamentally though, the exhibition was about the drawings, their beauty and their craft.

Franc Myles
Member

Prof Barry Raftery: 16 August 1944–22 August 2010

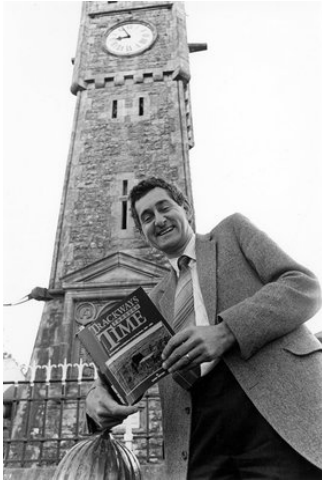
I first met Barry in the early 1970s when I began studying archaeology in University College Dublin. He had been appointed to a lecturership in the Department of Archaeology in 1970 following a stellar early career; school education in Belvedere College, Dublin, First Class Honours BA in Archaeology and Geography in UCD, a First Class MA for his major thesis on *Freestone Hill and the Hillforts of Ireland* and then a German Government scholarship spent at the Philipps-Universität, Marburg. Barry was an inspiring lecturer, whether he was talking about the Hittites, Halstatt or hillforts. His lectures were full of detail, insight and questions, a combination which engaged students fully and made them feel part of an intellectual quest to understand the past from the archaeological evidence. Barry had begun his excavations at the major hillfort site of Rathgall, Co. Wicklow and when he talked about this or more broadly about his research on the Irish Iron Age and its problems, on which he completed his PhD thesis in 1977, we knew we were listening to cutting edge research.



In 1979 I was fortunate enough to begin to work as a colleague of Barry's in the Department of Archaeology. It was clear that now his archaeological stage was a European one. He was very highly regarded internationally and rightly considered as the authority on Iron Age Ireland. From 1981-3 he was based in Marburg on a prestigious Alexander von Humboldt Research Fellowship. He travelled extensively all over Europe, visiting museums, universities, excavations and research institutes, acquiring a deep first-hand knowledge of the European Iron Age. This enabled him to establish lasting contacts with a wide network of European Iron Age specialists and placed Barry to the fore of European research. A great benefit to UCD students was his success in finding places for them on excavations on the Continent. In Marburg he also brought his doctoral work to fruition in two major books: *A Catalogue of Irish Iron Age Antiquities* (1983) and *La Tène in Ireland: Problems of Origin, Development and Chronology* (1984). Back home in UCD students who had the privilege of being lectured to by Barry were always inquiring when he was coming back! They and his colleagues missed the sense of passionate engagement and fun that he brought to his work.

From the mid-1980s Barry became immersed in wetland archaeology through a programme of innovative research on trackways in Irish raised bogs. This began in 1985 with the excavation of a very large second century BC trackway at Corlea, Co. Longford, 'The Road to God Knows Where' as he titled it in a typically evocative phrase in his definitive book on the Irish Iron Age, *Pagan Celtic Ireland: The Enigma of the Irish Iron Age* (1994). The work expanded to an extensive programme of survey, excavation and student training. The Irish Archaeological Wetland Unit (IAWU) was established under Barry's direction and it was based appropriately at Crannóg in UCD. The result of all of this was a cohort of Irish archaeologists with extensive wetlands expertise. *Trackway Excavations in the Mountdillon Bogs, Co. Longford, 1985-91* (1996) was the first of a number of volumes from the IAWU. A popular account, *Trackways through time* (1990) brought the work to a wide audience and an interpretative centre, built to present the trackway at Corlea, is a lasting testament to the importance of this work.

As this exciting programme of wetland research was developing Barry's work and expertise was being increasingly acknowledged in Ireland and Europe through election to membership of academies, fellowships and service on a range of councils and committees. He was visiting Professor of European Prehistory in Ludwig-Maximilian Universität, Munich in 1988-90. He played a major role in the organisation of the international Celtic exhibition in Venice in 1991 and was an editor of the resulting large volume on *The Celts*.



