



Monthly eNewsletter

August 2020

Hi everyone,

Since the last eNewsletter I have produced a print Newsletter to make sure all our members are receiving the articles that we have included in the online newsletters. Unfortunately, our printed Newsletters have limited colour printing, so we can't include all the images. August was Irish National Heritage Week, which took an online form instead of the usual events and lectures. This year's theme was 'heritage on your doorstep' and the UAS contributed a piece looking at many of the sites around Ulster that the Survey Group have studied. Hopefully the work that the Group has put into the reports will help members of the public learn about monuments in their landscape and encourage them to explore their local environment. You can view all the projects submitted - <https://www.heritageweek.ie/projects>

We continue to work towards our annual conference, with many speakers now confirmed. We are grateful to the Centre for Community Archaeology for producing the artwork for this year's conference.

Best wishes,

Duncan

Editor

Discovery 2020!

	<p>ULSTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY</p>	 <p>Centre for COMMUNITY ARCHAEOLOGY Queen's University Belfast</p>
<h1>DISCOVERY 2020!</h1> <h2>FOURTH ANNUAL REVIEW OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES IN ULSTER</h2>		
<p>ORGANISED BY THE ULSTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY AND THE CENTRE FOR COMMUNITY ARCHAEOLOGY AT QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST</p>		
<p>Saturday 7th November 2020 @ 9.30am</p>	<p>Conference keynote lecture by Dr Monique van den Dries (University of Leiden) <i>"Discovering Archaeology's Treasures: The Public Benefits of Archaeology According to the Public"</i></p> <p>Followed by a range of lectures on recent archaeological discoveries, research and activities across Ulster including:</p> <p><i>Community Excavations at Magilligan Military Training Estate</i> <i>WW2 Aircraft Crash Sites in Monaghan</i> <i>Navan Fort and Environs</i> <i>Ireland's Golden Age of Piracy</i> <i>The Genomics of Megaliths</i> <i>A Gaelic Moated Site at Arney Fort, Co. Fermanagh</i></p>	
<p>The conference is FREE but registration is required to access lectures. Go to: https://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/uas/Conference/ More information will be added in the coming weeks so keep checking the QUB and UAS Facebook sites.</p> <p> Archaeology at Queen's Ulster Archaeological Society</p>		

We now have most speakers confirmed and will soon be putting together the line up. We hope to publish the full programme in the coming weeks

You can now sign up for the conference on the UAS website - <http://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/uas/Conference/>



Archaeology and Palaeoecology at Queen's 2020

2020 has been a year like no other because of the Covid-19 crisis but the workings of Archaeology and Palaeoecology in Queen's have gone on albeit with lots of the adjustments faced by people and organisations across the world.

Our number one priority, beyond keeping everyone safe and well, was to ensure that our students completed their studies for the 2019-20 academic year. Classes were switched to a remote learning environment when the lock down commenced and efforts were made to ensure that students in each year group could chat online to a member of staff on a daily basis should they wish to do so. We made it through to the end of semester and held our Exam Board meetings online when we welcomed Dr Lisa Marie Shillito from the University of Newcastle as our new External Examiner. A remote graduation event (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7A303UnVH08>) was held on 10 July and staff and students watched the celebration together via Teams. Despite our initial reservations it proved a great success and was actually a lot of fun, and it was great to connect with our students, many of whom are moving out into the world of work or onto university courses elsewhere. We were absolutely delighted to report in July that Archaeology and Palaeoecology once again came joint top in the UK for our subject area in the 2020 National Student Survey, with a score of 100% for Student Satisfaction.



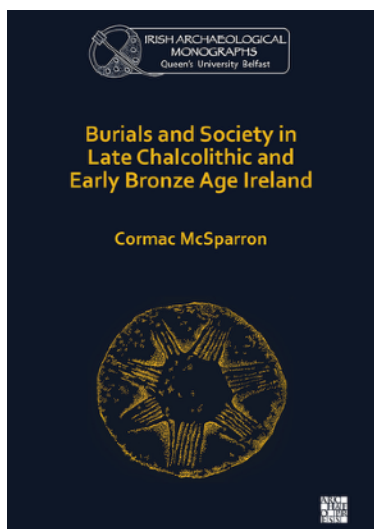
A party was held in January to mark the retirement of Dr Finbar McCormick after 27 years of service to Queen's. It was a bittersweet affair but Finbar is still very much involved with ArcPal and we hope he will continue to do so long into the future. The recent staff promotions round was a great cause for celebration with Dr Paddy Gleeson and Dr Will Megarry being promoted to Senior Lecturer and Dr Dirk Branderm and Dr Maarten Blaauw becoming Readers. Dr Michael O'Mahony gained his PhD, which focused on tower houses in Britain and Ireland, in July and we are delighted to report

