



ULSTER
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SOCIETY

Newsletter

Winter 2021/22

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A Message from the President

A very Happy New Year to all UAS members and to all the many friends of the UAS.

My term as President of the Ulster Archaeological Society comes to a close next month. It has been an honour and privilege to hold this office and to have helped steer the Society over the last six years. The last two years, with the coronavirus pandemic raging, have been especially challenging. The fact that the Ulster Archaeological Society continues to go from strength to strength is a testimony to the passion and dedication of the UAS Committee. This commitment ensures that we continue to carry out our core aim of sharing information about new archaeological projects, research and publications in Ulster to both the archaeological profession and the general public. I wish to record my thanks to each and every one of the Committee, without whom the Society would not be as successful and as vibrant as it is.

During my time as President, in 2017, we hosted the first Discovery conference along with our long-time colleagues in Queen's University Belfast. This well-established conference, now in its sixth year, continues to play a vital role in informing people about the important work being carried out across Ulster and beyond by heritage institutions and bodies, commercial archaeological companies and community groups. The Ulster Archaeological Society held its first meeting at Queen's in October 1947 and we have enjoyed close ties ever since. Nearly 75 years on, we are proud to be a part of the Centre for Community Archaeology at Queen's University.

During the last two years, with the pandemic affecting face-to-face archaeological activities everywhere, the Ulster Archaeological Society has increasingly utilised digital technology to host such activities as online lectures, workshops, our UAS eNewsletter and our annual Discovery conference. I would like once again to thank Dr Duncan Berryman for the

huge amount of tireless effort and commitment that he has put into this work for the Society. We all miss meeting up in person with our friends and colleagues and it is my fervent hope that it will not be too long until we can do this again.

During the last six years the magnificent work carried out by Cormac Bourke (Hon. Editor of the Journal) and Grace McAlister (Hon. Assistant Editor of the Journal) has meant that the Ulster Journal of Archaeology is now being published annually once again. Volume 76 of the Journal came out in December of 2021. We are very proud of the Ulster Journal of Archaeology. It remains the longest established and principal source for the publication of archaeological excavation reports and other papers on archaeological research in Ulster and is internationally acknowledged as such.

The programme of activities being carried out by the Ulster Archaeological Society in 2022 will become available in the next few weeks. Please keep checking the UAS Facebook site and website for details of all our activities.

I wish my successor as UAS President the best wishes for the future. I would like to also thank UAS members and all of our other friends for their continued support and goodwill.

Best wishes,

Ruairí Ó Baoill
President, Ulster Archaeological Society

Membership Subscriptions

Subscriptions are due on the 1st January 2022. Please send cheques for £20 (full) or £25 (full non UK) or £7.50 (retired/student) or £10 (retired/student non UK) to the Hon. Treasurer, Lee Gordon, 135 Old Hollywood Road, Belfast BT4 2HQ. You can also use PayPal on the website – <http://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/uas/JoinUs/>

If you are a U.K. taxpayer, you can increase the value of your contribution, at no extra charge to you, by signing a gift aid declaration. If you pay by PayPal you must tick the gift aid permission box even if you have previously signed a gift aid declaration to allow the society to claim the gift aid.

If you pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of gift aid claimed on all your subscriptions & donations in that tax year it is your responsibility to pay any difference.

N.B. Please notify the Hon. Secretary, Ken Pullin, (16 Knockbreda Park, Belfast BT6 0HB) if you:

- Want to cancel this declaration
- Change your name or home address
- No longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains.

Lectures 2022

We are still working on the lecture programme for 2022. It is unlikely that we will be able to hold in-person lectures for most of this year. Zoom links will be emailed out to members and anyone can watch on our YouTube channel - <https://www.youtube.com/c/TheUlsterArchaeologicalSociety>
Recordings of the 2021 lectures can be found on our YouTube channel.