Barry was appointed to the chair of Celtic Archaeology in UCD in 1996 and he retired in 2007. For all of us his time as Head of the Department of Archaeology in UCD (1996-2001) was exciting and invigorating. He led a major programme of change and development in the department, reflected in the teaching programmes, the appointment of new staff members and new areas of research. There was a notable expansion in the number of students, especially at PhD level, making the Department (now the School of Archaeology) the leading centre for postgraduate archaeological research in Ireland. His focus in more recent times was on bringing his excavations at Rathgall to publication and the report was substantially complete at the time of his death.

It was a great privilege to have worked with Barry and to have had the benefit of his friendship and wise counsel. He was, as Clare Tuffy put it in an email about his visits to the Boyne Valley, 'a kind gentle man with a lovely warm smile'. Above all he was a family man, very proud of his father, Joseph, and his achievements and career in the National Museum of Ireland. He took loving care of his mother Lotte in her later years. Barry bore his own illness with tremendous courage and fortitude. The loves of his life were his wife Nuala, their daughters Sara and Tilly, his goddaughter Triona and their families. He enjoyed his role as paterfamilias, doting over his granddaughters, Emily, Sophie, Charlotte and Robin.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dílis.

Gabriel Cooney
Member

Note: This obituary also appeared in Archaeology Ireland.



Whither Archaeology?: Panel Discussion on Professional Archaeology Today. Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, 10 May 2010.

Whither Archaeology? was the searching, if somewhat downbeat, title given by the RSAI to a panel discussion that took place in the Helen Roe Theatre, 63 Merrion Square, on the evening of 10 May 2010.

The purpose of the event was to take a broad look at the impact of the economic recession on the profession of archaeology and to reflect on what the future holds for those who are committed to making a living as professional archaeologists, whether currently members of IAI or otherwise.

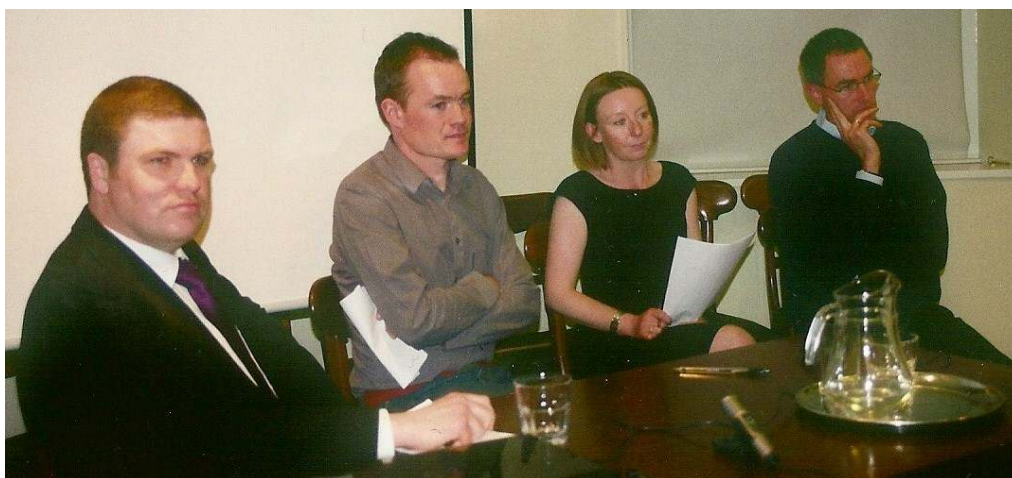
Whither Archaeology? was chaired by **Professor Gabriel Cooney**, Head of the School of Archaeology, UCD. In his opening remarks Gabriel reflected that this was a critical time for archaeology, now at a juncture after a period of unprecedented expansion. Two questions were posed: How do we emerge from this crisis, and how are professional archaeologists to be given opportunities to continue their career?

There followed a series of ten-minute presentations by each of four invited speakers. First up was **Cóilín Ó Drisceoil**, of Kilkenny Archaeology. Cólín recounted how in the wake of the huge boom in development work from 1997 onward he and wife Emma came to establish their consultancy. Although things have now come to a 'shuddering halt', in his view this nevertheless presents an opportunity to take stock of where we are going as a profession. Cólín described the rise and fall of 'compliance' archaeology over the past decade, and observed, since 4000 excavations remain unpublished, that society's appreciation of the past has not increased.

