



ULSTER
ARCHÆOLOGICAL
SOCIETY

Newsletter

Autumn/Winter 2017

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From the Editor

As Yule (or Christmas) comes around again, we can look back on an exciting year for the UAS. As always we have had a range of interesting lectures and field trips. This year has been extra special as we held our inaugural annual conference to celebrate all the recent discoveries in Ulster archaeology, suitably named Discovery 2017!. This was held in collaboration with Archaeology & Palaeoecology at QUB, and our president provides a full report in this Newsletter. We are pleased to announce that Discovery! 2018 will be the first weekend in November.

We have continued to develop our website. Thanks to the hard work of our president, there is now a full

list of the contents of the Ulster Journal of Archaeology, from 1938 up to the current issue. This is an excellent resource. There is also an account of the history of the UAS, based on Barrie Hartwell's presentation at Discovery! 2017.

I decided to combine the last two volumes of this year to ensure that you receive notice of the AGM on time. This year has been very busy for me, particularly finishing my PhD thesis and passing my viva (with minor corrections that I now need to finish off). Hopefully next year we will return to four issues. But in the meantime, enjoy this enlarged volume of the Newsletter.

Duncan Berryman
Editor

Subscriptions are 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.

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Diary Dates

Lectures

Monday 8pm, Elwood Building, QUB

29 th January	Terence Reeves-Smith (HED)	Deer Parks in Ireland
12 th February	AGM	
26 th February	Alex Gibson (University of Bradford)	Prehistoric Society Lecture: The Bronze Age Neolithic – re-emerging traditions
26 th March	James O'Neill	A miserable and beggarly war?: dispelling the myths of Tyrone's Rebellion
30 th April	Claire Foley (HED)	Creggandevsky Court Tomb

Field Trips 2018

6th – 13th May – Northumbria trip

12th May – Day trip to the Mournes

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

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

18th August – Day trip to Creggandevsky area (with Geological Society)

2nd – 3rd November – Discovery 2018! Annual conference

Contact Ken Pullin for info on ulsterarchaeolsoc@gmail.com

Annual General Meeting

The 76th Annual General Meeting of the Ulster Archaeological Society will be held in the Lecture Theatre, Queen's University Elmwood Building, Elmwood Avenue, Belfast BT9, on Monday 12th February 2018, commencing 7.45pm.

Agenda

1. President's Address.
2. Minutes of 75th AGM held on Monday 13th February 2017.
3. Honorary Secretary's Annual Report for 2017.
4. Honorary Editor Ulster Journal of Archaeology Annual Report for 2017.
5. Honorary Editor UAS Newsletter Annual Report for 2017.
6. Honorary Treasurer's Annual Report for 2017.
7. Election of Officers.
8. Election of two Ordinary Committee Members (3-year term).
9. Election of Honorary Auditor.
10. Business of which notice has been given.
11. Any other business.

Notices of motion and nominations for officers and committee positions should reach Mr Ken Pullin, Hon. Secretary, Ulster Archaeological Society, (c/o School of Natural & Built Environment, Elmwood Building, QUB, Belfast, BT7 1NN) not later than Monday 29th January 2018.

The President, three Vice Presidents, Honorary 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.

Following the business of the AGM there will be a PowerPoint presentation of the Society's field trips during 2017 and an illustrated account of the activities of the Survey Group during the year.

Survey Group News

At the end of July, we made a return visit to the early ecclesiastical site at Drumgath, near Rathfriland, County Down. This was our third visit to the site, this time to check over some details for the graveyard survey. Chris Stevenson and Randal Scott have completed the first report on the site, which details our current knowledge of the site and its history and this is already available on the society website. Well worth a read. The graveyard survey takes a more in-depth look at the grave markers and inscriptions and has already shed more light on what has become one of our most interesting surveys. Some members of the group were looking for at least two wells, marked on the early editions of the Ordnance Survey maps, when they came across a stone planter in a nearby garden. It is thought that this might be part of a stone font, likely to be from one of the two previously unrecorded churches on the site, provisionally dated by Chris Stevenson and Randal Scott to AD 1150 and 1400. Further investigations are planned, as this

site seems to be 'the gift that keeps on giving' from the Drumgath Ladies Group.