31 st January	'For want of a horse, the rider was lost': an introduction to Ireland's Late Iron Age equitation Dr Rena Maguire, Queen's University Belfast
21 st February	Burials and Society in Late Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age Ireland Dr Cormac McSparron, Centre for Community Archaeology
28 th February	Annual General Meeting
25 th July	40 Years 'a Digging. Reflections of an Irish Field Archaeologist Ruairí Ó Baoill, Centre for Community Archaeology
29 th August	Larne Lough. A Forgotten Seascape. Stephen Cameron, Antrim County Archaeological Society
31 st October	Irish Holy Wells Dr Finbar McCormick, Queen's University Belfast

Workshops 2022

Monday 7th March

How to Use Online Maps for Discovery and Research

David Craig, HeritageNI

This workshop will be held on Zoom and a registration link will be circulated to members.

Annual General Meeting

The 80th Annual General Meeting of the Ulster Archaeological Society will be held online via Zoom (<https://zoom.us>), the details are:

Date: Monday 7.30pm 28th February 2022

Meeting ID: 896 9365 0565

Passcode: UAS_AGM_22

Voting will take place using the polling facility within Zoom. Only paid-up members can vote during the AGM

Agenda

1. President's Address.
2. Minutes of 79th AGM held on Monday 22th February 2021.
3. Honorary Secretary's Annual Report for 2021.
4. Honorary Treasurer's Annual Report for 2021.
5. Election of Officers.
6. Election of two Ordinary Committee Members (3-year term).
7. Election of Honorary Auditor.
8. Business of which notice has been given.
9. Any other business.

Notices of motion and nominations for officers and committee positions should reach Mr Ken Pullin, Hon. Secretary, Ulster Archaeological Society, (16 Knockbreda Park, Belfast BT6 0HB or email ulsterarchaeolsoc@gmail.com) not later than Monday 7th February 2022.

The President, three Vice Presidents, Hon. Secretary, Hon. Treasurer, Hon. Editor Ulster Journal of Archaeology, Hon. Editor UAS Newsletter and Hon. Auditor are elected annually. Two Ordinary Members of the General Committee retire annually and are not eligible for re-election for one year.

Discovery 2021! Fifth Annual Review of Archaeological Discoveries in Ulster conference

The fifth annual conference was held on Saturday 6th November 2021 over Zoom with almost 100 attendees over the day. There was a packed programme organised into five sessions. We started the morning with a really interesting keynote from Prof. Carenza Lewis (University of Lincoln) about wellbeing and the benefit of community archaeology.

The first session led on from the keynote by focusing on community archaeology. Prof. Eileen Murphy of Queen's University and the UAS discussed the excavation of a famine road in Boho, Enniskillen. This was followed by the Friends of Knock Iveagh giving an account of how the group are working to protect the cairn on the summit of Knock Iveagh from the development of a wind turbine. The final talk of this session was Kate Robb (John Cronin & Associates) talking about a community project involving the

cross in St Mura's Church, Fahan, Co. Donegal. All these papers showed excellent work being carried out with communities across Ulster.

The second session was about prehistoric archaeology, starting with Dr Will Megarry (QUB) and Prof. Gabriel Cooney (UCD) talking about their work on the Neolithic landscape of Shetland. Cóilín Ó Drisceoil and Aidan Walsh provided an overview of previous and recent work on the Black Pigs Dyke, Co. Monaghan. Taking us furthest from Ulster, the final paper by Dr Robert Barratt (QUB) presented his PhD research on the astronomical alignments of temples in Malta.

Session three presented discoveries from recent excavations. First, Ruth Logue (QUB) showed us some of the discoveries from the student training dig at Stranmillis College, Belfast. Chris Lynn (Gahan & Long) told us of the excavation he has been supervising in Downpatrick, revealing a late prehistoric settlement and a famine graveyard. Dr Heather Montgomery (QUB)

presented the results of excavations of military training structures, such as trenches, at Magilligan, Co. Londonderry.

The penultimate session focused on medieval archaeology. Louise Moffett opened the session with an overview of her PhD research into the archaeological and documentary record of late medieval churches. Dr Tracy Collins discussed nunneries in medieval Ireland, which is the subject of her recent book. Judith Findlater presented her PhD research on the animal bones of medieval Carrickfergus.