Dr. Ruth Johnson, Dublin City Archaeologist, delivered the second presentation. Ruth is one of only seven local authority archaeologists in Ireland, originally appointed to deal with planning issues and development problems. She confirmed that things are now 'very quiet' on the development front with a huge decline in planning applications over the last two years, compared to the previous five. Ruth finished on the positive note that Irish archaeology has untapped tourism potential, which is something we need to work on for the future.

The third speaker, **Ronan Swan**, acting Chief Archaeologist with the National Roads Authority, stated that the NRA has spent €250 million on archaeology to date. He illustrated how excavations steadily multiplied up to a spike in 2007, to be followed by a sharp drop in 2008, and remaining very low in 2009. The NRA has developed a dissemination strategy incorporating seminars, brochures, monographs, a magazine, a database and funding for PhD research. Ronan was reasonably upbeat about the future, with a number of national primary and secondary routes in the planning stage, but cautioned that all was subject to government finances.

The final member of the panel to speak was **Dr Eoin Sullivan**, IAI Development Officer. Eoin began by outlining that IAI represents the professional archaeologists of Ireland and currently has about 400 members of different grades, comprising a good cross-section of the profession. He described two surveys that have been carried out, details of which appear in previous issues of *IAI News*, the first dealing with the numbers working in archaeology in Ireland, and the second on earnings in the profession. Eoin went on to explain the importance of the Continued Professional Development (CPD) programme, regarded as crucial in providing opportunities for members to upskill themselves. In an optimistic vein, Eoin concluded that despite



The Whither Archaeology? panel. Left to right: Ronan Swan, Cólín Ó Drisceoil, Ruth Johnson, and Eoin Sullivan

the depth of the crisis, as a professional body 'we will get through it'.

There followed a lively, wide-ranging discussion. The topics debated included the supervision of archaeologists working on development projects, forthcoming new legislation, the publishing of excavation reports on the web, and the problem of how unemployed archaeologists can remain involved in the profession. Liam Downey questioned the perception of archaeology, arguing that it should be a knowledge industry, nothing else, and that there was no 'knowledge management system' in archaeology. He felt archaeologists were at fault for thinking of themselves as an excavation industry. It was stressed that the work of the profession needs not only to change but to improve. Ruth Johnson asserted that the lead in such improvement must come from the statutory authorities. Ronan Swan reiterated his belief that the results of archaeological investigation must be disseminated. Michael Stanley (NRA) expressed the opinion that the general public needs to understand and support the profession, while Collette Ellison (RSAI) felt that school children should understand that archaeology is the study of man and it should be incorporated into their education from a very early age. These strands of opinion were summed up by Gabriel Cooney as he brought proceedings to a close.

Whither Archaeology? confirmed that the crisis is one that has hit commercial archaeology hardest. But what we do not need is a return to excessive construction activity to restore job numbers in the sector. That is not sustainable. What we do need at government level is a properly resourced Department of Archaeology, headed by a Minister dedicated to securing for posterity the archaeological wealth in our possession, and continually disseminating and updating knowledge of this legacy for the benefit of all. The work of a strong central structure and a well-staffed regional network should be integrated with an organisation of archaeological officers appointed in every local authority in the country. The jobs that must be created for Irish archaeologists in the future will come about when the existing model of archaeology as a public service is fundamentally reformed. Of course, we remain a very long way from realising such a grand vision.

One compelling theme emerging from *Whither Archaeology?* is that people need to understand the meaning of archaeology and realise the value of having archaeologists. The archaeological profession must continue to grow and assert itself, even in bad times. If archaeology is allowed to 'wither' any further than it already has, we will all be much the poorer for it.

Ken Wiggins

New Research: NRA Review Ten Years of Geophysical Survey Data



The National Roads Authority (NRA) has awarded its Research Fellowship Programme 2010 to Dr. Chris Gaffney and Prof. Ian Armit of the Department of Archaeological, Geographical & Environmental Sciences at the University of Bradford. Their proposal, responding to the theme 'Preparing for the future: A reappraisal of archaeo-geophysical surveying on National Road Schemes 2001-2010', supports a PhD studentship and Earthsound Archaeological Geophysics has been appointed as the University of Bradford's Industrial Partner within the research project. I have taken a sabbatical from my role as a Director of Earthsound in order to undertake the PhD studentship.

