



ULSTER
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SOCIETY

Newsletter

Spring 2018

Editor: Duncan Berryman

School of Natural
and Built Environment,
Queen's University Belfast
Belfast BT7 1NN

newsletter.ulsterarcoc@gmail.com

Find us online at: uas.society.qub.ac.uk | Find us on Facebook and Twitter (@UlsterArcSoc) | Email us at: ulsterarchaeolcoc@gmail.com



From the Editor

This year marks the 80th anniversary of the third series of the Ulster Journal of Archaeology, with part 1 issued in January and part 2 in July. It is a great achievement for the UAS to have supported the publication for so long. And it won't be too long before we have Volume 73 landing on our door steps.

The committee has already had a busy start to the year sorting the Society's insurance and the new GDPR requirements. We are very grateful for all the work to keep us safe and legal. I have also had a busy few months finishing off the final version of my thesis. Now that it is finished, I might get the Newsletters out on time!

Duncan Berryman
Editor

Discovery 2018! Second Annual Review of Archaeological Discoveries in Ulster

This conference will take place at QUB on Saturday 3rd November with a full day of lectures in the main lecture room of the Geography Building. All are welcome! As before, this conference is being organised by the UAS and the Centre for Community Archaeology at QUB. More information will be placed on the website - <http://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/uas/Conference/>

Subscriptions were due on 1st January 2018

If you still have not paid, please send cheques for £20 (full) or £7.50 (retired) to the Hon. Treasurer, Lee Gordon, at the address on the cover of the Newsletter. You can also use PayPal on the website - <http://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/uas/JoinUs/>

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Diary Dates

Lectures

Monday 8pm, Elwood Building, QUB

21 st May	Christina O'Regan and Fintan Walsh (Irish Archaeological Consultancy)	The Ulster Scots Archaeology Project
24 th September	Stefan Bergh (NUI Galway)	The Mullaghfarna and Turlough Hill Settlements: More than meets the eye
22 nd October	Dave Pollock (Archaeografix)	Barryscourt Castle County Cork
19 th November	Stephen Cameron (Antrim County Archaeological Society)	Rediscovering the Lost Sites of East Antrim
10 th December	Karl Brady (National Monuments Service)	Archaeological Investigations of the Spanish Armada Wrecks at Streedagh County Sligo

Field Trips

19th May – Day trip to Archaeological Sites on the Shores of Lough Neagh

18th June – Evening fieldtrip (location to be decided)

6th August – Evening fieldtrip (location to be decided)

18th August – Day trip to Creggandevsky, Co. Tyrone

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

Contact Ken Pullin for info on ulsterarchaeolsoc@gmail.com

Survey Group News

The survey group completed autumn and winter season of research, report-writing and training at Rowallane and kicked off the 2018 survey season on 24 March 2018. This was an early start, mainly due to the early Easter this year and for our first outing, we made our way to Mount Stewart in County Down. There, we were asked to survey three sites at a part of the demesne known as the Sea Plantation. This is outside the main area of the National Trust property and to the west of the main road connecting Newtownards and Greyabbey. As its name suggests, the Sea Plantation runs along the shore of Strangford Lough and contains a number of unusual and enigmatic monuments. Our targets were a Second World War observation tower, an enigmatic three storey stone building and a circular concrete structure, possibly the location for a wartime anti-aircraft gun, or a revolving summer house. As these monuments have not yet attracted the usual level of attention from the National Trust, access was quite difficult and we had to take care none of the group

came to any harm. Despite the difficulties, the weather was unusually warm and sunny and we were able to complete two of the surveys. It was decided that the enigmatic stone building would require the undivided effort of the group, so we will have to return to this at a later date.

Not long after this survey, we learned of the passing of the mother of our esteemed friend and colleague Mal Conway and we send our heart-felt condolences to him and his family at this sad time.

As in recent years, we are receiving increasing numbers of requests from organisations and individuals to carry out surveys on monuments that are not connected to the National Trust. We try to accommodate these as much as possible, but until recently, concern about our insurance cover has prevented us from undertaking these. As this has now been resolved, we can now consider these again, although they usually require much more work in terms of site visits, arranging access and safety risk assessment.