The final session covered architecture and industry. Dr Colm Donnelly (QUB) discussed recent surveys of vernacular buildings in Fermanagh. Dr Christy Cunniffe (Galway Community Archaeology) reviewed the archaeology of the Ulster Catholics displaced to the Sliabh Aughty uplands after the Battle of the Diamond. Brian Sloan (QUB) showed the results of an excavation at an industrial mill complex in Newmills, Co. Tyrone. The last presentation was from Stephen Gilmore (NAC) on his

research into brick production around Belfast.

The conference was closed with a virtual wine reception and the launch of Dr Cormac McSparron's book *Burials and Society in Late Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age Ireland*. This was a great end to another excellent conference. Despite being online, there was plenty of audience interaction with the Q&A sessions. Hopefully next year we will be able to have some in-person elements to the conference.

Further information about the conference and our previous conferences can be found on our website - <https://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/uas/Conference/>

Duncan Berryman
Conference Co-Ordinator

June Lecture

The Society's June lecture was given by Brian Sloan of Queen's University Belfast. His lecture was an update on findings from the

2018-19 excavations at Cathedral Hill, Downpatrick.

Nine weeks of excavation were carried out over two years at Downpatrick Cathedral, supported by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council and Peace funding. The excavations were mainly undertaken by community volunteers who were not professional archaeologists and the excavation was designed in partnership with the community. Analysis of the findings are still ongoing and will form the focus for several student research projects over the coming years.

The Cathedral sits on a raised drumlin above the town of Downpatrick. The main focus of the excavation was in an area known as the tennis courts, the site was levelled here and tennis courts were constructed at some point in the recent past. Downpatrick has a complex history. The date of the earliest church is unknown. It is known to have had a round tower, which indicates an early construction date (the tower was removed around 1790). The site is mentioned in the Annals of Ulster

in 496 CE, but there is no indication of a church at this point. In 753 CE, there is mention of a great church on the site. This coincides with the expansion of Dál Fiatach kingship from the early 8th century. The creation of a major monastery could be associated with the growth in power of the Dál Fiatach. The Vikings attacked the monastery on several occasions in the 9th and 10th centuries. The Annals of the Four Masters indicates that there was a school within the monastery at this time. The monastery was burnt several times in the later Middle Ages. An Augustinian priory was established on the site in 1138, which was replaced by De Courcy's Benedictine abbey after 1177. The monastery became dilapidated by the 16th century and was burnt in 1538 by Lord Deputy Leonard Grey.

During the Middle Ages, the area around Downpatrick would have been mostly water. The water level of the Quoile was significantly higher before it was drained in the 18th century. Cathedral Hill would have appeared like an island in the salt marsh, with water on three

sides. To the north of the Cathedral is the Mound of Down, which was also surrounded by water. The Mound incorporates an unfinished motte and may also be associated with an earlier assembly space. The outer bank dates to the 10th/11th century, and this covered evidence of Bronze Age activity.

Excavations were carried out on Cathedral Hill in the 1950s by Dr Proudfoot, focusing on earthworks surrounding the hill. Two Bronze Age gold hoards had been found in the graveyard before the excavations and influenced Proudfoot to suggest the site was originally a Bronze Age hill fort. This remained the view until the 1980s when Nick Brannon re-excavated the area and found nothing earlier than early medieval. Thus the banks and ditches were interpreted as part of the enclosure of the early medieval monastery.

The first recent excavations carried out at the Cathedral were in advance of the erection of the replica of the 8th Century high cross. The location of the cross in the car park was intended to have minimal impact. However, part of

the medieval graveyard was uncovered, including fourteen individuals. Three dates were taken from these burials and ranged from 1031 to 1429 CE. Within this group were three juveniles and six neonatal burials, showing more than just monks were being buried here. The most recent burial (1328-1429) was of a woman, 35-50 years old, who had significant cavities in her teeth and scarring on her jaw bone, meaning she would have been in great pain around her mouth.

