



Now and Again

Current and Recurring Issues
facing Irish Archaeologists

IAI Conference 2019

Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland

Friday 5th April

8.20–9.00 **Registration**

9.00–9.10 Introduction by **Dr James Bonsall**, Chairperson of the IAI.

Session 1 Part 1: Key Stakeholder Presentations

9.15–9.25 **Maeve Sikora**, National Museum of Ireland, Keeper of Irish Antiquities. Current issues for the National Museum of Ireland.

9.25–9.45 **Johanna Vuolteenaho**, Historic Environment Division, Heritage Advice and Regulations. Way Forward for Archaeology in Northern Ireland—Training and skills.

9.45–9.55 **Ciara Brett**, Local Authority Archaeologists Network. Archaeology and the Local Authority—Introduction to the Local Authority Archaeologists Network (LAAN).

10.00–10.20 **Ian Doyle**, Heritage Council of Ireland, Head of Conservation. Public attitudes to archaeology: recent research by the Heritage Council and RedC.

10.20–10.30 **Christine Baker**, Fingal County Council, Community Archaeologist. Community Archaeology.

10.30–10.40 **Dr Charles Mount**, Irish Concrete Federation, Project Archaeologist. Archaeological heritage protection in the Irish Concrete Federation.

10.40–11.00 **Tea and Coffee**

Session 1 Part 2: Key Stakeholder Presentations

11.00–11.15 **Michael MacDonagh**, National Monuments Service, Chief Archaeologist. What role the State in terms of professionalisation?

11.15–11.35 **Dr Clíodhna Ní Lionáin**, UNITE Archaeological Branch. Fiche Bliain ag Fás—Lessons Learned from 20 Years in Archaeology.

11.35–11.45 **Nick Shepard**, Federation of Archaeological Managers and Employers, Chief Executive. FAME—the voice of commercial archaeology in Ireland?

11.45–12.05 Dr **Edel Bhreathnach**, The Discovery Programme, former CEO. Reflections on the Discovery Programme and Irish archaeological research.

12.05–12.15 **Chelsea Ryan**, Association of Young Irish Archaeologists, Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland representative. The Voices of Youth: the State of Professional Archaeology in Ireland.

12.15–12.30 **Rónán Swan**, Transport Infrastructure Ireland, Head of Archaeology and Heritage. TII Archaeology and Heritage—Current Developments.

12.30–13.30 **Lunch**

Session 2: Voices from the Archaeological Profession

13.30–13.50 **Dr Meriel McClatchie**, University College Dublin, School of Archaeology, Assistant Professor. Archaeology in third-level institutions in the Republic of Ireland: where are the women?

13.50–14.00 **Dr James Lyttleton**, Irish Post-Medieval Archaeology Group, Chair. The Irish Post-Medieval Archaeology Group—who we are, what we do and why we do it.

14.00–14.15 **John Tierney**, Eachtra Archaeological projects. Community Archaeology the Eachtra way Or, making it up as you go along.

14.15–14.25 **Sara Nylund** and **Elizabeth Gardner**, representing Archaeological Illustrators. Archaeological Illustrators: Hidden in Plain Site.

14.25–14.40 **Faith Bailey**, IAC Ltd, Senior Archaeological Consultant. What do you do?’ A Brief Analysis of Current Roles in Irish Archaeology.

14.40–14.50 **Niamh McCullagh**, Position Statement Forensic Archaeology.

Keynote address

14.50–15.35 **Dr Sophie Hueglin**, Vice President of the European Association of Archaeologists. EAA and IAI: Empowering Professionals and People—Pasts and Politics for the Future.

15.35–15.50 **Tea and Coffee**

15.50–17.40 Round Table discussion

17.40–18.40 **AGM**

20.00–late **Table quiz** River Lee Hotel.

Saturday 6th April

9.30–10.00 **Registration**

Session 3 Part 1:

10.00–10.20 **Dr Lorna O'Donnell and Mick Monk.** Dedication to Dr Eileen Reilly.

10.20–10.40 **Dr Ben Geary.** The wet centre is bottomless?

10.40–11.00 **Dr Aaron Potito, Dr Karen Taylor, Dr Carlos Chique, Dr Daisy Spencer and Seamus McGinley.** Impacts of prehistoric farming on Irish lakes.

11.00–11.20 **Dr Susan Lyons.** Wood resource use and woodland management in early medieval Ireland.

11.20–11.40 **Dr Steve Davis.** Let's talk about Cess.

11.40–12.00 **Question and answer session**

12.00–12.20 **Tea and Coffee**

Session 3 Part 2:

12.20–12.40 **Dr Penny Johnston, Dr Ellen O’Carroll, Dr Lorna O’Donnell.** Environmental remains from an urban medieval site at Arundel Square in Waterford.

12.40–13. 00 **David McIlreavy.** A Blackpitts ‘phantasy’, Dublin 8 excavations (15E0555).

13.00–13.20 **Dr Alan Hawkes.** A newly discovered Neolithic enclosure on Baltinglass Hill, Co. Wicklow.

13.40–14.00 **Thomas C. Collin, Dr Ron Pinhasi and Dr Robin N.M. Feeney.** Archaeologists ‘don’t do dinosaurs’ but they can do ancient DNA: A discussion on the use of ancient DNA within the field of Archaeology.