In August, we returned to Broughderg, to continue our survey of another site that seems to keep on giving! This site initially appeared to consist of two stone circles and a standing stone, but some research indicated that there were more monuments in the immediate area. Our second visit identified a further three stone rows and no less than fifteen burial cairns. Three others had been recorded on the Sites and Monuments Record, but there was no visible evidence of these. Our site was located on the edge of a large expanse of uncut bog land and as several stones were observed to protrude above the surface of this, it is thought that many more monuments lie undiscovered nearby. It is likely that this site is at least as extensive, if not larger, than the nearby Beaghmore complex. When we finished our survey, we were treated to lovely refreshments by members of the Broughderg community, who are clearly very proud of their ancient heritage.

Gift Aid

The geophysics team also had a busy season. After completing their initial training in January, they used the equipment in anger in June at the Divis excavations and again in September under the direction of Dr Tom McNeill at a medieval site at Killyglen, near Larne, with some dramatic results. These are currently being processed and should be published shortly.

After Discovery 2017! we got three new members. We are really delighted about this and hope they enjoy their time with us.

So our 2017 survey season has come to a close and we made our way to Rowallane at the end of September to begin our research, training and report-writing over the winter months. As always, we are indebted to the National Trust for making these facilities available to us and to Mal Conway for his continuing support, which is very much appreciated.

Harry Welsh
Fieldwork Co-ordinator

Tax regulations require us to remind everyone who offers Gift Aid that they must be a UK taxpayer and if they pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax claimed on all their donations in a tax year it is their responsibility to pay any difference.

Please notify the Hon. Secretary if you:

- Want to cancel the declaration
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Gift Aid allows the UAS to receive an extra 25% for sub payments made without any extra cost to the donor providing they pay income tax.

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Discovery 2017!

The Ulster Archaeological Society and Archaeology and Palaeoecology, School of Natural and Built Environment at Queen's University Belfast, jointly hosted the Discovery 2017! Inaugural Annual Review of Archaeological Discoveries in Ulster conference on October 20th and 21st 2017 at Queen's University Belfast. The conference celebrated both the 70th anniversary of the first ever meeting of the Ulster Archaeological Society (UAS), founded at QUB, and the launch of the new Centre for Community Archaeology, based at Queen's University, of which the UAS is an important component.

The Discovery 2017! conference launch took place on the Friday 20th October with a wine reception and the launch of the new Centre for Community Archaeology by Professor Mark Price, Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences, Queen's University Belfast. There were also talks by Joe Mahon, of UTV's Lesser Spotted Ulster fame,

and by Robert Heslip, Heritage and Development Officer with Belfast City Council.

On the following day, Saturday 21st October, there was a full day of short presentations and the wide range of papers at this inaugural conference give a taster of the interesting archaeological work currently being carried out across Ulster by heritage institutions and bodies, commercial archaeological companies and community groups. In keeping with the celebration of the 70th anniversary of the first ever meeting of the Ulster Archaeological Society at Queen's University on 15th October 1947, there were talks on the history and activities of the Ulster Archaeological Society, the Ulster Journal of Archaeology and the work that the UAS does in collaboration with QUB and the National Trust for Northern Ireland. Other papers presented at the conference included ones on the excavation of prehistoric timber circles in Counties Derry and Tyrone, the excavation of a multi-period site at Aghagallon, Co. Antrim, a survey of the early Medieval ecclesiastical complexes

of Inishowen, Co. Donegal, community heritage projects around Lough Neagh and in the Glens of Antrim, the Post-Medieval ceramics of Carrickfergus and the New World, the excavation of a megalithic tomb outside Cushendall, Co. Antrim, and the Belfast Young Archaeologists' Club (YAC).