The tennis court area was first investigated by Time Team in the 1990s, where they found part of a wall that they interpreted as the Benedictine kitchen. This became the focus of the 2018 and 2019 excavations. Alongside the wall were very deep midden pits, providing glimpses into life in the monastery. The lower levels of the pits were waterlogged allowing the survival of wood and leather, although little leather was found. Two large staves of a barrel were uncovered and they possibly came from Dublin around 1197 CE. The bone assemblage was very large and one interesting artefact was a tuning peg from a harp. One of the

youngest volunteers found a stick pin that has parallels to others found in medieval Dublin and dates to the 11th/12th century. The most iconic find from the site was the fragment of a cross-slab that was probably once a grave marker. A significant collection of pottery fragments is allowing a student to rebuild many of the pots from the kitchen and it will be compared to the pottery of a kiln found in the 1980s on the side of Cathedral Hill. The animal bones and grain samples indicate a rich diet, with plenty of meat, wheat and barley. Masonry, roofing slates, and stained window glass help to show the appearance of the monastery buildings. To the east of the main excavation, a smaller trench uncovered a well and within it was a piece of metal from a shrine.

A trench opened to the north of the main area revealed a cobbled path and a stone-lined pit. The path indicates that people passed through this area and the pit contained slag from metalworking. Within the pit were a medieval bone die and a socketed arrowhead, showing games and violence were common on the site.

The stone-lined pit was cut into a deeper, flat-bottomed ditch which contained a piece of pottery and charcoal dated to 1282-1059 BCE. This provides tangible evidence for Bronze Age activity on the hill. This may have been a hill fort or associated with a burial.

Duncan Berryman

September Lecture

The Society's September lecture was given by Dr Alison Sheridan, formerly of National Museums Scotland. Her lecture was titled 'Movements and connections between Ireland and Scotland (and beyond!), from around 4000 BCE to around 1500 BCE'.

Connections between Ulster and western Scotland are well known from the medieval and modern periods. But those connections are now known to go much further back into the past.

During the Mesolithic, there is no evidence of any connection between Ireland and Scotland. This has been confirmed by genetic research. From 4,000 BCE, there

was a significant change in Britain and Ireland with the dawn of agriculture and pastoral farming. Domesticated animals and crops must have been brought to Britain and Ireland on curragh-like boats from the Continent. Genetic studies have confirmed that farming was brought to the islands by Continental migrants.

Chamber tombs (such as at Carrowmore, Sligo) in Britain and Ireland are very similar to those found in Brittany. These are mainly found along the western seaboard of Britain and northern coastal regions of Ireland. The tomb at Achnacreebeag (Argyll) had Breton-style pottery with a rainbow motif and a fragment of rock crystal, which can create rainbows. Such monuments probably date to around 4,000 BCE, based on pottery and C-14 dates from bone samples.

The carinated bowl tradition arrived in Britain from northern France (Nord-Pas de Calais) between 4,100 and 3,900 BCE. This brought a different pottery tradition and rectangular houses, along with funerary rituals with

open-air cremations and no stone monuments. The earliest dated evidence of this tradition in Scotland is 3,900 BCE, but in Ireland, it could be as early as 4,100 BCE. The causewayed enclosure at Magheraboy, Sligo, has evidence of carinated bowl farmers gathering at this early date. Networks of contacts amongst carinated bowl communities around the Irish Sea allowed objects, resources and ideas to move between Ireland and Scotland.

The non-megalithic timber funerary tradition was soon altered and evolved into the court cairn tradition found across northern Ireland and southwestern Scotland. These tombs were in use from 3750 BCE. Flint from Antrim has been found in graves and hoards in Scotland, while pitchstone from Arran has been found across northern Ulster. Hebridean pottery has been found as far as Portstewart, Co. Londonderry, and the Isle of Lewis. Porcellanite axeheads from Tievebulliagh or Brockley mountains have been found across Britain.

The development of passage tombs in Ireland shows an adaptation of the earlier traditions. Listoghill mound was added to the Carrowmore cemetery and Knocknarea was built overlooking the landscape (c. 3200 BCE). Similar changes occurred at Loughcrew and Brú na Bóinne, Co. Meath. Many of the designs of the passage tombs and their decoration have close parallels with Brittany. Inspiration for some features and artefacts were also drawn from Galicia and Portugal.

Genetic studies have shown that many burials in Irish passage tombs were related to one another. In particular, a burial at Newgrange was the result of an incestuous relationship. This suggests an organised society with elites who had significant social control.

