



ULSTER  
ARCHÆOLOGICAL  
SOCIETY



Centre for  
**COMMUNITY  
ARCHAEOLOGY**  
Queen's University Belfast

# DISCOVERY 2024!

**EIGHTH ANNUAL REVIEW OF  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES IN ULSTER**

**Saturday 9th November 2024**

**Main Lecture Theatre, Elmwood Building  
Queen's University Belfast**

## Welcome from the Ulster Archaeological Society

On behalf of the Committee of the Ulster Archaeological Society (UAS) I would like to welcome everyone to Discovery 2024!, both in person and those joining us online. This is the eighth Annual Review of Archaeological Discoveries in Ulster conference organised by the Ulster Archaeological Society and the Centre for Community Archaeology at Queen's University Belfast (CCA, QUB). We are grateful as always to our friends and colleagues at QUB for facilitating this conference.

The UAS continues to grow in numbers, bringing together a blend of academics, those involved in the heritage sector and those who simply have an interest in the past. Members come from all walks of life and all are equally welcome. This year, we have enjoyed our usual series of monthly lectures from September to May and outings including visits to Friar's Bush graveyard, Bangor Abbey & Museum, the Castlereagh excavations and a day of graveyard archaeology in Fermanagh and Tyrone with the National Churches Trust's Treasure Ireland Project. We have also had a study tour to County Westmeath and workshops on Prehistoric Bead Making and Prehistoric Pottery Making. The Survey Group has continued to meet regularly, with several geophysical surveys undertaken, and an opportunity to excavate at the circular stone enclosure at Divis. Further opportunities to excavate were facilitated by the Community Archaeology Programme, Northern Ireland (CAPNI). Volume 78 of the Ulster Journal of Archaeology was published earlier this year, and Newsletters and the Website and Social Media continue to inform members of upcoming events and reflect on past ones.

Our committee members work tirelessly to organise this for the benefit of our members, and I take this opportunity to thank them all. Everything we do is in the interests of promoting public interest in the amazing heritage we have. As members of the UAS, each of us plays a part in ensuring that it remains for future generations to enjoy. This can be achieved in many ways, including keeping an eye on the condition of our monuments, enabling communities to take pride in their surroundings and encouraging the younger generations to take an interest in the past. We welcome feedback and input from the membership, so please do get in touch if there is anything in particular you would like to know more about, or if you have concerns about archaeological and heritage matters. It is your society and we will try to help.

This weekend, we are delighted to welcome Professor Gabriel Cooney of University College Dublin as our keynote speaker on the subject of Death and Burial in Ireland 8000 BC – AD 400, with Reference to Ulster, a local perspective of his recently published book, *Death in Irish Prehistory*, which was awarded the European Association of Archaeologists' Book Prize 2024. We also welcome all our other speakers who will be sharing their knowledge on a wide variety of interesting subjects relating to community archaeology, research, heritage past and present and commercial excavation and post-excavation projects.

I hope you all enjoy the conference, learn something new, and have the opportunity to interact with people having similar interests. It is encouraging to see that there is a flourishing interest in archaeology in Ulster. Thank you for attending and I look forward to seeing you again next year at Discovery 2025!

**Anne MacDermott MBE**

***President, Ulster Archaeological Society***

### **Welcome from the Centre for Community Archaeology**

We are delighted to welcome you to the eighth annual review of archaeological discoveries in Ulster – Discovery 2024! We are thrilled that Professor Gabriel Cooney from University College Dublin has agreed to give our keynote address this year entitled “Death and Burial in Ireland 8000 BC – AD 400, with Reference to Ulster” based on his recent award-winning book – *Death in Irish Prehistory* – published by the Royal Irish Academy.

Comprising Dr Colm Donnelly, Professor Eileen Murphy, Dr Heather Montgomery, Brian Sloan and Ruairí Ó Baoill, this has been a busy but very productive year for the Centre for Community Archaeology (CCA), with the majority of our activity devoted to the implementation of the first year of the Community Archaeology Programme Northern Ireland (CAPNI). CAPNI was formally awarded to the CCA by the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) on 17 January 2024, leading to a launch in the Great Hall at QUB on 8 February 2024, hosted by Aileen Cummins (Civic Engagement, QUB), and with presentations from Eddie Friel (Director of Alumni Engagement and Philanthropy, QUB), Darren Rice (Committee Member, National Lottery Heritage Fund NI), and Professor Eileen Murphy, who provided an outline of the activities to be rolled out across Northern Ireland over the course of the next three years (2024-2026).