Results of photography Competition

Close of Conference

Abstracts

Friday 5th April

Session 1: Key Stakeholder Presentations

Maeve Sikora

Current issues for the National Museum of Ireland

National Museum of Ireland, Keeper of Irish Antiquities

This short presentation will outline current issues facing the National Museum of Ireland, with particular reference to the Irish Antiquities Division, which is responsible for the care of the archaeological collections of the National Museum of Ireland. The Irish Antiquities Division carries out the statutory role of the Museum in relation to archaeological objects, consultation on behalf of the Director on archaeological excavation licenses, export and alter licensing and intake of archaeological finds from excavations. The short presentation will outline challenges facing the profession of archaeologists working within the Museum sector and, more generally, the training of Museum professionals.

Johanna Vuolteenaho

Way Forward for Archaeology in Northern Ireland—Training and skills

Historic Environment Division, Department for Communities, Heritage Advice and Regulations

A symposium for exploring ways to develop a Way Forward for Archaeology was convened in 2016 by the Historic Environment Division, Department for Communities. One of the key elements that emerged from the symposium was an acknowledgement that there is a need for more collaboration across the sector in order to realise the full value of archaeology in Northern Ireland. The symposium identified four main themes: Skills and Training; Legislation, Policy, Procedures and Standards; Communication and Engagement; and Framework for Archaeology and Archives. Task groups, comprising representatives from public, private and academic sectors, were established for each theme.

A survey on the training skills and needs in Northern Ireland was undertaken in 2018 by one of the task groups. This talk presents and discusses the results of that survey.

Ciara BrettArchaeology and the Local Authority—Introduction to the Local Authority Archaeologists Network (LAAN).

Local Authority Archaeologists Network

Archaeologists employed by local authorities have been meeting on an ad hoc basis since 2008. In 2018, the City and County Managers Association (CCMA) sanctioned the formation of a Local Authority Archaeologist Network (LAAN). The aim of LAAN is to provide a network between Local Authority archaeologists, to support and encourage their roles within Local Authorities, and to establish lines of communication with relevant agencies, in the interest of the promotion and protection of archaeological heritage.

The role and function of the LA archaeologist is broad ranging and encompasses more than the traditional 'planning archaeologist' role in many instances. Our roles are very much collaborative and while they may vary in each Local Authority the Network provides a necessary forum to share information and experience.

The following will be discussed:

- Core Responsibilities
- Benefits for the Local Authority
- Objectives of LAAN
- The LAAN Archaeologists

Ian DoylePublic attitudes to archaeology: recent research by the Heritage Council and RedC.

Heritage Council of Ireland, Head of Conservation.

In 2017, the pan-European NEARCH project published a public attitudes survey entitled *Europeans & Archaeology*. This study was conducted in nine European countries (United Kingdom, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, and Sweden). In December 2018, the Heritage Council of Ireland carried out a comparable survey seeking to examine the perception of archaeological heritage in Ireland. This evaluates the understanding, interest, and attachment to archaeological heritage, and examines the public perception of archaeology, its strengths and its weaknesses. This is the first time such public attitudes have been surveyed in Ireland specifically on archaeology and the existence of the Nearch survey allows for a ten-country European context.

The underlying aim of conducting this survey is to identify new insights into archaeology and heritage so as to examine the relationship between communities and experts. In a broad sense the answers show a very broad range of public support for archaeology, which sometimes exceed European averages; for example 92% see having archaeological remains as an advantage for a town and 83% see supporting archaeology as economically important for Ireland. Yet equally there are challenges to current models of practice, with insights like documentaries being the

most likely way to engage with archaeology (71%) and the traditional model of books mentioned far less (28%). Notably, 25% of the population would be interested in taking part in an archaeological excavation and this figure suggests that community archaeology projects involving excavation have a particularly important role to play.

Christine Baker

Community Archaeology

Fingal County Council, Community Archaeologist,

The presentation will briefly address the following issues: Community Archaeology in Ireland—a short overview; issues and training needs for archaeological professionals; and the sustainability of Community Archaeology.

Dr Charles MountArchaeological heritage protection in the Irish Concrete Federation

Irish Concrete Federation, Project Archaeologist

Archaeological heritage is a nationally significant non-renewable cultural and scientific resource. Ireland's national policy aims to avoid developmental impacts on the archaeological heritage and states that preservation *in situ* is always the preferred option. The National Development Plan 2018–2027 has the objective of filling significant infrastructural deficits to achieve socio-economic improvements for a growing population in areas such as housing, education, health, transport and low-carbon energy and climate-resilient adaption. These developments require large quantities of aggregates and concrete provided by the members of the Irish Concrete Federation (ICF). Both archaeological heritage and aggregate production provide significant social benefits and, with a proactive approach, the benefits of both can be realised without the latter impacting the former.

In order to achieve the objective of providing materials for national priorities while preserving archaeological heritage the ICF agreed a formal archaeological Code of Practice with the Government. My objective as Project Archeologist with the ICF is to work proactively to assist the industry in achieving the aim of preserving the archaeological heritage whist allowing quarrying to

supply the materials needed by society. Implementing this objective within a competitive industry requires flexibility, communication and cooperation between all the parties to the Code and the planning authorities.