In Scotland, there was also aggrandisement of early funerary monuments and appropriation of those earlier traditions. Long-horned cairns were added to earlier passage tombs, such as at Caithness and Orkney. Maeshowe has many parallels to Brú na Bóinne and the designers of

Maeshowe had likely seen Newgrange and the other monuments. A cruciform chamber, an astronomical alignment, and rock art are all taken from Newgrange to Maeshowe. The Orkney Vole also shows that there was direct communication between Orkney and the Continent c.3,200 BCE. The voles were probably brought from the Continent as food.

Orkney society developed new styles of stone circles, grooved ware pottery, and large walrus ivory jewellery. Carved stone balls were also developed at this time, and many have decoration that parallels rock art from Newgrange. Their houses also developed and were similar to the structure of Maeshowe. Grooved ware pottery is found across Britain and Ireland and the macehead at Knowth is part of the Orkney tradition of maces.

Connections between Ireland, Britain, Brittany, and Galicia continued into c. 2,800 to 2,500 BCE. Rock art from many sites shows similar styles and connections. Many outcrops of

rock art were reused in the Bronze Age, such as at Dunchraigaig, Kilmartin Glen. Around 2,500 BCE saw the arrival of the 'Beaker People'. This brought many new artefacts and metalworking. Copper from the mine at Ross Island, Co. Kerry, has been found across Britain and particularly in northern Scotland. A burial at Culduthel, Inverness, has been dated to 2280-2020 BCE and isotopic analysis shows he was brought up in County Antrim. The accompanying grave goods are typical of a Beaker burial with an archer's wrist guard made from Lake District stone, riveted to hide with copper rivets capped with gold. A pair of graves also from Inverness contained a male with an Irish copper dagger and a female with an Irish style bowl. For the first time, there were sets of grave goods for different genders displaying prestige.

Duncan Berryman

October Lecture

The Society's October lecture was given by Dr Katharine Simms of

Trinity College Dublin and examined 'The transitory character of society in Gaelic Ulster'.

The accuracy of documentary sources is often questioned by archaeologists, but they have a lot to contribute to the study of Gaelic Ireland. The 12th-century account of Roger of Hoveden records the construction of a temporary palace for Henry II of England at Dublin, "according to the custom of that country". The annals of Ireland record that Gaelic chieftains constructed 'Easter Houses' to hold feasts for their nobles and dependents; such feasts were also held at other festivals such as Christmas and Whitsun. In 1387 Niall Ua Neill constructed a temporary hall on Emain Macha for a feast of the poets and the poems about Niall that may have been written for this occasion. However, no trace of this hall has yet been uncovered on Emain Macha, the only relic might be a wooden drinking cup found on the hill in the 19th century.

Gaelic lords may have often brought the learned classes (poets, bards, sages, and musicians)

together for feasts or festivals. William O Celliag is said to have hosted a Christmas feast for many scholars, poets and entertainers at his castle in 1351. And a 16th-century text tells of the 14th-century residence of Aodh Mor O Neill at Fraochnhagh, where there were 60 sturdy houses for such people alongside his mansion. *Fulacht fiadh* were used for cooking and brewing and may have accompanied such feasts. However, there is not the same archaeological evidence for the *fianbotha* (hunting or cooking pit huts), which were temporary shelters for cooking that are recorded in contemporary literature. Many of these huts would have been constructed from hazel rods and thatched with available materials. The literature most often associates such shelters with military campaigns and particularly while resting before dawn raids. The 14th-century French chronicler, John Froissart, was told by an Anglo-Irish interpreter that the Irish hid in forests and lived in holes under trees. This might be a reference to trenches dug to hold the hazel rods of such shelters. The English

likely interpreted these shelters as the permanent dwellings of the Irish they were fighting.

The houses of Deer Park Farms give us an indication of the style of house that may have been common in Gaelic society. The law tracts indicate that the housing of the tenants distinguished their social status. The free farmers of a landholder were described as having new buildings, while hereditary serfs were identified by their houses of old hurdles or wickerwork. When the Normans came to Ireland, many Gaelic farmers were forced to return to their land and farm it under their new lords. Serfdom died out in the wake of the Black Death, with the only serfs being left on church lands as they were protected from taxation. The exactions of English landlords in the 15th and 16th centuries caused many tenants to change their landlord each year and the English believed this practice discouraged the Irish from constructing stone buildings or improving their land. Bartlett's 1602 map of Armagh probably shows these Irish buildings of

wattle-work walls and thatched roofs.