Our first fieldwork took place in the early Spring when we conducted a topographical survey of a stone circular enclosure at Magheradone, near Moneymore, with the Loup and District Historical Society (11-15 March), while geophysical surveys were undertaken with Dr Thorsten Kahlert at Shaftesbury Park in Carrickfergus (7 March) and at Castlereagh (13 and 20 February), both surveys were undertaken to inform applications for excavations later in the year. We worked with the Kilmore Oneilland Trust, helping members of the local community undertake a survey of the memorials in the historic Kilmore Graveyard in County Armagh (15-18 April; 28 October to 1 November), and we undertook a building survey of a vernacular cottage at Grange Blundell in County Armagh (27 September) in partnership with Lurgan Townscape Heritage Scheme in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council. Our first community excavation this year was an investigation at Shaftesbury Park in Carrickfergus, County Antrim (directed by Ruairí Ó Baoill), undertaken in partnership with Carrickfergus Museum (20-31 May). This was followed by an investigation which also formed the ArcPal training excavation, carried out in partnership with the East Belfast Mission and

TURAS, at the location of a 'lost' medieval castle in Castlereagh, County Down, connected to the Clandeboy O'Neills (directed by Brian Sloan; 5 June to 2 July). Our third excavation was an investigation at Nailors Row in Derry City (directed by Ruairí Ó Baoill; 4-18 September), undertaken with the Friends of Derry Walls to investigate whether the 17th-century town ditch outside the historic walls had survived the demolition of the street in 1970. Our work here had been planned with the Friend's Mark Lusby and we were all devastated by the news of his death on 4 April. Our fourth excavation (7-18 October) was undertaken at the Ulster American Folk Museum working with the National Museums NI at the site of vernacular cottages on the estate (directed by Brian Sloan). Separate from the main CAPNI excavations was a fifth excavation, carried out by Dr Colm Donnelly (10-21 June) in his hometown of Ballycastle, working with the Ballycastle Museum in a project funded by the NLHF looking for the "lost" castle of Clare on the outskirts of the town.

We were very aware that the majority of archaeological sites in Northern Ireland are located on farmland. To enable us to directly interact with the rural community we therefore had a stand for the duration of the Balmoral Show, the largest agricultural show in Northern Ireland, with 4800 visitors to our stall over four days (15-18 May). Our main festival event was held in the Stranmillis University College on 16 June and where staff from the CCA and Level 1 undergraduate ArcPal students came together with a range of heritage stakeholder groups including the National Lottery Heritage Fund Northern Ireland, Belfast Naturalists' Field Club, Ben's Hollow Forge, Friar's Bush Graveyard Belfast, HED-HERoNI, Irish Archaeological Consultancy Ltd, Ulster Archaeological Society, Turas, Ulster Museum, and Wild Walk Bushcraft. We also took part in the Newry Arts Festival in Bagenal's Castle (5-6 April), the CBA festival of Archaeology in the Ulster Museum (26 July), the "Keep 'er Lit" evening event in the museum (22 August), the *Back from the Booley* festival in Hilltown, County Down (23 August), the Lough Erne Landscape Partnership's Heritage Festival in Enniskillen Castle (5 October) and the Northern Ireland Festival of Social Science (26 October). We undertook school visits to the Forth River Primary School and Harmony Primary School at the Shankill Spectrum Centre (25 March), Holy Cross Boys Primary School in Ardoyne (24 April), Hazelwood Integrated Primary School (7 May) and Lough View Integrated Primary School (22 October), while a school hub was held at the Hill of the O'Neill in Dungannon (7-13 May), which featured as the subject of an article on the BBCNI website, with a school hub due to be delivered in Newry (11-15 November).

Lectures on CAPNI were delivered to the ArcPal Seminar Series (5 March), the Ulster Archaeological Society (29 April), the LOGGIA's Connecting Threads conference in Trinity College Dublin (24 May), and in the "Inclusive Archaeology" session at the 30th EAA Conference in Rome (29 August), while we will also be delivering a lecture at the *Archaeology Above and Below* community archaeology conference at Rathcroghan on 17 November. Lectures were also delivered to the Lecale and Downe Historical Society (Colm Donnelly, 26 September) and Carrickfergus Museum / Carrickfergus & District Historical Society *Carrickfergus Revisited* conference (Ruairí Ó Baoill, 7 September). We also undertook "Walk and Talks" at Ardglass with Newry, Mourne and Down District Council (15 August) and at Templastragh for the Ballintoy Archaeological and Historical Society (28 August). Delivered