Currently, the survey group has surveyed a total of 75 monuments and published 67 reports on the

UAS website. The outstanding reports are at various stages of completion, but we try to keep our backlog to a minimum before each survey season gets underway. We look forward to the new season and exploring the wide variety of monument types that Mal arranges for us. As always, membership of the survey group is open to all UAS members and we welcome new members at any time. No previous experience is necessary. Just ask any member of the committee for details or check out our page on the UAS website.

Harry Welsh
Fieldwork Co-ordinator

December Lecture

Our December lecture was given to us by archaeological consultant Cathy Moore. Cathy was appointed as the wood specialist on the Drumclay excavations in 2012/2013 and as such was responsible for managing the recording and preserving of the wooden artefacts and wooden structural remains on the site.

Cartographic evidence depicts Drumclay Crannóg as an island in a

small inter-drumlin lake at the junction of three townlands. It was known locally as a blind lake, meaning a hidden wetland where animals could stray and get easily lost. The crannóg was an artificial island constructed of overlapping wooden platforms stacked like pancakes. A total of 57 platforms, mostly made of alder and surrounded by wattle walls were excavated and dated to the 9th-15th century, with some occupation in 17th century and the peak of activity occurring in the 9th and 10th centuries. The platforms carried houses which all had a similar form, with evidence that they had been dismantled and rebuilt with the central hearth remaining in the same place. Interestingly, no internal roof supports were found in any of the excavated houses. The material culture was incredibly rich, with stone, bone, metal, wood, leather, glass and amber artefacts recovered. The assemblage was also overwhelmingly domestic, with many of the items being produced on site, evident by the manufacturing waste found, highlighting the self-sufficiency of the crannóg occupants. While

many of the artefacts are paralleled on other crannóg sites and some dry land sites, the scale and quality of the Drumclay artefacts exceed those found on other crannóg sites and in fact are more on a par with assemblages from urban excavations.

A total of 957 wooden artefacts were recovered from the site, which for such a small site is a very large and rich assemblage indicating that wood formed the foundation of daily life. The dominate woodcraft on site was cooperage with the excavation of a Cooper's workshop producing numerous unfinished staves and wooden hoops. Cooperage is a very specialist woodcraft evidenced in Ireland since 7th century, and of the 300 wooden vessels found a Drumclay, 200 were coopered. Some of these vessels were very fine, staved wooden cups, similar to vessels found at Deer Park Farms. The vast majority were made of yew, with the hoops made of hazel.

Wood turning also occurred on site but was less common than coopering with only 35 turned items found. This is paralleled at

Deer Park Farms where there was also a preference for coopered vessels. The turned items are mostly small fragments of bowls and cups, predominantly made of alder, but also of ash, willow and yew. One of the most notable turned vessels was a plate which had been broken but repaired with copper wire stitching.

Carved vessels included bowls, kegs, platters and the iconic cheese press. It is carved from willow and is a squat, circular dish in the base of which there are 11 perforations and an incised cross with expanded terminals. There are many superstitions associated with dairying which were well documented by Estyn Evans and the carving of cross in the base of the vessel may be evidence of the Christianisation of these superstitions.

Three dugout canoes were found during the excavation. The most intact example was a light vessel made from oak, suitable for six paddlers and designed for fast travel over longer distances. The other two examples were made from ash with one seemingly a smaller, heavier vessel suitable for

only two occupants which could have been used for travel between the lake and the shore. A total of eight paddles were found on site, mainly made of alder.

A number of net-floats were a very significant find. They were made of cork oak from the Mediterranean indicating the significance of the site and the wide trading connections of the crannóg occupants with larger urban centres.

Other artefacts included 12 fragments of wood artefacts, with an incised, carved or burnt decoration (similar to examples found at Cavancarragh and Hillsborough); 30 spoons, carved from pernicious fruit wood (comparable to medieval spoons found in Waterford); items associated with weaving such as combs, spindles, tablets, pins, distaffs and a weaving sword; items associated with footwear including two shoe lasts, and wooden toggle fasteners; tools such as mallets and shovel blades; a large, incomplete gaming board made from ash and 15 carved gaming pieces (mostly conical with a flat base).

The Drumclay wooden artefact assemblage is the finest assemblage from a rural site in Britain or Ireland and the most significant excavated in Northern Ireland. It rivals assemblages from Cork, Dublin and even York and is more complete and wide-ranging than any of the assemblages from antiquarian excavations of crannógs. The quantity of artefacts and the discovery of unparalleled items means the Drumclay assemblage undoubtedly has the potential to redefine typology and chronology of early medieval material culture in Ireland.