The Discovery 2017! conference was a great success and around 90 people attended over the two days. Photographs from the weekend have been put on both the UAS Facebook site: www.facebook.com/The-Ulster-Archaeological-Society-190943297657719/ as well as the 'Archaeology at Queen's' Facebook site: www.facebook.com/archaeologyatqueensbelfast/ An archive of material relating to the conference will shortly be put up on the UAS website.

It is planned that the annual Discovery conference in Queen's University Belfast will become the most important yearly archaeological conference in

Ulster, where members of the public and members of the archaeological community will come together to discuss and learn about all the new archaeological projects, research and publications taking place in Ulster. The dates for the Discovery 2018! conference have already been set and it will be held on Friday 2nd November and Saturday 3rd November 2018 at QUB. More information about the 2018 conference will be supplied to UAS members as details are confirmed. We hope to see you all there!

Ruairí Ó Baoill

September Lecture

The Society's September lecture was given by Antoine Giacometti of Archaeology Plan Heritage Solutions. His lecture showed the results of the excavations of Ratharnham Castle in 2014 before restoration by the OPW.

The castle was built by Adam Loftus, archbishop of Armagh and Dublin. He was also responsible for founding Trinity College Dublin and served as its first provost. As archbishop of Dublin, he disliked

the palace, so he decided to build himself a new one at Rathfarnham; construction began in 1583. The village had a pre-Norman church and is likely to have had a motte, probably on the site of the castle but no evidence of it was uncovered. The castle was laid siege to in the 1640s confederate wars and was badly damaged. It was sold off later in the seventeenth century to cover family debts. The castle was renovated in the late eighteenth century and sold to the Jesuits in 1913. It was finally purchased by the state in 1987.

The sixteenth-century building was a large central block with four corner towers, which were at a salient angle. It incorporated French and Italian chateaux styles and it was the first building in Ireland to use such a style. During the 2014 excavations, one aim was to find whether the gun loops had been inserted, but they appeared to be original features. However, some of the medieval features, such as fireplaces, were found to be eighteenth century insertions.

The Jesuits had gutted the south-west tower and inserted a concrete staircase, which the OPW wanted to replace with a better one and a lift. Sixteenth- and eighteenth-century features were revealed, including a basement with a good stone floor and a brick built display cabinet. A latrine pit was found under the floor of the eighteenth-century basement, this contained a huge assemblage of objects – 16,000 artefacts were recovered.

All the objects dated to the end of the seventeenth century. The vast majority of the pottery was imported, mostly English and particularly north Devon. Only one pot was Irish glazed earthenware. White salt-glazed earthenware was very early for the date of the rest of the assemblage. Clay pipes dated between 1680 and 1710. There were 37 leather shoes, dating to 1660-1700, many had been slashed after use probably to remove the silk uppers for reuse. A banana was found amongst the material and dated to 1684, but it may also have dated to 1930 due to uncertainty in C14 dating. The fact that all the material was dated before 1720 suggests that this

deposit was associated with the sale of the castle in that year and was probably the Loftus family clearing out rubbish.

The artefacts indicate the luxurious lifestyle of Rathfarnham castle. The Loftus family were well known for their extravagant parties. Lots of silk and clothing of cutting-edge styles was found. Shoes had very high heels and are comparable to those depicted on images of contemporary monarchs. The food remains also show extravagance, with figs, melons, and bilbury being grown on the estate, while rabbits and deer are evidence of hunting. One human tooth found in the material suggests a diet of too much sugar.

Many of the objects show that the family were interested in the innovations of the time. With the restoration of Charles II new social practices developed and consumerism grew. Elaborate desserts at parties became fashionable and the drinking of tea and coffee became popular. Coffee cups were found that had been specially produced in China for the directors of the East India

Company. There were also prototype coffee cups produced in a workshop in London. A number of lead-crystal dessert glasses were found, this material was only invented in 1675. Some were Irish, produced in Dublin, with a style that has not been found outside Ireland. The second oldest pencil was found, which had been imported from Nuremberg. Many of these objects were one-off pieces, ordered from specialists. The Loftus family was one of the first in Ireland to display the new social fashions and use the latest technology.