through QUB Open Learning we commenced our 10-week team-taught lecture series (The CAPNI Introduction to the Archaeology of Ulster) on Wednesday 9 October, with the lectures delivered at 1.00pm in the Elmwood Building in person and also live streamed, with a recording and support documents then uploaded to the CAPNI virtual learning platform on CANVAS. Our work across the programme has been greatly aided by the arrival of four placement students – Jamie Galbraith, Lara Wilgaus, Heidi Johnson and Étaín Mullan – on 16 September for academic year 2024-2025. We are grateful to them and all of the ArcPal students who have supported our activities over the past year. If you want to find out more about CAPNI, an article on the work conducted during Year 1 has recently been published in *British Archaeology* (Nov-Dec 2024 edition). We hope that UAS members will continue to get involved with our engagement activities – you can register your interest on the QUB – Archaeology at Queen's Facebook site or just email [arcpal@qub.ac.uk](mailto:arcpal@qub.ac.uk) We very much hope you will enjoy Discovery 2024! and hearing all about this year's range of exciting projects.

**Dr Colm Donnelly & Professor Eileen Murphy**

***Co-Directors, Centre for Community Archaeology***

***School of Natural and Built Environment, Queen's University Belfast***

**DISCOVERY 2024!**  
**EIGHTH ANNUAL REVIEW OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES**  
**IN ULSTER**

Organised by the Centre for Community Archaeology at Queen's University  
Belfast and the Ulster Archaeological Society

***Friday 8th November 2024***

- 18.00**      **Conference Registration**
- 18.30**      **Conference Launch and Wine Reception**
- 19.00**      **Keynote Address: Professor Gabriel Cooney OBE** (University College Dublin)  
*Death and Burial in Ireland 8000 BC - AD 400, with Reference to Ulster*

***Saturday 9th November 2024***

- 9.00**      **Conference Registration**
- 9.30**      **Conference Welcome: Anne MacDermott MBE** (President of the Ulster  
Archaeological Society), **Dr Colm Donnelly** (Co-Director of the Centre for Community  
Archaeology, Queen's University Belfast), **Dr Duncan Berryman** (Conference Co-  
ordinator, Ulster Archaeological Society)
- 9.40**      **SESSION 1: COMMUNITY ARCHAEOLOGY**
- Professor Eileen Murphy** (Centre for Community Archaeology, QUB)  
*Community Archaeology Programme Northern Ireland (CAPNI), 2024*
- Ruairí Ó Baoill** (Centre for Community Archaeology, QUB)  
*A Recent Community Excavation in Derry City*
- Brian Sloan** (Centre for Community Archaeology, QUB)  
*Excavations at Castlereagh, Co. Down*