Transhumance (moving cattle into the upland in the summer) was common in Ireland, and elsewhere in Europe. A survivor of the Spanish Armada remembered seeing abandoned huts where the Irish came during the day and returned to the village. This account suggests the whole village moved. In some parts of Ireland, it is common to find the same townland name in the lowlands and the uplands, indicating both areas were part of one townland. A 14th-century Catalan pilgrim in Ulster mistook the movement of cattle between lowland and upland for nomadism and believed the Irish permanently moved around with their cattle. In pre-Norman times, the annals record the population of whole provinces moving to escape local famines or war. Migrants in wartime were known as *imirceda*, these included women, children, and cattle. In the 14th century, the word *creaght* or *caoraighect* was used to describe groups of landless warriors and their families who were bringing their livestock to graze on other's land, as

trespassers or in exchange for rents. Sometimes the head of a *creaght* was a poet or a mercenary captain and, in these cases, they may have been bringing their livestock to graze the lands of an employer before moving to another employer. The spread of the term *creaght* was associated with new social conditions, particularly the increase in pastoralism after the Black Death and increased warlike activity due to the Gaelic resurgence. In the 15th century, the church authorities in Armagh complained that the O'Neills were driving out church tenants by bringing their *creaghts* to graze on church lands. By the following century, the O'Neills were occupying these lands, creating the lordship of the O'Neills of the Fews, and paying rent to the primate in Armagh. The heads of the *creaghts* collected rents for the O'Neills based on the number of cattle their tenants held. These cattle were counted on the 1st May and 1st November, implying they were counted when they were brought to and from the upland grazing and that Gaelic society was still practising transhumance. In the 17th century the term *creaght* was

beginning to be used for the temporary dwellings of the people, rather than the groups of people themselves, and confusing the Irish word with the English word create. There may be confusion in the use of the term for temporary dwellings. The Irish adopted the Viking term *longphort* and used it to refer to palaces and strongholds with no maritime association as well as temporary fortifications.

Assemblies, or *ao-naigh*, were held on greens outside the lord's castle or on hills and raths. The identity of such sites is often known by local folklore and could be archaeologically investigated. Prof. Fitzpatrick, while researching Gaelic inauguration sites, noted that the Thingmote on the Isle of Mann was covered with colour cloth during meetings, something that could never be recovered archaeologically. Later accounts of assemblies suggest the use of booths and tents to house attendees. Such assemblies lasted over several weeks and had an associated fair.

Duncan Berryman

December Lecture

The Society's December lecture was given by Dr Michael O'Mahony of Queen's University Belfast. His lecture was on 'Reconstructing Ireland's Castles: An Archaeological Interpretation of the Environs of the Irish Tower-House'.

Today tower houses appear to be isolated structures. But this was rarely the case when they were occupied. Tower houses were centres of rural landscapes and were the representation of lordly authority. They were also not primarily military structures and were only designed to withstand small-scale raiding.

The most common defensive structure was the bawn wall. However, only a fifth of towers had a bawn. Lords may also have added earthworks and moats around their tower houses to increase their protection from raiders.

Tower houses were residences for Gaelic lords, but they did not have the space internally to entertain.

Thus there would have been external structures to facilitate feasts. The castle also needed to house and feed guards, stewards, and craftsmen. The main domestic structure associated with the tower house was the hall. These were typically timber or earth constructs with a central hearth for cooking. The hall was the social and administrative centre of the castle. Kitchens are found, but not common; examples have been found at Dysert O’Dea and Parke’s Castle. In 1584, Richard Stanihurst recorded that Gaelic lords held feasts in their hall, or palace, but slept in their castle because the thatch of hall was vulnerable to fire from attackers.

Tower houses were accompanied by economic buildings. The original meaning of bawn was ‘cattle enclosure’ (*bádhún*) as Ireland’s economy was primarily pastoral at this point. Prize animals were also kept in the cellar of the tower for additional security. Dovecotes were also part of castle structures, such as that at Aughanure (added into a corner tower). Dovecotes provided food, but they were also associated with

Catholic theology. Mills were also constructed in the landscape around towers.