Session 1 Part 2: Key Stakeholder Presentations

Michael MacDonagh

What role the State in terms of professionalisation?

National Monuments Service, Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Chief Archaeologist

The National Monuments Service (NMS) welcomes this IAI session on professionalisation and looks forward to summarising its involvement and plans to assist the profession in its development. As the regulatory authority in terms of core aspects of archaeological practice (in particular excavation, detection device survey and works to protected national monuments), the NMS has a key role to play in the practice of Irish archaeology. The legislative framework for the regulation of archaeological practice is robust and has supported the development of the archaeological profession in Ireland over many years. Indeed, it was a core objective of the National Monuments Act 1930 to ensure that archaeological excavation would only be carried out by competent persons—hence the inclusion in the 1930 Act of the

provision prohibiting archaeological excavation other than with a licence. This legislation has served us well and underpinned the development of an archaeological profession. The overall legislative scheme is, however, in need of consolidation and revision. All things going well, it is intended to commence the passage of the new Monuments Bill through the Oireachtas in the coming months. In terms of practical impact on the profession, the new Bill will simplify the regulatory process through integration of the various existing forms of licences and consents. While maintaining the position that breaches of the legislation are criminal offences, it will (in line with other areas of environmental law) create civil enforcement procedures to enhance the practical capability of the NMS to, for example, enforce licence conditions. The excavation competency interview will continue and, indeed, be given an express legal basis.

Pending introduction of the new legislation, the NMS will continue to use the existing licensing system for archaeological excavation to the best effect possible to support high standards of archaeological practice and to consider new methods for doing so within the current legislation. This can be seen in the recent changes to licencing and reporting conditions which have been made. Following consultation with the sector in 2016, the excavation licence application form and conditions were extensively revised. This created the basis for the introduction of new compliance procedures from the start of 2019. By working to improve the outcome of the licensing system through more effective regulation, the NMS is supporting both the overall archaeological profession and its individual members. In terms of

future supports, it would be the intention of the NMS to commence excavation site inspections to build on the supports it offers first time directors. There is a need for comprehensive archaeological standards to be developed, especially for excavation and post-excavation and the NMS stands ready to engage with and support the Institute in developing these. In terms of the Institute's CPD, which NMS supports financially, there is a need for more focussed professional development and the NMS recognises it must as the regulatory body engage with this more than it has in the past.

Dr Clíodhna Ní Lionáin

Fiche Bliain ag Fás—Lessons Learned from 20 Years in Archaeology

UNITE Archaeological Branch

This paper will present the story of the archaeological practitioner on two scales—the individual narrative and the lessons learned over a twenty-year career in archaeology, as well as the collective story of the archaeological sector, from boom to bust to apparent recovery. It will present vignettes over the course of a career where the archaeological practitioner could have benefitted from unionisation, as well as highlighting the important work that Unite has done in recent years in providing such support. It will examine how a balance can be reached between protecting our archaeological heritage, supporting our archaeological practitioners, and ensuring the viability of our sector.

Nick ShepardFAME—the voice of commercial archaeology in Ireland?

Federation of Archaeological Managers and Employers, Chief Executive

The Federation of Archaeological Managers and Employers (FAME) is a UK-based trade association and has been representing the interests of archaeological companies for over 30 years. With more than 50 members we act for both the largest and smallest organisations and recently have also begun to attract members from the Republic of Ireland. FAME's vision is to strive for a business environment where archaeological organizations can operate safely and sustainably, the well-being of employees is prioritised, and archaeologists feel empowered to build careers and expertise, so that collectively we can conserve and advance knowledge of the past for the benefit of society. In this we are complementary to the professional institute and organisations representing employees. Our presentation will focus on introducing FAME to a wider Irish audience, and on highlighting some of the key current issues facing commercial archaeology in Ireland.

Dr Edel Bhreathnach

Reflections on the Discovery Programme and Irish archaeological research

The Discovery Programme, former CEO

As CEO of the Discovery Programme (DP) for the past six years and a participant in the DP's Tara Research Project since 1991, I have followed the course of research in Irish archaeology keenly. In this talk I reflect on both achievements and short-comings of the discipline, and especially the Discovery Programme, and as I leave the CEO post raise some important questions about the viability of the DP in its current configuration.

Chelsea Ryan

The Voices of Youth: The State of Professional Archaeology in Ireland

Association of Young Irish Archaeologists, Committee Members

During the 2018 Association of Young Irish Archaeologists (AYIA) Conference, a session was held to discuss the six pillars of Archaeology 2025. What followed was a fruitful discussion on the concerns that current students, recent graduates, and novice professionals have regarding the practice of archaeology in Ireland. These issues were addressed again by the AYIA Committee Chair during a panel session at the 2018 *Dig* conference held in Kilkenny. This paper will continue the

conversation by highlighting five topics of concern regarding wages versus experience; training at both university and on the job; finding employment and overall opportunities; how current research sharing and networking shapes the industry; and which directions we should be pushing archaeology towards. Prior to writing this paper, the AYIA Committee prepared a survey with questions on each of the five topics. This was distributed to Higher Education Institutes across Ireland and Northern Ireland, as well as advertised on social media. Survey responses have been incorporated to the paper to reflect current perceptions on each of the five topics.