Bronze Age enclosure (Site AR26) on the M8/N8 Cullahill-Casheil Road Improvement Scheme at Ballydavid, County Tipperary. Magnetometer data collected by James Bonsall, Earthsound Archaeological Geophysics, Excavation by Valerie J. Keeley



Magnetic Gradiometer survey in progress

Over the last ten years the NRA has funded a large number of extensive geophysical surveys in advance of – and often as a compliment to – subsequent intrusive excavations. These surveys have helped reveal the extent of hundreds of known and previously unknown archaeological sites across the country. The NRA believes that archaeological geophysics can and will add value to the process of discovery that is required for mitigation and cost-effective preservation by record. The nature of geophysical investigation is that it is done at the start of a project and practitioners, including myself, have often complained that its importance in driving succeeding work is rarely acknowledged. Conversely, those excavating previously surveyed sites often only give feedback when features have been ‘missed’ by the geophysicist. As a result there is an uneven acceptance of the suitability of geophysical survey for road schemes and a need to reconsider the balance between the initial impact and the long-term success of geophysical work within NRA schemes. This research will reflect upon ten years of accrued data to establish the significance of and prospects for geophysical survey.

The project will critically review the demonstrable outputs from 10 years of ‘linear’ survey undertaken using geophysical methods for national road projects and to enhance their effectiveness in future NRA schemes. Geophysical surveys carried out on NRA schemes are data rich, extensive in size and often very highly specified. Subsequent excavations provide considerable opportunities for us to assess the suitability of geophysical methods to map and interpret anomalies that are often the product of subtle archaeological features. As a result of the digital delivery of the archaeological and geophysical investigations, the road schemes are an excellent resource to study the parameters that contribute to a successful identification of a range of features and sites. The project will deliver a critical and appropriate review of NRA schemes that have involved prospecting using geophysical devices.

The research makes provisions for the collection of new data for a series of baseline Irish seasonality tests. These will monitor climatic variations in geophysical responses to archaeology over the course of a year which will be useful not just to the NRA but geophysical practitioners across Ireland. The research will be assisted in this fieldwork component by the project’s Industrial Partner, Earthsound Archaeological Geophysics, who will be supplying survey assistants, geophysical instruments, transport, and office space. The project will also assess new or novel methods and their applicability to road schemes and linear corridor surveys.

Linear projects are common across Europe and the rest of the world. However, the NRA has been a leader in embracing geophysical survey for evaluation of archaeology in such schemes. While there are no statistics to indicate the level of use of archaeological geophysics outside of Ireland for similar projects, anecdotal evidence suggests an up-take on increasingly large linear developments. There is however an uncritical use of technology in many of these projects and the academic analysis of the NRA schemes could have great impact beyond our shores. There is considerable international interest in validating the outcomes of ground-based remote sensing and the reappraisal of NRA schemes can play a major part in contributing to this research agenda.

James Bonsall
Member

*Magnetic Gradiometer data on the N8 Fermoy
Mitchelstown Scheme © Earthsound Archaeological
Geophysics & Sub-Strata*

Book Review

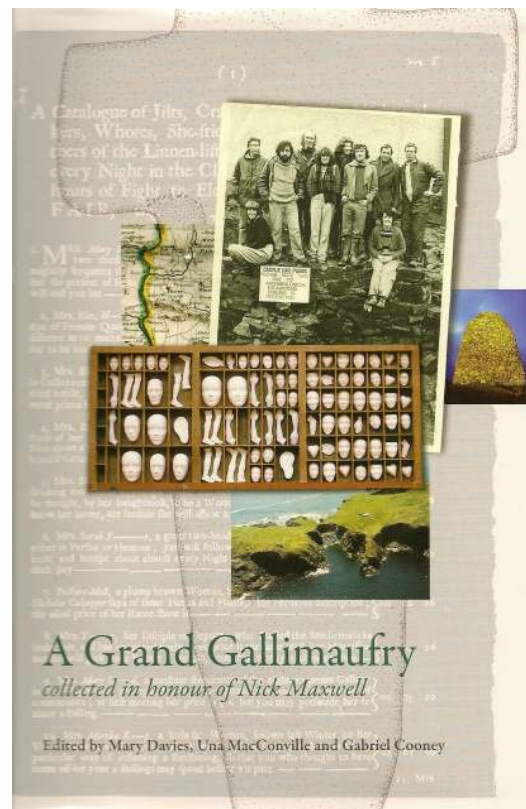
Mary Davies, Una MacConville and Gabriel Cooney (eds.), *A Grand Gallimaufry: collected in honour of Nick Maxwell*. Wordwell, Dublin, 2010, 306pp, 120 illustrations. ISBN 978-1905569-458. Price €40.00.