The artefacts uncovered in this excavation reveal the luxurious lifestyle of the Loftus family, with extravagant dinner parties and access to the latest fashions.

Duncan Berryman

October Lecture

The Society's October lecture was given by Jonathan Barkley and Colin Dunlop of Northern Archaeology Consultancy. Their theme was 8,000 years of settlement – the archaeology of the A26 Frosses Road.

Dunlop introduced the prehistoric aspect of the excavations by noting that Woodman had identified the valley around Dunlop and Cloughmills as the best place to find Mesolithic settlement. And he was right, there was evidence of a house from 6,000 BCE with a possible stone seat and pits within. There was also a collection of flints, with signs they were used to cut flesh rather than bone (there was no natural flint in the area, so they were all imported). Nearby there was an Iron Age ring ditch, but there was no evidence of a burial, which had probably been ploughed away. The ditch cut a badger set, indicating that the badgers were there before the burial. But badgers are believed to have arrived in Ireland during the Iron Age, so these must have been

very early badger settlers in this area.

Near Logans Fashions was a burnt mound beside a stream with a timber-lined trough. This was dated to 2,000 BCE. Stake holes beside a step into the trough suggest a small structure, possibly a changing room before entering the trough. A smaller trough to the south did not hold water and may have been used for heating the stones before they were placed in the larger wooden trough. A small flint scatter was able to be reassembled into a core. This may have been flint brought to the site and napped before being placed in a bag and buried for later.

On the hill to the north of Logans was an early medieval house and souterrain. Post holes show a rectangular house with the souterrain to the south and a corn-drying kiln to the north. The house dated to the 700s CE, it was partly cut into the hillside and was probably of wattle-and-daub. Within the house was a stone edged hearth, with one stone missing to allow it to be emptied. There was a spread of charcoal and

southern wear within the house, and an iron pin that may have been a dress fastener. The corn-drying kiln dated to the 600s CE and may be associated with an earlier house on the site.

The southern was dated to 895-1420 CE. The main section was accessed through a drop hole in-line with the rear door of the house. This section was tall enough for a man to stand in and was probably used for storage. The secondary tunnels were much smaller and would have presented a good method of escape during a raid of the house. The exit to this tunnel was on the other side of the hill from the house, allowing the occupants to get away to the safety of the wood and the bog. Most of the southern in Antrim are associated with raths, but there has been limited research into unenclosed settlement (as it has been viewed as being of a lower social status).

Dundermot Motte beside Glaryford Bridge was also near the road excavations. Topsoil stripping did not reveal the bailey marked

on maps. This was also known as the Gateway to Hell.

This area also had a significant amount of post-medieval industrial archaeology. One such feature was the flax dam between the A26 and Killagan Road, south of Logans. This dated to the nineteenth century and probably provided linen for the war effort. The flax was taken to the scotching mill at Cloughmills. The Frosses Road itself proved of archaeological interest, as there were numerous stone culverts under the road designed by Lanyon in the 1840s. Lanyon laid out the route of the road, including the famous trees, and included detailed features, despite them never being seen by the road users.

These excavations have shown that there was almost constant settlement in this area for at least 8,000 years. The river and a fertile valley made this a very attractive place to live throughout history.

Duncan Berryman

November Lecture

The Society's November lecture was given by David Bell, visiting researcher at QUB. His talk was entitled "Bronze Age blades and the Battle of Ballynahinch: unexpected connections".

There were two main types of sword-like weapon in the Middle Bronze Age – rapiers and swords. Rapiers were long, slender weapons that were used in a stabbing motion, as they were too flimsy to slash with. The handle was riveted to the butt of the blade. Swords were stronger and were used for slashing; they benefited from having a solid hilt with plates attached over the tang.

Warfare resulted in osteological damage and damage to the edges of the weapons. As very few skeletons survive from the MBA, it is impossible to assess bodily injuries. However, a number of types of impact damage have been noticed on the weapons. Bell recorded the locations of damage along the edges and it was noticed that most was on the sides of rapiers, rather than on the tip.