Grace McAlister

January Lecture

The Society's January lecture was given by Terence Reeves-Smyth of the Historic Environment Division and was a history of the deer parks of Ireland.

Deer parks were an integral part of the demesnes and landscapes of Ireland. However, they are now much reduced and we still do not know the full extent of their existence. About 30 medieval deer parks are known, but it was

probably significantly higher. Most of the known parks are 17th and 18th centuries. In 1990, about 300 parks were known, but today the figure is well over 600.

Hunting is often considered to be an elitist past-time, but it consumed a significant amount of the lives of the elite. Bede recorded that Ireland was known for hunting of stags by the early Middle Ages. The law tracts and annals note the hunting of deer as an aristocratic activity. Deer were considered a symbol of purity and were depicted on some high crosses. Anglo-Saxon hunting was carried out with dogs to drive the deer so archers and spearmen could catch them. The Irish wolfhound was created to chase the deer across open country, hunting by sight. However, the modern wolfhound is a creation of the Victorian era.

The Anglo-Normans brought the deer park to Ireland as a new method of hunting. It's been suggested that there were 60 deer parks in Ireland and over 3,000 in England. Normans viewed game differently, they believed it was crown property rather than that of

the land owner. The right of free warren allowed lords to hunt smaller game, while the right of free chase allowed them to hunt larger game across the countryside. There may have been ten royal forests created, but only Glencree in Wicklow appears to have been reasonably well established. Glencree was an enclosed valley in the mountains and was supplied with fallow deer by King John in 1213. These parks enclosed grassland, woodland and waterbodies. Fallow deer were used because they could graze in smaller areas and a driven hunt developed to work in a small space. These parks declined in the later Middle Ages.

The 16th and 17th century saw a resurgence in the construction of deer parks. James I was at the forefront of this resurgence. The increase in the construction of manor houses at this time resulted in the creation of more deer parks. Parks were not limited to English lords either. Large designed landscapes were created at Killyleagh, Lismore, Portumna and Mallow Castle, amongst others. Deer were sent from England and Richard Boyle (of Lismore) sent

deer to his friends elsewhere in Ireland. Some of the white fallow deer from Mallow were sent to Parkanaur. Many of these parks included houses for keepers and places for lords to banquet. The Earls of Antrim had a 3,000 acre park at Glenarm; however, it decreased in size over the 17th century. The Duke of Ormond had at least eight parks across Ireland, including Phoenix Park in Dublin.

Deer parks were primarily a status symbol. They represented a huge investment in construction, maintenance, stocking and staffing. The 17th century saw a resurgence of medieval ideas of hunting and lordship. Parks were an important part of the medieval and early modern landscape, yet social changes have resulted in these monuments being lost.

Duncan Berryman

February Lecture

The Society's February lecture was given by Dr Alex Gibson of the University of Bradford. His talk was entitled "The Bronze Age Neolithic: re-emerging traditions?"

It had long been believed that pottery types evolved over the Neolithic and into the Bronze Age. Carrinated bowls (c. 3,000 BCE) gave way to impressed ware and decorated ware (c. 2,000 BCE) and collared urns (1800–1200 BCE) were thought to have developed out of the impressed ware. However, recent carbon dating has revealed that all pottery types are about 1,000 years earlier than previously thought. This means that we need to reassess our understanding of this period.

Deposits in West Kennet longbarrow contained impressed ware, grooved ware and beaker ware in the same level. A Middle Neolithic pot (3,500–3,000 BCE) found at Horton, in the Thames valley, was believed to be too early for its style. Analysis of the carbon dates associated with a range of finds indicates that impressed ware was associated with earlier dates, making the date of the Horton pot typical for this style.

Grooved ware can be dated c.2,900–2,400 BCE, starting in Orkney around 3,200. There appears to have been little geographic overlap between areas

of the earlier impressed ware and later beaker ware. Even on sites where they were found together, it is clear they were not in contemporary use. It is also evident that grooved ware had no influence on Beaker and Bronze Ages.

It has long been believed that Neolithic burials were communal while the Bronze Age practiced crouched inhumations. Many crouched burials contained Neolithic artefacts, it was thought they were Bronze Age people emulating beaker burials with Neolithic objects. Redating of a number of these crouched burials places them firmly in the Middle Neolithic (3,640–3,380 BCE), not early Bronze Age. Cremation burials at Duggleby Howe (North Yorkshire) and Stonehenge have been dated to 3,000–2,500 BCE.