that seven new PhD students will be joining us this autumn. The quality of the academic work of our students and staff have been recognised through awards of international prizes and PhD graduate Dr Jeanna Loyer (2019) won the PhD dissertation prize of the Société d'Anthropologie de Paris for her thesis entitled 'Life, health, and death in the steppe: a bioarchaeological study of Bronze Age and Iron Age populations of the Volga-Don region, Russia'. Dr Paddy Gleeson won the Martyn Jope Prize, awarded by the Society for Medieval Archaeology, for an article ('Archaeology and myth in early medieval Europe: making the Gods of Early Ireland') published in *Medieval Archaeology*. Dr Gill Plunkett was elected President of the Irish Quaternary Association (IQUA), Dr Dirk Brandherm became Editor of the *Journal of Irish Archaeology* and Prof Eileen Murphy was delighted to become a Vice-President of the Ulster Archaeological Society.



As always, we had a lot of exciting fieldwork ventures planned for 2020 but many of these had to be put on hold. In January Dr Colm Donnelly made a trip to Boston and Lowell in the United States where he and Prof Audrey Horning attended the annual Society for Historical Archaeology conference and then met with Dave McKean and Walter Hickey, friends from previous fieldwork ventures in Lowell, and Prof Stephen Mrozowski, founding director of the Fiske Center for Archaeological Research at UMASS Boston. We had intended to start a new transatlantic programme of excavation in the city this August, but obviously that has had to be put on hold. We had also planned to run a field school for US students, alongside our training excavation for Queen's students, and hopefully that too can be resurrected in 2021.

A lot of interesting articles by ArcPal researchers have been published this year in journals including the *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, *Journal of Archaeological Science*, *Journal of Paleolimnology*, *Journal of Quaternary Science*, *Medieval Archaeology*, *Nature*, *Nature Scientific Reports*, *Oxford Journal of Archaeology*, *Polar Research*, *PNAS*, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, *Quaternary Research*, *Quaternary Science Reviews*,



Radiocarbon, and magazines Archaeology Ireland and History Ireland, as well as chapters in prestigious new books. Dr Dirk Brandherm's new edited volume – Aspects of the Bronze Age in the Atlantic Archipelago, volume 3 in the Archaeologia Atlantica – was published in February. In March we launched our very own Irish Archaeological Monograph Series with Archaeopress. Volume 1 - Burials and Society in Late Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age Ireland by Dr Cormac McSparron will be out very soon. Submissions are very welcome and you can find out more at: <http://archaeopress.com/ArchaeopressShop/Public/defaultAll.asp?SubSeries=Queen%27s+University+Belfast+Irish+Archaeological+Monograph+Series>



In late January Prof Eileen Murphy was involved in a story that attracted a lot of media attention when some of the new findings of the Takabuti Research Project, including the discovery that she had been murdered, were released by the Ulster Museum to coincide with the 185th anniversary of the mummy's unwrapping in the Old Museum in Belfast. Eileen and Prof Rosalie David, University of Manchester, have recently completed an edited book on Takabuti that provides an overview of these new scientific studies as well as exploring what life may have been like for

her as a wealthy young woman in ancient Egypt and what happened to her remains when they arrived in Belfast in 1834. The book will be published by Liverpool University Press in March 2021. Another story attracted a lot of media interest in July and involved

Dr Paddy Gleeson's collaborative geophysical work at Navan Fort which was recently published in the Oxford Journal of Archaeology. Dr Will Megarry was also involved in a major media story in relation to the launch of the collaborative 'Heritage on the Edge Project' in January. The project uses state-of-the-art 3D capture technologies alongside interviews and videos to record both climate change impacts and local responses at

World Heritage Sites in Rapa Nui, Peru, Bangladesh, Scotland and Tanzania. It is well worth a look - <https://artsandculture.google.com/project/heritage-on-the-edge>. Dr Melie Le Roy's fascinating work on



child labour in the past featured in Discover magazine in May (<https://www.discovermagazine.com/planet-earth/the-ancient-practice-of-child-labor-is-coming-to-light>).