Rónán Swan

TII Archaeology and Heritage—Current Developments

Transport Infrastructure Ireland, Head of Archaeology & Heritage

In this short paper, I will present an update on ongoing developments within TII Archaeology and Heritage, which will be of relevance to IAI members and conference attendees, regardless of whether they are working on TII schemes or not. Highlighting changes arising from the Code of Practice for Archaeology, as agreed with the Minister in 2017. The recent implementation of procurement on the basis of quality:price, rather than solely on lowest price will also be illustrated. Finally, there will be consideration of the qualifications of archaeologists required under TII contracts.

Session 2: Voices from the Profession

Dr Meriel McClatchie

Archaeology in third-level institutions in the Republic of Ireland: where are the women?

University College Dublin, School of Archaeology, Assistant Professor

Recent reports from the Higher Education Authority in the Republic of Ireland have highlighted the under-representation of women among staff in higher education, particularly at senior levels (HEA 2018). By the end of 2017, although 45% of core-funded academic positions in universities were held by women, females held only 24% of professorial positions. Furthermore, women represented 64% of professional, management and support staff in universities, but only 30% of the highest-paid staff in this category. While there were two female presidents of Institutes of Technology in 2017, there has never been a female university president in the Republic of Ireland. Commenting on these data, the Minister for Higher Education, Mary Mitchell O'Connor, said "gender inequality exists as a result of systemic and cultural barriers which have solidified over time. We must work together to tear down these barriers." (Gender Equality Taskforce 2018).

It was in this context that UCD School of Archaeology decided it was time to undertake a detailed review of gender representation and equality within the School. The approach recommended by

the HEA and the Gender Equality Taskforce is development of an application for an Athena SWAN award. Athena SWAN was established to recognize third-level institutions and departments who are working to advance gender equality by encouraging representation, progression and success for all genders. An application requires a School/Department to take a close and often uncomfortable look at many aspects of their culture in relation to gender equality. Throughout 2018, UCD School of Archaeology undertook collation and analysis of data, consultation with staff and students (via surveys and focus groups) and benchmarking. This enabled a very detailed analysis of gender equality, completion of a substantial report for the Athena SWAN application and development of an ambitious Action Plan to address issues raised. This presentation will outline the process, results, challenges and opportunities experienced by UCD School of Archaeology, with the intention of generating a broader conversation about gender equality in Irish Archaeology and practical steps that can be taken.

Dr James Lyttleton

The Irish Post Medieval Archaeology Group—who we are, what we do and why we do it.

Irish Post-Medieval Archaeology Group, Chair

The Irish Post-Medieval Archaeology Group (IPMAG) is the only archaeology society or group that is dedicated to promoting a greater awareness of a specific period of Ireland's past. We as a group reach out through various activities in the form of

conferences, field trips and publications, engaging not only with colleagues, but also with the wider community on the importance of this island's archaeology from the sixteenth century onwards. IPMAG has also been active in lobbying government departments and heritage agencies in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland to recognise the value and importance of our post-medieval past. This has led to an increased awareness in and the study of this aspect of Irish archaeology, which has been all the more recently emphasised in this era of commemorations and where key locations are integral to our understanding of events from our most recent historical past. One of the aims of IPMAG is to seek greater protection for monuments of post-medieval date under national legislation on the island of Ireland, north and south. While awareness and appreciation of post-medieval archaeology has increased both within and outside the profession, challenges still remain. Both government bodies and commercial companies need to pay greater attention to post-medieval heritage assets and implement coherent strategies for dealing with and curating these resources.

John Tierney

Community Archaeology the Eachtra way
Or, making it up as you go along.

Eachtra Archaeological Projects.

Conceived at the World Archaeological Congress in UCD in 2008, the Historic Graves Project started in 2010 and the first community survey went online in 2011. Since then Eachtra have worked with over 500 communities in Ireland and the UK to survey and publish over 800 historic graveyards to the web platform www.historicgraves.com. Based on an EU Leader Rural Development ethos we developed a collaborative approach with local communities where we brought archaeological methods to the table and communities brought leadership.

This talk will explore our thought processes as we developed the project and compare with our experience in development-led projects.

Sara Nylund and Elizabeth Gardner

Archaeological Illustrators: Hidden in Plain Site

Representing Archaeological Illustrators

Archaeological Illustrators have a role which is rapidly evolving as new visualisation and recording strategies become sufficiently cost effective to allow them to be integrated into the archaeological process. Illustration is a strand which runs through the whole archaeological discipline from pre-determination mitigation reporting such as map regression analysis through the qualitative assessment made when drawing a plan or section in the field, to post-excavation analysis, publication and dissemination.

The commitment of archaeological illustrators as archaeologists producing accurate as well as aesthetically pleasing drawings forming part of the recording process is often not treated in parity with the written word. Experienced illustrators often collaborate with object specialists and identify extra information sometimes spotting unobserved features on objects due to the nature of the way we draw an artefact.

Our skills require training, practice and a deep comprehension of archaeological practice, theories and conventions to produce clear and succinctly visually readable images. We are never credited as authors, sometimes our work is not even cited. We encompass illustrators, photographers, surveyors and any archaeologist whose main output is visual as opposed to written.