Many of the Irish examples also had significant damage near the butt of the blade. Clearly something was wrong with our traditional interpretations of these weapons.

The eighteenth century saw the development of antiquarianism and an interest in the origins of the Irish race. Charles Vallancey was one of the first to write on the subject, suggesting that the Irish were descended from Phoenicians. Anglo-Irish antiquarianism developed in the shadow of the 1798 rebellion and the Act of Union in 1800, they saw Ireland as culturally foreign but they didn't want to distance the country politically. The images of the ancient Irish were inspired by the artefacts that were being collected by the Royal Irish Academy and the Society of Antiquaries. This resulted in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century interpretation of the weaponry.

There are plenty of examples of sharp-force trauma on medieval skeletons, cause as a result of armed conflict. However, MBA skeletons appear to only show

blunt force trauma. The best example is from the Tollense Valley in northern Germany. Here a mass burial indicated the use of wooden clubs and a lack of bladed weapons. Spanish examples also reveal blunt force trauma, although some were buried with bladed weapons. In Ireland, cremation was the main form of burial in the MBA and acidic soils will have destroyed mass burial sites.

Experimental archaeology has employed copper sheet instead of bronze and used a number of methods, such as edge hardening, that were not available in the MBA. This has resulted in unsatisfactory tests of MBA weapons and armour.

While recording the blades, Bell noticed that many had handles added to them and some had repairs with materials that would not have been available in the MBA. After closer inspection, it was found that much of the damage on these weapons had occurred relatively recently, as there was damage to the patina surface of the metal. Further research revealed that many of these were donated to museums by the

commanders of the forces that put down the 1798 rebellion. Therefore, much of the damage to these weapons was caused when the rebels took the blades from the great houses they looted and mounted them as pikes.

There is no evidence that these seemingly prestigious weapons were ever used in warfare in the MBA. Any action they did see was many years after their creation.

Duncan Berryman

June Evening Trip

An evening field trip was carried out on Monday 19th June to the National Trust Divis and Black Mountain property. It was held during a community excavation there between 12th and 23rd June and two monuments known locally as Divis Cashel and Divis Settlement Site, both of which had previously attracted the attention of the UAS Survey Group. Survey reports on these two monuments are available on the society website.

On a lovely sunny evening, a large group were conducted around the excavation trenches and nearby monuments by the excavation director, Harry Welsh. The group were informed that the Divis Cashel site had been thought to be an early medieval cashel, although in appearance it did not closely resemble other monuments of this type. The excavations had not revealed any evidence of medieval activity, but to everyone's surprise, had uncovered mortared walls, paved and cobbled surfaces and a lot of metalwork, along with clay pipe fragments and pottery that indicated use during the Victorian period. An even greater surprise was the discovery at a lower level of flints and pottery that appeared to be of middle Neolithic origin. This was particularly interesting as no evidence of Neolithic activity had previously been found at the property.

The other excavation was at the nearby Divis Settlement Site, where one of at least seven circular platforms was thought to be part of a prehistoric settlement. As the excavation progressed, it was soon evident that there was no

indication of a hut, but instead it appeared to be the remains of a burial cairn. Again, this was entirely unexpected, particularly as the seven monuments were in such close proximity, unlike other burial cairns on the property, which are located in isolation from each other.

The site visit also took in the enigmatic Cell-Bay Enclosure, a short distance uphill from the burial cairn. This monument has also been surveyed by the UAS Survey Group, but no excavation has taken place there and its use and date remain a mystery. The dry weather certainly made access to these sites much easier, as in wet weather keeping your feet dry can be a challenge!

The group were also made aware of the significant participation in the excavations by members of the UAS Survey Group, who made up the entire excavation crew, under the direction of Ruairí Ó Baoill and Ruth Logue from the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork at Queens University. The survey group also carried out a site survey and resistivity survey as part of the

community effort. The only downside for the group is that they will now have to re-write the respective survey reports! Further details of the excavations can be found in the Winter 2017 edition of Archaeology Ireland.