**Dr Colm Donnelly** (Centre for Community Archaeology, QUB)

***Excavations at Ballycastle, Co. Antrim***

**Malachy Conway** (National Trust)

***Excavations at a Circular Stone Enclosure in Divis Townland 2024***

**10.55** ***Morning Tea/ Coffee break***

**11.25** **SESSION 2: RESEARCH**

**Dr Rena Maguire** (Queen's University Belfast)

***'Pict'ure This': Exploring Early Connections Between the North of Ireland and Scotland Through Art and Identity***

**Gosse Bootsma** (Queen's University Belfast)

***Botanical and Chemical Factors Impacting Recent Carbon Storage Dynamics in Temperate Peatlands***

**Dr Jessica White** (Queen's University Belfast)

***The Biomechanics of a Physically Impaired Individual from Early Medieval Ranelagh, Co. Roscommon***

**David Craig** (Ulster Archaeological Society)

***Probing the Ground: UAS Fieldwork Activities in 2024***

**12.25** **Q & A for morning sessions**

**13.00** ***Lunch***

**14.30** **SESSION 3: HERITAGE PAST AND PRESENT**

**Bronagh Murray** (Historic Environment Division, DfC)

***Archaeology 2030: A Strategic Approach for Northern Ireland – An Update***

**Sapphire Mussen and Maia Giles** (Historic Environment Division, DfC)

***HED Artefact Collections: Successfully Transforming Storage and Access***

**Maybelline Gormley** (Historic Environment Division, DfC)

***Galloon East Cross Conservation 2024***



**Dr Vicky Ginn** (Historic Environment Division, DfC)

***The Historic Environment in Peatland Restoration***

**Dr Greer Ramsey** (National Museums NI)

***Ballintaggart Court Tomb – A 6000 Year Agricultural Journey***

**15.50**            **Q & A for Afternoon Session 3**

**16.05**            ***Afternoon Tea/ Coffee break***

**16.25**            **SESSION 4: COMMERCIAL EXCAVATION & POST-EXCAVATION  
PROJECTS**

**Dr John O Neill** (Irish Archaeological Consultancy Ltd)

***Update on Drumclay Crannog Post-Excavation Project***

**Mario Fusco** (Northern Archaeological Consultancy Ltd)

***A Bridge Too Glar: Excavations of a Rath at Randalstown***

**Simon Kane and Bethany Johnston** (Gahan and Long Archaeological Services Ltd)

***More Than we Bargained for: The Excavation of a Lost Medieval Cemetery at  
Carrickfergus***

**17.15**            **Q & A for Afternoon Session 4**

**17.30**            **Conference concludes**



## Conference Abstracts and Profiles

### KEYNOTE ADDRESS

**Professor Gabriel Cooney** (University College Dublin)

***Death and Burial in Ireland 8000 BC - AD 400, with Reference to Ulster***

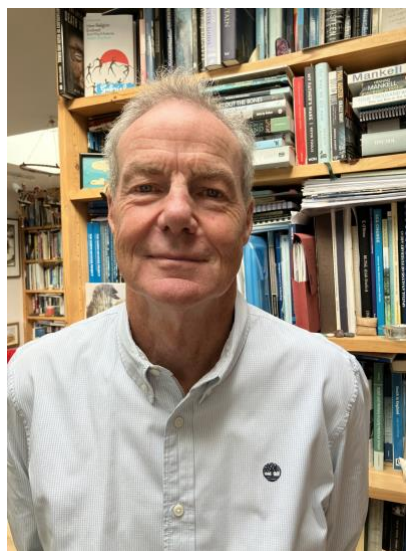
#### **Keynote Speaker abstract**

The richness of the mortuary record that we have for Irish prehistory is a highlight of the archaeological record for that eight thousand year span of time (8000 BC- AD 400). This lecture will consider changing patterns in the treatment of the dead of the earliest human generations who lived in Ireland, making particular reference to Ulster, and how the evidence here relates to wider trends across the island.

#### **Keynote Speaker profile**

**Professor Gabriel Cooney** is Emeritus Professor of Celtic Archaeology in the School of Archaeology, University College Dublin. He served as Chairperson of the Historic Monuments Council from 2009-2019 and is a member of the Royal Irish Academy. Gabriel's research interests focus on the Neolithic period, particularly the use of stone, and on mortuary practices in prehistory.

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## SESSION 1: COMMUNITY ARCHAEOLOGY

**Professor Eileen Murphy** (Centre for Community Archaeology, Queen's University Belfast)

### ***Community Archaeology Programme Northern Ireland (CAPNI), Year 1***

#### **Abstract**

The presentation will provide an update on the Community Archaeology Programme Northern Ireland (CAPNI) which was launched in February 2024. CAPNI is a structured programme of community archaeology to be undertaken across Northern Ireland over the three-year period from 2024 to 2026. Supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and based within the Centre for Community Archaeology, Queen's University Belfast, the programme has been enabling CAPNI's archaeologists to facilitate and support local communities in the study of their past through direct participation in co-designed activities, including excavation, survey, festivals and walking tours. The programme has also included regional School Hub events where the CAPNI team have the opportunity to introduce children to the work of archaeologists, archaeological sites in their locality and the importance of our archaeological heritage. An overview will be provided of the work that the CAPNI team has undertaken over the past eight months.

#### **Profile**

**Professor Eileen Murphy** has worked in Archaeology and Palaeoecology at Queen's University Belfast since 2000. She is Co-Director of the Centre for Community Archaeology, Co-PI of CAPNI and a Vice-President of the Ulster Archaeological Society. Her research largely focuses on human osteoarchaeology and burial practices.

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**Ruairí Ó Baoill** (Centre for Community Archaeology, Queen's University Belfast)

### ***A Recent Community Excavation in Derry City***

#### **Abstract**

During September 2024, Ruairí Ó Baoill directed a community excavation in Derry City. The dig was part of the Centre for Community Archaeology's CAPNI programme of community engagement with archaeology and heritage. The programme is funded by a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. In Derry, a reconnaissance excavation took place just outside the historic 17<sup>th</sup>-century city walls

at Nailor's Row, between Double Bastion and Royal Bastion, to assess the condition of the archaeological resource in this part of the city. The CCA's community-based partners in the city were the Friends of the Derry Walls. Its founder, the late Mark Lusby, has been instrumental in promoting the heritage of the walled city. The excavation uncovered interesting information about life in this historic urban settlement over the last few centuries.