CifA in the UK has the most comparative quantitative data stretching twenty years in *Profiling the Profession: A survey of archaeological jobs in the UK* (Aitchison 1999). This has evolved through further profiling the profession surveys to Archaeological Market Surveys since 2014. In 1999, questionnaires reported that 37% of organisations who responded offered specialist illustration services (127/349) and illustrators are found across all sectors (consultancy, contractor, academia, national agencies and museums). There were 53 individuals employed specifically as archaeological illustrators with salaries ranging from £8,017 to £19,000. The majority of the workforce was aged between 30 and 40.

The Profile of the Profession published in 2013 shows that salaries in the UK averaged £27,814 and an average archaeological

Illustrator earns below that at £24,411. However, 77% of the Illustrator workforce have more than 10 years' experience. In the whole profession, as surveyed, only 34% had more than 10 years' experience.

In discussions to define an archaeologist we would like Illustrators to be included. We would like the support of IAI to be able to help tackle issues both within our sub-discipline and the profession as a whole.

Archaeological Illustrators are faced with similar issues to other archaeologists as well as illustrators and these include:

- Pay and conditions—as across the board in the profession pay is low but there is little to no career progression so illustrators demoralisingly have no obvious salary scale to climb and little recognition for experience.
- Training—severely lacking. Very few undergraduate opportunities and no post-graduate opportunities available nationally or internationally (Only MA was in the UK and that closed several years ago).
- Intellectual Property, attribution, copyright and authorship issues.

Faith Bailey

What do you do?' A Brief Analysis of Current Roles in Irish Archaeology

IAC –Ltd, Senior Archaeological Consultant

The purpose of this position paper will be to briefly examine the current roles in Irish archaeology, with a view of ensuring that the 'definition' of an archaeologist does not forget the varied and multiple skills that many archaeologists within the country possess today. This ultimately will illustrate that a large portion of the profession are not simply confined to 'field archaeologists' with many archaeologists possessing multiple skills. These include field work, along with consultancy, CAD and GIS technicians, post-excavation work, geophysicists, specialists and project managers. Many individuals are working within multiple aspects of the archaeological environment, especially since the last recession where archaeologists have 'up-skilled' due to demand on what is currently a poorly resourced profession. In the context of the existing environment, where an emphasis is placed on field archaeologists, the paper will ask that a more holistic approach is taken in the process of defining an archaeologist so as to ensure that skilled professionals do not become disenfranchised from the process.

Niamh McCullagh

Position Statement Forensic Archaeology

The recognition of Forensic Archaeology as a sub discipline of Archaeology has under gone significant changes in the last 5 years.

In the UK the Chartered Institute of Archaeologists has developed a designated Expert Panel that requires application by a practicing forensic archaeologist. In Europe the European Network of Forensic Science Institutes (ENFSI) has recognised forensic archeology as a sub discipline within their crime scene working group and is currently drawing up minimum standards for practitioners. The definition of an archaeologist under Irish legislation is vital to the practise of this sub discipline in Ireland. This brief paper will briefly outline the differences in Archaeological Practise and Forensic Archaeological Practise and why it is crucial to establish these definitions.

Keynote Address: Dr Sophie Hueglin

EAA and IAI: Empowering Professionals and People—Pasts and Politics for the Future

European Association of Archaeologists, Vice-President

The European Association of Archaeologists (EAA) is undergoing a profound process of professionalisation necessitated by a continuing growth in the number of permanent members and conference participants. In 2018, there were more than 3,000 delegates at the 24th Annual Meeting in Barcelona. While preparing for future Annual Meetings in Bern (2019), Budapest (2020), Kiel (2021) and beyond, EAA contiously develops secretariat and conference management with local organisers. But EAA is more than a conference and the transformation affects all: e.g. the roles of the Board members, EAA Communities and each

individual member. Empowering all of them means to turn representation into responsibility and passive consumption into active cocreation.

EAA was chosen to represent archaeology in the European Heritage Alliance 3.3, and has helped to shape the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018. Following this, EAA continues to raise political awareness and engages in debates concerning archaeology in and beyond EU-Europe. For the European Elections in May 2019, EAA Communities have prepared 'Benchmarks for Archaeology and Heritage Protection'. By cooperating with partner organisations within and beyond Europe, in- and outside of archaeology, EAA seeks to become the voice of archaeology in—old and new—Europe.

Session 3 Part 1: Environmental and Urban Archaeology

Session chair: Dr Meriel McClatchie

Dr Lorna O'Donnell, Mick Monk.

Dedication to Dr Eileen Reilly.

Dr Ben Gearey

The wet centre is bottomless?

Coles and Coles (1989, 159) once enthused that: 'there is some argument for saying that the Irish bogs still hold more information about the past than any other wetland in Europe'. This was in part spurred by the results of survey and excavations carried out in the Moundillon Bog Complex, Co. Longford (Raftery 1990), and the establishment of the Irish Archaeological Wetland Unit at UCD. Where have we come in these three decades? This paper will reflect on the last 30 years of peatland archaeology in Ireland, revisiting the results of various archaeological and palaeoecological studies and reflecting on what we know and what we don't know, about human activity across prehistory in particular. It will situate this work within the context of broader societal developments in the perception and management of peatland environments and discuss the role of archaeology and archaeologists within these debates.

Dr Aaron Potito, Dr Karen Taylor, Dr Carlos Chique, Dr Daisy Spencer and Seamus McGinley.