Harry Welsh

Mourne Day Trip

UAS and Belfast Geologists' Society joint geoarchaeology field trip to Mourne Mountains on 13th May 2017 and an appreciation of Dr Vanessa Ryan.

Good attendance (over 30) and dry weather ensured an enjoyable day for the annual geoarchaeological event. The equivalent trip to Carlingford in 2015 was led by Vanessa Ryan who sadly died in late 2016, an appreciation of Vanssa follows this report.

Slidderford Dolmen (portal tomb). This monument had to be viewed from the road owing to a crop in its field. The stones comprise Newry (but not Mourne) granite as well as Silurian sedimentary rocks, all glacially transported materials (see

Meighan in *The High Crosses & Round Towers of County Down* by Peter Harbinson, p.24, re this dolmen and the nearby Maghera Round Tower).

Maghera Round Tower and Old Church. The rocks of the round tower comprise diverse local materials, mostly glacially derived and again including Newry granite. As with other round towers in Ireland, the lithologies are entirely of local derivation.

Bloody Bridge River, E. Mourne Mountains. The leader gave a brief outline of Mourne geology, including the history of the mapping of the 5 granite intrusions (G1-5) and their exploitation from Neolithic up to present times.

Dunnaman Court Tomb, near Kilkeel. A splendid example of this category of Neolithic tomb. The stones, with one exception (Silurian), are Mourne granite (all the fourth and W. Mourne G4).

S. McConnell & Sons Ltd., Stone Masons, near Kilkeel. A highly interesting visit to the McConnells' stoneworks during which we saw

'state of the art' rock cutting machines, including the one on which the Downpatrick replacement High Cross of Mourne granite G2 was made for Down County Museum. The original cross was laser scanned and its replacement was then produced automatically. McConnells also made the Princess Diana Memorial in London, again using Mourne granite. Several presentations were given: Mr Alan Kilgore (Annalong) spoke on the history of the working and export of Mourne granite and members of the McConnell family described various aspects of their business. Many thanks to the McConnells for their time and for providing a splendid afternoon tea. Rachel McConnell and Karen Parkes of Methodist College Belfast kindly arranged this visit. Finally, thanks to our excellent and tolerant coach driver.

Dr Vanessa Ryan. Society members will be saddened to learn of Vanessa's sudden and untimely death in late 2016. She was principal leader on a UAS field trip we both took to Carlingford town and Cooley in 2015; Vanessa gave us a truly excellent day on their

medieval archaeology (the subject of her PhD thesis under Prof. Terry Barry at Trinity College Dublin). She worked for Mourne-Cooley-Gullion Geotourism and organised some highly successful field trips to the monuments of this region. Also Vanessa and I were collaborating on a research project involving the geoarchaeology of the main buildings of Carlingford town in an attempt to elucidate how the rock types used, and their sources, changed through the medieval period. Vanessa was an outgoing, friendly and charming lady and Irish archaeology has suffered a sad loss. Our Society extends its deepest sympathy to her two young daughters, her father and mother and the rest of the Ryan family.

Ian Meighan

Limerick Field Trip 22nd – 25th September 2017

The annual county field trip started with a guided tour of the famous Lough Gur area led by Brian Collpoly of the Lough Gur Heritage Centre. Our first visit was to Grange Embanked Stone Circle

consisting of 113 stones set around the inside of an earth bank dating to about 2950 BC. It is a most impressive monument set in association with other monuments of which there are now only scant remains. We moved a little further along the road to Teampall Nua, the ruins of a 17th century church standing on the site of a 15th century church. The building was largely rebuilt and restored by Rachel, Countess of Bath and repaired again by the Count de Salis in about 1900. From the graveyard we could see Knockadoon across the lough, and Brian explained the importance of the Neolithic and Bronze Age settlement site excavated by Seán P Ó Ríordáin from 1936-1954, turning the understanding of Irish prehistory on its head. The next stop was the nearby wedge tomb before we clambered up a field to view the Carraig Aille Cashels, also excavated by Ó Ríordáin. Despite the wind and rain, the view of the countryside around Lough Gur was splendid. We finished our tour with a visit to the Lough Gur Heritage Centre. Brian was informative and entertaining in equal measure, and thoroughly enjoyed by us all.