This volume is published as a celebration of the life and achievements of Nick Maxwell, a man synonymous with the publication of archaeological writings in Ireland over the past 25 years, principally through the success of his company Wordwell Ltd, established in 1986, and the magazine *Archaeology Ireland*, the first issue of which appeared in 1987. Among his many other accomplishments it should be mentioned that Nick also publishes and distributes *The Journal of Irish Archaeology* on behalf of IAI. The acknowledgements helpfully tell us that 'gallimaufry' is a 16th-century term for a 'heterogeneous mixture' or medley, probably derived from the French *galimafree*, a dish made of odds and ends of food, and *galer*, to make merry. It is explained that contributors were asked to provide entries which encompassed Nick's broad range of interests, so that in addition to unusual aspects of Irish archaeology and history, contributions were sought on such topics as music, funerals, graveyards, soccer, cricket, food and drink, printing and typology. The resulting volume succeeds in touching every one of these bases, all the while staying true to Nick's madcap humour and his unique way of looking at the world.

A Grand Gallimaufry contains a total of 85 short articles, contributed by a cohort of archaeologists and academics, all of whom are well known to Nick. The extraordinary thing about this project is the secrecy that surrounded its production, as those involved conspired to keep the existence of the proposed volume hidden from discovery by the unsuspecting subject. This 'ring of security' proved so tight that Nick only became aware of the publication a matter of days before it was launched in the National Museum of Ireland, courtesy of his good friend Dr Pat Wallace, where Nick's stunned disbelief was gleefully relished by all those present.

The book opens with an affectionate sketch of Nick himself, 'How Nick got the start', by Pat Wallace, where fulsome tribute is paid to Nick's contribution to the Wood Quay/Fishamble Street excavations in Dublin between 1974 and 1981. This piece makes one realise that there is so much more to excavations than the description and discussion of features, deposits and finds in academic journals and monographs. The assortment of characters brought together on a site is a major part of the fabric of the archaeological experience. Fond memories inspire Franc Myles in 'High Island pollack teriyaki: a recipe of sorts', which memorably recounts the highly imaginative dining arrangements at the excavations carried out there under the direction of Georgina Scally in the mid-1990s. Likewise, in the hilarious 'Definitions are crucial', Thaddeus Breen treats us to a priceless anecdote from his time at Wood Quay. One gets the feeling that Thaddeus has simply loads of these nuggets stored up in his head, and perhaps the appearance of *A Grand Gallimaufry* can be the catalyst for the publication of an entire volume dedicated to the unsung 'time teams' of the past.

A Grand Gallimaufry is a dazzling kaleidoscope of wit and wisdom, and all things weird and wonderful. Central to Nick's personality are his sense of fun and the fact that he really loves what he does. This passion is shared by all those who contribute to the book, which fairly bristles with gems. James Eogan introduces us to the concept of the 'living monument', with his moving account of a roadside memorial tree at Ballymount, Co. Kildare. An interesting story can develop from merely answering the telephone, as Heather King ably demonstrates in 'More questions than answers: a damaged cross base and a disarticulated burial'. The most colourful language in the volume undoubtedly belongs to Connie Kelleher's invitation to the murky world of prostitution in late 17th-century Dublin, 'Jilts, cracks, night-walkers and others of the linen-lifting tribe'. The choice language of those times gives the 'gallimaufry' much of its spice. If like me you own a car that requires repeated visits to the garage, and must stomach the expense involved, you will agree that although the phrase 'inflaming a Reckoning' may be dead, the practice is very much alive!