Impacts of prehistoric farming on Irish lakes.

Palaeoenvironmental Research Unit, School of Geography and Archaeology, National University of Ireland Galway

Lake sedimentary records act as effective natural archives to record land-use change and associated environmental impacts through time. This comparative talk focuses on the interpretation of chironomid (non-biting midge) subfossils in lake sediment records in Ireland, where agriculture, and particularly pastoral farming, has been a predominant control on lake ecology since the transition to farm-based economies in the Early Neolithic ca. 4000

BCE. Due to their unique life history traits, chironomids are effective indicators of past environmental change. Chironomid communities are affected by a variety of inter-related environmental variables including temperature, lake water dissolved oxygen, benthic conditions and lake nutrient status. This talk integrates previously published and new lake sedimentary records from Irish prehistory to the recent past to investigate the utility and performance of chironomids as ecological indicators of land-use change through time. Chironomids are combined with lake sediment geochemistry ($\delta^{13}\text{C}$, $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ and C:N), fossil pollen and other analyses to investigate the impacts of land-use change on lake ecology from six lakes across Ireland. Ordination analysis shows that $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ and non-arboreal pollen indicative of grassland/pasture (NAPp) were the predominant controlling factors of chironomid community compositional change during the Irish Neolithic (4000–2500 BCE) and Bronze Age (2500–750 BCE), with Bronze Age farming showing a considerably greater impact than Neolithic farming on all lake systems. Comparison with chironomid surface samples shows that Irish lakes typically reach ‘modern’ impacted conditions ranging from the late medieval (1100–1600 CE) to the mid-20th century.

Dr Susan Lyons

Wood resource use and woodland management in early medieval Ireland: New advances and novel approaches using the archaeological charcoal record.

This talk will present some results from my doctoral thesis, which looked at wood resource use during the medieval period in Ireland using the archaeological charcoal record. Wood resource use and

woodland management during the early medieval period in Ireland still remains an elusive subject despite our wealth of archaeological research and historical sources. As one of the largest archaeological datasets available, charcoal is providing significant insights into local wood use variance at site level and the factors that influenced wood resource distribution and supply on a temporal and spatial scale.

The focus of this presentation will be on the fluctuating use of oak between the fifth and eleventh centuries AD and the pivotal role of corn-drying kilns as proxies for identifying intimate changes in the oak signal on a temporal and spatial scale. It will present hypotheses for how and why oak came under pressure in the late seventh/early eighth century, the human response to this as identified through the archaeological record, and the measures put in place to counteract this depleting resource.

This study will demonstrate how charcoal can challenge the results of existing applications and offers new ways to approach medieval woodland studies using the archaeological record.

Dr Steve Davis

Let's talk about Cess.

One of the areas that Eileen Reilly made something of a specialty of in recent years was the analysis of insect remains from urban medieval and sometimes post-medieval excavations. These are among the richest samples we encounter, which can be both a blessing (to those of us that love insects!) and a curse (because there are sometimes just so many of them). By their nature, these urban deposits contain many organic-rich, often smelly, deposits that are usually divided between the categories 'cess pit',

'tannery' and 'refuse pit'. This paper will review some of the key studies relating to this kind of deposit, including work on modern analogs and indicator packages, and explore some recent analysis on such features. While this is not an advertisement, this paper is intended to highlight the critical role insect analysis can have in providing more nuanced information on features of this sort.

Session 3 Part 2: Environmental and Urban Archaeology

Session chair: Dr James Bonsall

Dr Penny Johnston, Dr Ellen O'Carroll, Dr Lorna O'Donnell

Environmental remains from an urban medieval site at Arundel Square in Waterford.

This paper will focus on the environmental remains analysed from medieval and post-medieval deposits in Waterford, excavated by IAC Ltd in late 2016 and early 2017 at a site between Arundel Square, Sully's Lane, and Peter Street. A rich variety of disparate environmental material was found, preserved by both charring and waterlogging. Drawing on findings from a range of different studies (particularly the analyses of charcoal, wood, insects and non-wood plant macro-remains) we will discuss the benefits of combining results from multiple environmental proxies in order to better understand the complex environmental content found in urban archaeological deposits. The results are also combined with previous work undertaken at similar sites to create and gain an understanding of past medieval landscapes and how these varied at different urban medieval centres in Ireland.

This paper will incorporate results from one of the last pieces of work completed by our friend and colleague Dr Eileen Reilly. Eileen was a strong advocate for the benefits of collaboration in environmental archaeology, and in archaeology more generally, and we offer this paper in her memory.

David McIlreavy

A Blackpitts 'phantasy', Dublin 8 excavations (15E0555).

The 'phantasy' in the title of this presentation is a nod to Freud's 'idle game' covered in his *Civilization and Its Discontents*. And standing in the middle of an urban excavation it can seem that all monuments and buildings from different historical periods do coexist in the same place at the same time.

Over the course of 2016 a team from IAC Ltd were engaged to excavate a significant and challenging urban site to the immediate south of the Newmarket area in the Dublin Liberties. The excavation areas within the 5,500 sq. m site would produce c. 1000 individual contexts, 3,023 artefacts, over 200kg of animal bone, 124 pieces of leather, and 138 timber elements. However, the most challenging elements of the excavation related to the excavation what may be described as two 'Dutch Billy'-style house footprints on the site.