After lunch in the delightful Deebert House Hotel in Kilmallock, we embarked on a walking tour of the medieval town with Trevor McCarthy who infected us all with his enthusiasm for his home town. Sheltering from the rain in the fine Gothic Revival Church of Ss Peter and Paul, Trevor set the scene for the walk with a potted history of the development of the town, from the foundation of the monastic site of Cill Mocheallog nearby in the 6th/7th century to the development of the medieval town from the 10th/11th century and its rise and fall over the following centuries. We then braved the elements to visit the Crochta memorial, situated on a 17th century bastion attached to the medieval town wall. The memorial commemorates Bishop Patrick O'Hely and Fr Conn O'Rourke, hanged in 1579 for plotting against the Crown, and Fr Maurice MacEnraghty of Kilmallock, hanged for celebrating Mass in 1586.

Continuing down the street, sheltering under the arch of King's Castle - a tower house on the site of John's Gate, one of the original entrances in the town walls - Trevor

pointed out other medieval buildings as he led us to the Blossom Gate and then to the mid 13th century Collegiate Church of Ss Peter and Paul. This was the site of the monastery when it moved from its original site down to the valley. The only remaining building from this period is the round tower, re-used in medieval times as the bell-tower for the Collegiate Church. The ruins of the church include 15th century alterations with some fine details, but the real treat in store was the unexpected access to the re-roofed south transept where we were able to see close up the 16th and 17th century tombs of the Fitzgeralds, Blakeney and Verdons. Well done Trevor for acquiring the keys! We also visited the Dominican Friary of St Saviour which dates to the late 13th century with 14th century additions. The church retains some interesting architectural features and carved decoration and the cloister to the north still has parts of the east and north ranges. Despite the dreadful weather, we had a most interesting visit to Kilmallock and learned a great deal from our young guide.

The second day of our trip almost started with disaster as our guide Evan was unable to open the electric gates at Adare Castle. However, thanks to our boy scout Lee, a small screwdriver was produced to open the remote control and rearrange the batteries correctly, and we were able to proceed. Evan explained how the Norman castle, situated on the banks of the Maigue, was built on an earlier fortification attributed to Domhnall Mór Ua Briain. The castle belonged to the Fitzgerald family until their downfall in 1536 and it was forfeited to the Earls of Desmond between 1537 and 1552. It was reinstated to Gerald Fitzgerald in 1569 and remained in his family until 1721. Returning to the very picturesque village of Adare, we spent the rest of the morning exploring the Visitor Centre, Augustinian Friary, now St Nicholas' Church of Ireland, and the Trinitarian Abbey, now Holy Trinity Church.

After enjoying lunch, we set off for Limerick City and had a tour of St Mary's Cathedral which dates to the late 12th century, traditionally founded by Domhnall Mór Ua

Briain on the site of his palace. Our guide Noreen told us about the history of the cathedral and pointed out some of the most interesting features including the Earls of Thomond Memorial and Domhnall Mór's Coffin Lid, the pre Reformation altar slab, the leper squint, the exquisite 15th century oak misericords, and many memorials to the great and good of Limerick – and some not so good, such as the grave of Murrrough "The Burner" O'Brien. Our final visit was to the early 13th century keepless King John's Castle which started in the modern Visitor Centre, built over the excavations of the east curtain wall. Descending through a timeline of exhibits explaining the history of the castle, from the Vikings, the original 'English Lords', the medieval clashes, the Plantations, the Civil War, to the sieges and war between the Williamites and the Jacobites, we arrived in the basement where the excavated areas, including Viking houses and 17th century siege works, were on view. Finally emerging into the daylight of the castle courtyard, we continued our exploration of the castle with its curtain walls,

gatehouse and undercroft of the original castle's great hall or storehouse, which was later backfilled around 1790–1800 when the castle became a British garrison. Altogether, a fascinating site and a great attraction in the city.