The historic environment record of Ireland shows that 69% of tower houses had no archaeological features within 25m. This is surprising as we know tower houses were the centre of busy communities. The Civil Survey records that many tower houses were in a ruined state by 1654-56. Post-medieval maps of Ireland give us an indication what the tower houses would have looked like in the 16th/17th century. The 1601 map showing Glin Castle depicts a burning village to the right, a bawn enclosure around the tower and a banqueting hall within the bawn.

The Civil Survey was an assessment of land ownership in Ireland after the Cromwellian wars. The entries in the survey describe tower houses, their owners, and surrounding buildings. The Inchiquin Manuscripts are a detailed set of documents related to the Ui Brian dynasty. The Calendar of Ormond Deeds is a large collection of records detailing land ownership and buildings. The

National Library of Ireland has a vast collection of illustrations and photographs that have been digitised; many castles illustrated have since been lost.

Several excavations have shown bawn walls and other structures associated with tower houses. In particular, these have been noted at Parke's Castle and Barryscourt. Carrigafoyle Castle had a double bawn surrounding it and water defences. Aerial photography has been used to help identify the location of the bawns despite their ruinous condition.

Many castles had ancillary buildings and other structures within a 50m radius. Data quality from the SMRs means that it is hard to ensure all structures are picked up without further data processing. Thus there are no associated structures shown in Northern Ireland. The most common structure found beside a tower house is a 17th-century house, followed by churches. Bawns and mills are also quite common. Post-medieval houses are often an attempt to combine all the features of a tower house into a single

building. These houses may be on the same position as the medieval hall.

Gaelic lords displayed their piety through the construction of churches. This also ensured the ecclesiastical authors would give them a good obituary in the annals. There were many Franciscan foundations at this time. Private chapels were constructed within the tower house and a lord could request a private chaplain.

Many of the unclassified castles recorded in the SMR are likely to have been tower houses. Within the Civil Survey, there was a large range of 17th-century residences, with "castle" being the most common term used; this could mean a tower house or something else. Many tower house locations were also the sites of earlier castles or moated sites. Tower houses and their surroundings must be re-evaluated. Some tower houses have had restored features, such as the banqueting hall at Dysert O'Dea, or lost later features, such as the modern house at Aughnaneure.

Duncan Berryman

Current Research by postgraduate students within QUB ArcPal

The number of postgraduate researchers in ArcPal continues to grow and some of the newest wanted to take this opportunity to update UAS members on the current areas of research.

Researcher Name: Gosse Bootsma

Project Title: Dynamics of carbon capture in Scottish and Irish peatlands over the past centuries

Project Abstract: The project is part of the QUADRAT DTP, funded by the NERC. My supervisors are Maarten Blaauw (QUB), Dmitri Mauquoy (University of Aberdeen) and Gill Plunkett (QUB).

My project focuses on carbon storage in peatlands in Scotland and Northern Ireland over the last few centuries. Northern Ireland and Scotland are the ideal study site, as large areas of globally important peatland are present here. I am really interested in the plant life, specifically mosses, found in peatland ecosystems. This,

combined with the importance of peat in fighting the climate crisis, is why I am really excited to start my PhD.

To work out the details of the history of the peatland and the conditions under which they were formed, a range of techniques including carbon dating, lead dating, pollen analysis, testate amoeba analysis and Bayesian modelling will be used.

Researcher Biography: My background is in Plant Sciences, with a focus on biodiversity and ecology. Before starting at this PhD, I worked for a biodiversity NGO, where I was involved with their Peatland programme. I am really excited to work more on peatlands here at Archaeology and Palaeoecology!

Researcher Name: Helen Essell

Project Title: Human-Environment Dynamics through the Holocene in the Mourne Region, Northern Ireland

Project Abstract: My PhD project is a DfE Collaborative studentship,

supervised by Dr Gill Plunkett and Dr Maarten Blaauw, in collaboration with the Geological Survey of Northern Ireland, aiming to reconstruct the natural and cultural heritage of the Mournes.