Dr Ryan Rabett has continued with his major SUNDASIA project which is exploring how prehistoric tropical communities adapted to cycles of coastal inundation over the last 60,000 years in northern Vietnam, and how these data can help inform models and responses to modern climate-induced rising seas in this region (<https://sundasia.com/>). The multi-disciplinary research project is focused on the archaeological, geological and ecological history of the Trảng An massif World Heritage site, Ninh Binh, Vietnam. The long-standing project has been going from strength to strength and new funding was obtained through a UK Department for the Economy (DfE) – Global Challenge Research Fund (GCRF) Award (2020/21 Round) for a spin-out pilot project: 'Post-2020 local community-based management contributions in the ecotourism sector: An interdisciplinary assessment of World Heritage Sites in Vietnam and Sri Lanka'. Elsewhere, Prof Caroline Malone's major ERC-funded FRAGSUS project, which has been investigating cultural continuity and change in the Neolithic of Malta, is ending and several monographs have been submitted for publication.



Back in February ArcPal staff and students played an active role in the fabulous NI Science Festival with events including a workshop on Lackan Bog, Co. Down, held in Rathfriland and led by Dr Gill Plunkett and Level 3 student, Adam Purvis; a workshop on the ArcPal teaching collection lead by our postgraduate students and a weekend festival of archaeology, involving many ArcPal staff and students, that took place in the Navan Centre. Our Belfast Young



Archaeologists' Club had its regular monthly meetings at the start of the year but moved to remote sessions in May and so far has covered topics on dinosaurs, mummies, artefacts and excavation. We plan to continue the remote meetings for as long as necessary but hope to be able to resume face to face meetings very soon. We would be delighted to have more involvement in the YAC from members of the UAS whether as Assistant Leaders or with

younger family members. If this is of interest, please email - belfastyac@qub.ac.uk – to find out more.

Centre for Community Archaeology

Staff in the Centre for Community Archaeology (CCA) were also busy though many have been on furlough for the past few months. We were thrilled in February when their sterling work was recognised at the QUB Staff Excellence Awards ceremony for 2020 and they won the university's 'Community Impact' award which recognises the significant contribution that members of the university's staff have made to the local community and wider society. We were also delighted that the CCA's Grace McAlister was awarded DfE PhD funding in January to commence doctoral research on community archaeology and its impact on school children. The National Heritage Lottery Fund-funded 'Journeying Beyond Westeros' project was completed in March and the associated story book can be read online: <http://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/communityarchaeology/OurProjects/StoryMaps/>

Films were launched of projects involving the CCA on excavations at Boomhall in Derry and Downpatrick and these can be viewed on the ArcPal YouTube site: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCGI1c_dt-Mg58f9nELc93zA

As part of our activities to commemorate the 175th anniversary since the start of the Great Famine in 1845 the CCA had planned an experimental archaeological project growing Lumper potatoes on the Meharg's family farm near Dumdrod in the Belfast hills, in association with the Belfast Hills Partnership and Glens of Antrim Potatoes. A variety whose name is most associated with the Blight at the heat of the Great Famine, the Lumper had been almost consigned to history until Michael McKillop from Glens of Antrim Potatoes got hold of some 'heirloom' seed potatoes about 10 years ago and recommenced growing the variety. When it became clear that we would be unable to run a community project Brian Sloan



planted some of the potatoes in his own vegetable patch and has provided updates on their progress on the 'QUB – Archaeology at Queen's' Facebook site.



At the start of March CCA was excited to report on the first of its programme of excavations for the year – little did we know then that this would turn out to be probably our only excavation in 2020. A team, led by Dr Heather Montgomery, undertook a community project commissioned by the Ministry of Defence/Defence Infrastructure Organisation, supported by 2 Royal Irish Engagement Team and in collaboration with the Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust on the MoD/DIO Magilligan Training Estate. The key purpose of the project was to connect local people with the First World War heritage in their area and to increase understanding of the life of the soldiers and the training regime within the camp during the First World War.



Some CCA fieldwork commenced in late August when Dr Siobhán McDermott, Dr Alastair Ruffell (Geography) and Dr Colm Donnelly undertook a geophysical survey at Killyloughran Fort in south Armagh. In partnership with the Creggan Local History Group, and supported by the Newry Mourne and Down District Council, the CCA had made a successful application to the Royal Irish Academy for funding to support the work at this enigmatic site. Local tradition states it was the location of a Medieval church that was in use prior to the establishment of a new church in nearby Creggan in the 16th century. We are looking forward to hearing more about what the results have revealed.