Ann MacDermot

Monuments and Buildings Record lecture series

Friday 26 January 2017

Ulster Museum - Laura Basell "Why Heritage Matters: Perspectives from Eastern Africa".

Friday 9 February 2018

PRONI - Heather Montgomery "Training Kitchener's New Army 1914-1918: Perspectives of the Irish Experience".

Friday 9 March 2018

Ulster Museum - Claire Foley "Creggandevosky: Excavation of a Court Cairn in Ulster".

Friday 23 March 2018

PRONI - Keith Lilley "Surveying Heritage: A landscape archaeology of the Ordnance Survey in Ireland".

Friday 13 April 2018

Ulster Museum - Emma Hanna "Crafting a Chronology for Early Medieval Ireland: Rural Craft-work from the fifth to Twelfth Centuries AD".

Friday 11 May 2018

Ulster Museum - William Megarry "Digital approaches to World Heritage Sites".

Friday 8 June 2018

Ulster Museum - Jonathan Barkley "Clonboy Rtah: The environmental story of an early medieval defensive enclosure".

Check <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/articles/events> for additional events from the Historic Environment Division.

New Books

Ancient Ireland Colouring Book, by
Conor McHale

O'Brien Books, £5.99

This is a great book for the younger archaeologist. From the Neolithic to the Viking period, there are illustrations to colour and a brief description of the archaeology of the period. The images are accurate and portray real sites and artefacts. This would make an excellent present for a young relative or for an older archaeologist who wants to relax.

Old Ways Old Secrets, by Jo
Kerrigan

O'Brien Books, £14.99

This is an attractively produced book punctuated with interesting quotes, poems and sepia-toned photographs bringing to life many folk stories and bardic tales. The narrative is divided into three parts. The first part, 'The Keepers of Power' explores druids, deities and superheroes such as Cúchuliann and Fionn Mac Cumhall. This section includes the

tale of how the rowan tree first came to Ireland. The rowan or mountain ash is well known for its frothy white blossoms, vibrant berries and attractive foliage. It is one of the most magical trees in Irish belief. Part Two, 'Nature and the Otherworld' looks at sacred places, magical creatures and the turning of the year. Included is a story about The Little Shoemaker – the leprechaun and the various celebrations linked to the Celtic calendar – Samhain, Midwinter, Imbolc, Bealtaine, Midsummer and Lughnasa. The final section, 'Traditions in Story' is a feast of ancient folklore finishing with the well-known tale of 'The Enchantment of the Children of Lir'.

A fascinating book which would make a delightful gift for anyone interested in Ireland's ancient traditions, wonderful landscape, mythical sites and unique folklore.

Viking Law and Order: Places and rituals of assembly in the Medieval North, by Alexandra Sanmark
Edinburgh Uni Press, £75

This is a very informative book, taking a new approach to the assembly sites of the Vikings. This book investigates variation in thing sites across the Viking world and explores the meaning and use of these sites. Each chapter presents a different theme and provides detailed examples of thing sites. Of particular interest to UAS members will be the chapter on Scotland, which discusses sites on many of the western isles and the connections with Ireland. This work reveals that law and order were very organised and visible aspects of Viking society.

Hillforts, Warfare and Society in Bronze Age Ireland, by William O'Brien & James O'Driscoll
Archaeopress, £60

This significant volume studies the role of warfare in Bronze Age society by investigating hillforts across Ireland. This work combines landscape survey with surveys of

individual ring forts, groups of ringforts and excavations of a number of sites. This is not designed to be a general reader volume, but it is very well illustrated and provides an important analysis of these monuments. Every aspect of this work is supported by a huge amount of data, making this a valuable and informative study. This volume will be of great relevance to anyone interested in prehistoric Ireland, as it goes beyond purely a study of warfare and shows us something of life in Bronze Age Ireland.