Deep peat records will be collected at sites within the western Mournes to reconstruct the long-term vegetational and climatic history of the region through pollen analysis. Targeted palaeoenvironmental sampling will be conducted in the vicinity of archaeological and historical sites within the Mourne uplands to provide time-specific contextualisations for human activities, and suitable sites in the adjacent lowlands will be sought to establish comparative records for settlement and land-use intensity.

This will allude to the roles of climate and demographic change in stimulating migration to and from higher ground, demonstrating whether past occupation of the Mournes was continuous or intermittent, permanent or transient. With the view to informing public understanding of the complex history of the region,

this project aims to ensure a deeper appreciation of the significance of the upland areas for not only past, but present and future populations.

Researcher Biography: My background is in Geography, and I have recently finished my MPhil where I evaluated the truthfulness of proxy-based reconstructions of Holocene temperature, seeking to aid more accurate interpretation of contemporary climate change. When not tending to my ever-growing collection of houseplants, I enjoy spending my spare time outdoors and am very much looking forward to exploring Northern Ireland!

New Books

Burials and Society in Late Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age Ireland - Cormac McSparron
Archaeopress, £35

This is the first volume in a series of Irish Archaeological Monographs by Queen's University Belfast and Archaeopress, and this volume presents the doctoral research of Cormac McSparron. This book opens with an overview of the Chalcolithic period and a discussion of theoretical approaches to the study of funerary archaeology. The majority of the volume is an analysis of burial traditions, such as grave goods, pottery motifs, grave size, sex patterns, and locations of burials. The final chapters discuss what we have learnt about Irish society in the Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age, there is also a proposal for a chronological model of the single burial tradition in Ireland. This book is a rich source of data, with every possible aspect of burials being analysed, supported by extensive distribution maps, tables, and graphs. This means that it makes a significant contribution to our understanding

of prehistoric Ireland and will be essential reading for anyone studying that period, but it is not a book for the casual reader.

Village and Colony Asylums in Britain, Ireland and Germany, 1880-1914 – Gillian Allmond
BAR Publishing, £69

This significant book presents an overview of asylums in the British Isles and Germany and a detailed investigation of several case studies. The work particularly focuses on the asylums which had accommodation dispersed across their site, rather than the more common single building (similar to a prison). One of the case studies and a typical example of this institution is the Belfast District Asylum at Purdysburn. The descriptions and analysis of the sites are accompanied by a significant number of plans and photographs. Throughout this work we get a good understanding of life within the asylum and how the complex appeared. The discussion of light and domesticity within asylums provide interesting and new approaches to studying these institutions. This book will be of

relevance to anyone interested in the archaeology of the recent past and buildings, often still in use, within our landscape. The illustrations are very helpful and the text is informative and insightful.

Churches in the Irish Landscape AD 400–1100 - Tomás Ó Carragáin
Cork University Press, £45

This is an important study of the early medieval church in Ireland, discussing the arrival and development of church foundations and estates. There was an evident move from the earliest foundations as part of royal estates to churches serving communities. The chapters of the book discuss these changes chronologically, with subsections for the case study areas. The layout and illustrations make this book accessible to a lay reader, there are many interesting diagrams, such as excavation plans and cross-slabs, and the distribution diagrams are clear and useful. This volume will be of immense use to anyone studying the early medieval period, as the church had an impact on the landscape, landholdings, and

society (all of which is covered here). It will also be of interest to a lay reader, as the information about the sites will help to bring them to life if you were to visit, and parallels can be drawn with church sites closer to home.

Temporary Places: The Great House in European Prehistory - Richard Bradley
Oxbow Books, £16.99

Continuing Oxbow's 'Insights' series, this book provides an overview of prehistoric halls or great houses that were at the centre of these societies. Ireland features prominently throughout, with sites such as Navan, Tara, and Knockaulin among the many examples discussed. Bradley covers the archaeological evidence from these sites and goes on to suggest how these structures were used and the meanings of their construction and destruction. This is a useful reference book for these buildings and widens the perspective to include all of northern Europe and parts of eastern Europe.

Some screenshots from Discovery 2021! (Shared by Courtney Mundt)