The CCA is currently working with the UAS Committee to establish the programme for the forthcoming Discovery 2020! conference which will be held in November. The event will be remote and online this year, but we have assembled a great programme of lectures and no doubt it will be a very informative event. Dr Siobhán McDermott of the CCA received seed funding from the QUB Engaged Research Fund to establish a digital resource so we can continue to engage with community groups. Working in collaboration with the Lough Neagh Landscape Partnership, this 'Community Archaeology Toolkit' has been designed to provide insight into how archaeologists undertake their work, while

providing information that the participants might then use to inform their own research into the monuments in their localities and make funding applications to support this work. The Toolkit will be launched imminently and may of interest to members of the UAS so please keep an eye on our Facebook site for further information.

14CHRONO Centre for Climate, the Environment and Chronology

Staff in the 14CHRONO Centre for Climate, the Environment and Chronology have also been busy. Earlier this year, it launched its new website (<http://14chrono.org>) which is packed with interesting information about the techniques used in the Centre. Prof Paula Reimer and Dr Svetlana Svyatko were awarded funding from the Leverhulme Trust for a project exploring 'Migration or adaptation: emergence and development of nomadism in the Altai'. Dr Gerard

Barrett was awarded funding from the Royal Irish Academy for an exciting new project on 'Northern Ireland's Round Towers: Establishing a Chronology and Technological Understanding through mortar'. The work of the lab was integral in the exciting discovery of the remains of the seventh-century St Eanswythe, granddaughter of King Ethelbert, in a church in Kent!



Dendrochronologist, David Brown, was able to conduct field projects again in August and he helped David McMeekin from Garvagh Museum to establish a date for a timber that was used to support a pew in the gallery of the old First Garvagh Presbyterian Church, that was built sometime in the early 17th century and was demolished in 1971. He also visited Laurel Cottage near Waringstown, Craigavon, to see if dendrochronological dating of the cottage's roof timbers could establish if it dates to the 17th century, as is the case with other buildings in the area.

Recently the latest INTCAL calibration curves were published and you can read more about these in a piece just published in The Conversation that involves Prof Paula Reimer (<https://theconversation.com/from-cave-art-to-climate-chaos-how-a-new-carbon-dating-timeline-is-changing-our-view-of-history-143620>). While most ArcPal staff are still working remotely the 14CHRONO team were the first to resume work on campus at the start of July and they have been beavering away clearing the backlog of samples submitted for radiocarbon dating put on hold because of the lock down.

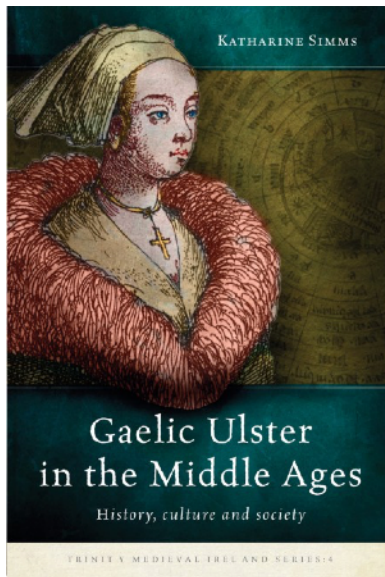
Despite the pandemic it is clear that the ArcPal team has been as busy as ever and we have all been getting used to the new remote way of working. To keep up to date with our activities and events please keep an eye on our Facebook site – 'QUB – Archaeology at Queen's'.

Eileen Murphy

Department of Archaeology

Queen's University Belfast

New Books



Gaelic Ulster in the Middle Ages - Katherine Simms

Four Courts Press, €65/£55

This impressive book is based on decades of research by Katherine Simms, beginning with her BA dissertation in 1969 and continuing to the present day. The first section covers the social history of Ulster from the Iron Age to the 16th century, discussing the rivalries between the Gaelic families and their kingdoms. This reveals the complexity of Gaelic society in Ulster and its interactions with the wider island. The second section deals with the culture of Gaelic Ulster. This section has chapters on kingship, the church, poets, 'men of art', warfare, and women. The final chapter looks at the everyday life of people, in particular their settlements, housing, clothing, and living conditions. This is a scholarly work and will form the cornerstone of all future studies of Gaelic Ireland, but it is written in an accessible manner for the non-academic audience. The book is vital for anyone studying medieval Ulster, or Ireland more generally, and there are many details that will be informative for anyone that has an interest in medieval Ulster and its Gaelic families. Katherine Simms is recognised as one of the foremost scholars on the Gaelic world and this volume demonstrates why. She is able to intertwine history and archaeology and bring the people, events, and landscapes alive for the reader.