These structures were constructed on flood and occupational deposits immediately to the north of former River Poddle channel, partially utilising pre-existing stone-lined troughs and a mill race feature, as well as a number of re-purposed timbers that would seem to immediately pre-date their construction. Later insertion of the characteristic 'Dutch' corner fireplace structures within the structures, rearrangement of internal doorways, external windows and floor levels, all indicate a complex post-medieval developmental pattern that mirrors that of the surrounding urban landscape.

In particular, the excavations revealed that even within a relatively well mapped urban environment, archaeology still has the

capacity to inform on the development of an area which may not be captured in cartographic snapshots, or to completely overturn what those sources depict. Consideration of the particular structural elements covered in this presentation gives urban archaeologists much food for thought in our approaches to established building typologies and how to approach complex stratigraphies within the unique challenge of an urban context.

Dr Alan Hawkes

A newly discovered Neolithic enclosure on Baltinglass Hill, Co. Wicklow.

Thomas C. Collin¹, Dr Ron Pinhasi² and Dr Robin N.M. Feeney¹

Archaeologists ‘don’t do dinosaurs’ but they can do ancient DNA: A discussion on the use of ancient DNA within the field of Archaeology.

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The animosity between the fields of archaeology and ancient DNA (aDNA) has never been as prevalent in the academic world as over the past few years. Communities of archaeologists have spoken out against aDNA studies as responsible for destroying cultural identities and perpetuating Kossinna-like ideas of ‘master races’ (Heyd 2017). While aDNA communities speak of archaeological

studies as heavily subjective in nature and overly reliant on material culture. One such example of this animosity can be found with the debate on the 'Bell-Beaker phenomenon'. For many years archaeologists debated over the presence of a distinct Bell-Beaker peoples. Some hypothesised a migration of a new people group while others found the variety of Beaker artefacts hard to define as an emerging culture, likening it to a fashion craze of bell-shaped pottery that spread between distinctly different groups.

The colloquially known Bell-Beaker paper by Olalde (2018) suggested the near complete replacement of Neolithic peoples with Beaker steppe-related populations within a few hundred years, with subsequent populations inheriting very little of the Neolithic Britons DNA. Archaeologists were quick to point out that traditionally a large migration of new peoples brings the appearance of new ideas and cultural practices, however Beaker populations remained highly similar. An idea that for many archaeologists disputes Olalde's paper.

This talk aims to foster healthy discussion within the wider archaeological community about the application and use of aDNA studies within the field of archaeology. Using published works by Olalde (2018), Lazaridis (2016) and data from my own investigations, this talk proposes that aDNA studies can be used as a complementary source of information at sites with varied material preservation. Furthermore, the application of aDNA research at sites with poor preservation facilitates access to previously untapped information.

Samples from my own investigations at the Coombe, Co. Dublin (900–800 BP), and Satsurbliia Cave, Georgia (31,000–15,000 BP), were extracted using a novel buffer and aDNA libraries prepared to Meyer and Kircher (2010). Shotgun sequencing was undertaken using NextSeq™. Data was analysed for deamination frequency, strand length and misincorporation events through C>T substitutions, mapDamage2.0 and Geneious software.

At the Coombe site, sediment from within shoe contexts recovered genomic hits for *Claviceps purpurea* (Ergot) while home contexts displayed hits for both Ergot and *Secale cereal* (Rye). At Satsurbliia large-animal genomes were recovered from processing areas (PA) compared to Hearth contexts (HC) where small-animal genomes were more abundant. *Bos* (0.58%PA total mapped reads, 0.42%HC) *Capra* (1.61%PA, 1.16%HC), *Capreolus* (0.72%PA, 0.49%HC), *Aves* (0.02%PA, 0.4%HC) *Salmo* (0.09%PA, 0.31%HC), *Sus* (0.08%PA, 0.30%HC) and *Canis* (0.11%PA, 0.97%HC).

Ancient DNA data supported by archaeological evidence from the Coombe suggests potential consumption of ergot-infected rye and potential infection with St Anthony's Fire. While at Satsurbliia data suggests the processing of larger animals for tools while smaller animals were used more frequently for consumption.

Poster Abstracts

Ben Spillane BA, MA, PhD Candidate (Irish Research Council scholar) Department of Archaeology, University College Cork.

Middle of the Road or at the Top of the Game? Settlement and Economy in South-East Ireland during the Middle Bronze Age (1600–1150 BC).

The Middle Bronze Age (1600–1150 BC) is an enigmatic and poorly understood period of Ireland's prehistory, yet recent research indicates it may represent a previously unrecognised peak of economic and social transformation.

Datasets generated during the 'Celtic Tiger' boom have uncovered a large body of sites dating to the Middle Bronze Age that indicate increased levels of human activity, matching or surpassing that of the Late Bronze Age. This is reflected in the palaeoenvironmental record that shows significant woodland clearance and agricultural activity. It may be against this background that significant political upheaval came about at the end of the period.