Grooved ware appears to be associated with circular monuments and passage graves, it is also focused on Orkney and the western seaboard. Many of the circular monuments had four large posts in the centre. Genetic studies have suggested that there was an influx of people from the

Netherlands with a steppe genetic marker; however, there were very few late Neolithic individuals included in the study.

Beaker burials appear to emulate Neolithic ones, by including collard urns, but there is a change from the grooved ware inclusion of archery equipment. There was a huge variety of local types of Beaker styles. Axe factories saw a renewed interest during this period. Rock art also began to reappear, but many reused stones were placed with the art facing towards the mound of the cairn.

Bronze Age people may have adopted Middle Neolithic culture after excavating it in the process of burials. Or there may have been oral traditions handed down through the generations. An alternative is that grooved ware and its associated circular ritual sites represent the material culture of a higher social class. It is possible then that the resurgence in Middle Neolithic traditions was a result of the end of oppression under the grooved ware society and it was therefore an expression to re-establish identity.

Duncan Berryman

New Books

Sites of Prehistoric Life in Northern Ireland, by Harry & June Welsh
Archaeopress, £38

Harry and June have produced an excellent follow up to their 2014 work *The Prehistoric Burial Sites of Northern Ireland* (also available from Archaeopress). Their new book provides an extensive inventory of all the existing evidence of prehistoric settlement within Northern Ireland. As with everything they do, extensive research and fieldwork have produced a valuable and informative book on this aspect of the past that is so often neglected. An essential addition to any collection on prehistoric Ireland.

Children, Death and Burial, edited by Eileen Murphy and Mélie Le Roy
Oxbow Books, £40

Eileen and Mélie are lecturers at QUB with an interest in childhood in the past. This volume brings together a range of papers from across the world and across history, from the Neolithic in France and at

Çatalhöyük to the Bronze Age in the Trans-Urals and Crete to Later Medieval Ireland and Denmark. Members of the UAS will be most interested in Eileen's paper on the burials of juveniles at the late medieval Gaelic cemetery of Ballyhanna, Co. Donegal, and Jonny Gerber's paper on the child burials at the Kilkenny Workhouse during the Great Famine. All the papers in this volume give us an insight into how societies in the past viewed their children, with significant variation. Children rarely show up in archaeological contexts and it is therefore easy for archaeologists to overlook them, this volume reminds us how important it is to remember these individuals and that they were an integral part of life in the past.

From Carrickfergus to Carcassonne, edited by P. Duffy, T. O'Keeffe & J.-M. Picard
Brepols, €89

Many UAS members will remember a conference held in Carrickfergus in 2015 to launch the exhibition *From Carrickfergus to Carcassonne*, this volume brings many of the papers from that day

to print and supplements them with additional work on the same theme. The exhibition and this book consider the relationships between Carrickfergus and Languedoc through the person of Hugh de Lacy.

A number of papers (including one by our own Ruairí Ó Baoill) discuss Ireland at the time of de Lacy's expulsion, such as the archaeology of Carrickfergus town and Trim Castle. The central section deals with de Lacy's time on crusade in the Languedoc, while the final section discusses his return to Ulster (including Philip MacDonald's paper on de Lacy's contribution to Dundrum Castle). This is a valuable addition to our knowledge of de Lacy's activities outside Ulster. The possibility of contacts between Ulster and the south of France is often ignored in our studies of castles and towns from the Middle Ages.

The Passage Tomb Archaeology of the Great Mound at Knowth, by George Eogan

Royal Irish Academy, €50

This huge volume is the sixth instalment of the publication of excavations at Knowth. The remit of this volume is to consider how the main tomb (Tomb 1) was constructed and the Neolithic mortuary practices. There is an amazing amount of new information about Tomb 1 and its context in the wider Brú na Bóinne landscape. Each chapter contains sections written by experts to provide the best descriptions and place the site and the finds in the wider context. Throughout, the text is accompanied by beautiful illustrations and well organised tables and diagrams, making the discussion very clear. This book is a wonderful addition to any library on prehistoric Ireland. But it is also a tribute to the dedication of George Eogan, and others, to fully publishing the excavation of this amazing site.