The best items in the volume are those that take a 'sideways' look at the multi-faceted world of archaeology and our struggle to comprehend it. In this regard, mention must be made of Jim Mallory's contribution 'Turkdean and the Lost Ark'. There have been many occasions when the prehistoric past has been re-imagined, not to say entirely mangled, through contact with that most iconic totem of today's culture—the cinema screen. Jim takes as his subject Prof. Indiana Jones' lecture in *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981), and its relationship to a report on excavations at Notgrove, Gloucestershire, north of Turkdean, near Hazelton, published in *Archaeologia* (1936). It is perhaps just as well for all his many fans that Indiana's adventures kept him largely out of the lecture-room, thus limiting the damage to his academic reputation due to the inconsistencies so expertly exposed in Jim's very balanced study of a movie immortal.

In overall terms, *A Grand Gallimaufry* is both a great tribute to Nick Maxwell, publisher extraordinaire, and a very entertaining collection. Although it comprises short articles and notes, it is by no means a lightweight affair. The volume is at all times engaging and informative, but very much underpinned by real scholarship. It offers fresh glimpses of archaeology's richness and diversity, making it a satisfying album of 'snapshots' by experts who share the enthusiasm and probing intellect that define Nick Maxwell. The contributors and the three wise editors have combined their ingredients well, coming up with a recipe that will appeal to a wide readership. We all wish Nick and his family the very best for the future, and if he goes on serving up 'more of the same' for the next 25 years, we won't mind one bit!

Ken Wiggins

Notes

Thanks to our sponsors

IAI would like to acknowledge the following organisation who kindly supported and sponsored our Autumn Conference 2010, which took place in Belfast on 5-6 November:

- Dept. of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government
- Northern Ireland Environment Agency
- Headland Archaeology (Ireland) Ltd.
- National Roads Authority
- Judith Carroll and Company
- National Museum of Ireland
- Wordwell Ltd.
- The Discovery Programme
- School of Archaeology, UCD
- Fourcourts Press
- Royal Irish Academy
- School of Archaeology and Palaeoecology, QUB
- Archaeological Development Services Ltd.
- Gahan and Long Archaeological Services

Contributions for the next issue

Contributions are invited for the next issue of IAI news and the deadline for submissions is 25 February 2011.

Articles should be short (500-1,000 words), topical and relevant to Irish archaeology (including recent discoveries, research programmes or issues of archaeological practice) with a maximum of four small or two large illustrations.

Submissions should be in a suitable digital format - MS Word compatible for text, JPEG, PNG or TIF for graphics.

Please contact the editors (newsletter@iai.ie) in advance prior to any formal submission.

The IAI reserve the right not to publish any particular item submitted.

Editor: Teresa Bolger

Contributors: James Bonsall
Tracy Collins
Martin Jones
Franc Myles
Ken Wiggins

Layout: Teresa Bolger

Published by the Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland Ltd.

Membership Numbers

During 2010, the IAI accepted 27 new members: 19 Full Members, 2 Graduate Members, 3 Associate Members, 2 Student Members and 1 Corporate Member. Two graduate members were upgraded to full membership. This brings the overall membership (at the end of 2010) to 332: 281 Full Members, 23 Graduate Members, 13 Associate Members, 8 Student Members and 7 Corporate Members.

IAI Staff and Office

The IAI offices are located at 63 Merrion Square, Dublin 2.

The office is not currently staffed. All administrative tasks are currently being undertaken by various members of the board.

IAI has secured funding from the Heritage Council and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government; on that basis we intend to advertise for a part-time administrative position in November 2010.

Events

IAI Events

1-2 April 2011

Conference: **Spring Conference 2011**

2-day conference including the AGM

Venue: Dublin

Other Events and Conferences

20-21 November 2010

Neolithic and Bronze Age Landscapes of North Mayo

Venue: Belderrig Research Centre, Co. Mayo

26-28 November 2010

Early Medieval Settlements in North-west Europe, AD400 - 1100

EMAP Conference 2010

Venue: Global Irish Institute (GII), University College Dublin

4 December 2010

Recent Research in the Boyne Valley

A one-day public seminar, presenting recent archaeological, historical and natural heritage research in the Boyne Valley

Venue: 'dHotel', Scotch Hall, Drogheda, Co. Louth

1-5 August 2011

XIV International Congress of Celtic Studies

Venue: NUI, Maynooth