This study will address this largely neglected yet key period, through an integrated landscape-scale investigation of south-east Ireland. This region is critical due to the large number of Middle Bronze Age sites from infrastructural development schemes, juxtaposed with varied topography and environment. Through the construction of activity-based Bayesian chronological models, integrated with a number of high-resolution, well-dated palaeoenvironmental sequences, the overall aim of the project will be to develop fine-grained models of human land-use during the Middle Bronze Age. This will create the basis for an integrated

understanding of the fundamental economic, societal and environmental changes during the period.

This poster presentation will introduce some preliminary analysis of the chronological and spatial relationships between various forms of Middle Bronze Age activity on a micro-landscape scale. Along with this, the potential of this analysis to understand the nature and extent of land-use in the study region will be discussed.

Dr Yolande O'Brien CourtneyDeery Heritage Consultancy

The Archaeology of Newcastle Woods, Co. Longford

This poster will describe the archaeology of Newcastle Woods, Co. Longford. Archaeological investigations in advance of the development of Center Parcs Ireland revealed a multi-period landscape which demonstrated Bronze Age exploitation of a wetland environment in the form of six burnt spreads located around the edge of the bog, as well as post-medieval land improvements undertaken by the King Harman family to create one of the largest estates in County Longford.

Post-medieval sites included a system of culverts, a bridge, kennels, paths and a decorative water trough related to the operation of the Newcastle Estate, which was owned by the Harman and King-Harman family. Laurence Harman King-Harman, the noted land improver, is responsible for many of these features, as he was credited with the construction of 'eighty

thousand perches of main and thorough drains, fourteen thousand perches of substantial fences, both stone walls and quicks, and many miles of farm roads, together with field gates numbering something like one thousand' (*The Irish Builder* 1868). A map of Newcastle dated 1875 depicts many of these improvements and illustrates the land use of different parts of the estate.

Investigations also included an excavation of 'Forgney House', the residence of the Atkinson family who occupied positions in local law enforcement. This vernacular homestead consisted of an L-shaped arrangement of house and outbuilding which were built directly on the subsoil and may have been mud-walled, with a cobbled courtyard and associated stone-lined well.

Róisín Nic Cnáimhín MPhil Candidate Department of Archaeology,
UCC

The Zooarchaeological Analysis of Faunal Remains from
Caherconnell Cashel

Excavations at Caherconnell Cashel, a drystone ringfort in County Clare, have produced a well-preserved faunal assemblage of substantial size. Through the zooarchaeological analysis of this assemblage the results will provide an understanding of the agriculture, settlement and economy of the site. It is a rural site of Gaelic occupation and high status that dates to the early and late medieval periods. As a Gaelic settlement, as opposed to Anglo-Norman, agriculture formed the basis of the site's economy. The analysis aims to investigate topics such as the role of animal

husbandry, hunting and fishing at Caherconnell which will contribute to our understanding of agriculture and economy of this high-status site. The assemblage consists of over 50 boxes of faunal remains, the examination of which will contribute to previous studies of animals in medieval Ireland. As the assemblage is comprised of both early and late medieval faunal remains, it provides the opportunity to understand changes and development in animal husbandry in high-status settlement sites. This poster presentation will discuss some of the preliminary findings from the faunal assemblage. The information will include the methodologies being undertaken as well as results from a context dating to the 10th century. These findings will include species identification along with taphonomic factors such as butchery, burning and gnawing, all of which indicate elements of human exploitation at the site.

Carolyn Howle Outlaw University College Cork

Irish Shell Middens: their loss and their archaeological potential

Coastal shell middens have the potential to shed light on many different aspects of human interaction with coastal environments over millennia. Approximately 600 shell middens can be found at various locations along the 7,500 km or so of the Irish coastline. These volumetrically variable deposits of discarded shells, charcoal, and other cultural material have a long chronology in Ireland from the Late Mesolithic through to modern times (80% of Ireland's human occupation). The abundance of shells which typify these sites create an alkaline environment that helps preserve

organic material, such as bone, that would otherwise be lost in the acidic Irish soils. They present a unique opportunity to analyse raw material usage, human-environmental interaction, seasonality, economics, taphonomy, and the changing relationships between the coast and agriculture. There is a false assumption that these information-rich sites all date to the Mesolithic. This stems from the antiquarian interpretation of the sites as indicative of groups without access to farming or 'better' options. A similar narrative links the sites to the Great Famine. In reality, some 80% of dated shell middens are post-Mesolithic and 75% of these are pre-Famine. A reanalysis of these sites is critical before rising seas, increased storms, isostatic shift, and coastal development destroy them forever. This research proposes rescue excavation and survey methods to deal with the loss of these poorly understood sites. The prompt and conscientious investigation of these significant and at-risk sites is crucial for a better understanding of Ireland's past interaction with the coast.

Niamh Millward PhD candidate at University College Dublin

The reconstruction of submerged Irish archaeological landscapes through the study of coastal peat deposits

Coastal peat deposits are a recognised source of well-preserved organic biological remains that can be used to reconstruct past landscapes and environmental conditions. This project seeks to survey coastal peat deposits at specific sites along the West, north-west and south-west coast of Ireland. The material that will

be studied in this project includes insect remains and pollen. This project will focus on the prehistoric period in Ireland and will attempt to better understand human activity and the human relationship with coastal woodlands during prehistory. This project also hopes to preserve the information locked within coastal peat deposits, as changes in climate have led to an increase in erosion of these types of environments.

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