## Profile

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**Ruairí Ó Baoill** is an archaeologist with the Centre for Community Archaeology. He is currently employed as an Archaeological Fieldwork and Outreach Officer on the CAPNI programme funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. He has directed excavations for more than 30 years. He has sat on the Board of the Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland and was a founder member and first Chair of the Irish Post-Medieval Archaeology Group. He was President of the Ulster Archaeological Society from 2016-2022 and one of the founding co-organisers of the annual Discovery! conference.



**Brian Sloan** (Centre for Community Archaeology, Queen's University Belfast)

### ***Excavations at Castlereagh, Co. Down***

#### **Abstract**

A community excavation was undertaken at Castlereagh, Co. Down, over a four-week period in June 2024 as part of the CAPNI programme funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. This investigation also comprised the fieldwork element for the annual QUB Training Excavation with the involvement of Level 1 Archaeology students. The focus of the excavation was 'Con O'Neill's' Castle, a 'tower-house' fortification that was located on the slopes of the Castlereagh Hills during the Later Medieval period. Geophysical survey carried out at the site by Dr Thorsten Kahlert in February 2024 identified potential archaeological anomalies which were ground proofed by excavation in June. Although the foundations of the tower house were not uncovered, the excavation did reveal features, deposits and artefacts related to activity in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

## Profile

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### Brian Sloan

Brian Sloan has worked at the CCA (and its predecessor the CAF) since September 2003. He is currently employed as an Archaeological Fieldwork and Outreach Officer on the CAPNI programme funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Throughout his years at QUB he has directed some prominent community projects at Downpatrick, Co. Down and Tullaghoge, Co. Tyrone. He is a lithics specialist and has completed numerous specialist reports on prehistoric assemblages from Northern Ireland. He also has a keen interest in experimental archaeology and has developed skills in both flint knapping and blacksmithing.



**Dr Colm Donnelly** (Centre for Community Archaeology, Queen's University Belfast)

### *Excavations at Ballycastle, Co. Antrim*

#### Abstract

In the late 1830s Thomas Fagan of the Ordnance Survey reported on a castle (ANT004:081) in the townland of Clare on the outskirts of Ballycastle on the north Antrim coast. Fagan's account highlighted that the castle had stood some four furlongs to the south-west of Dunineny Castle (ANT004:001) and that it had been home to the McNeill family. The exact location of Clare Castle is now lost but in June 2024 a two-week reconnaissance excavation was undertaken by the CCA at the location of a rectangular cropmark (ANT004:123) within an agricultural field in the townland to investigate if this might have been the location of the castle, in a community excavation carried out on behalf of Ballycastle Museum and funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

## Profile

Email: [c.j.donnelly@qub.ac.uk](mailto:c.j.donnelly@qub.ac.uk)

**Dr Colm Donnelly** is Co-Director of the Centre for Community Archaeology in the School of Natural and Built Heritage, Queen's University Belfast. An historical archaeologist, his research focuses on Late Medieval and early 17<sup>th</sup>-century architecture, Medieval Gaelic Ireland, the Irish diaspora in the USA, and early modern Irish folklife.



**Malachy Conway** (National Trust)

***Excavations at a Circular Stone Enclosure in Divis Townland 2024***

**Abstract**

The presentation details the preliminary results of an excavation carried out in July-August 2024 at a circular stone enclosure in Divis townland. Previous investigation was carried out at the site in 2017 by the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork at Queen's University Belfast and the National Trust which had sought to date the circular enclosure and establish its authenticity as a distinctive type of monument. The results from the trench excavated in 2017 had revealed that at least some sections of masonry walls forming the perimeter and apparent compartments within the enclosure were datable to the mid to late 19th century, however, tantalizingly flints and several sherds of pottery were recovered from a layer below the walls which appeared to be of Late Neolithic or Early Bronze Age character in date. A radiocarbon date returned from a sample recovered from the horizon below the later walls produced a Late Bronze Age date. No features of definitive prehistoric date were found, in what was at the time a limited key-hole trench.

Building on the results from 2017, the excavation in 2024 opened a large area across the south-east quadrant of the enclosure. In this area further evidence was uncovered that the site had been either built as or modified into a 'sheepfold' in the 19th century. This was confirmed by mortar bonded walls, cobbled surfaces and a compartment which contained a hearth. Finds from this phase included broken bottle glass, iron and some modern pottery fragments. Investigation below this 19th-century horizon revealed much earlier activity, which from the pottery and flintwork recovered suggests a Later Neolithic date for this phase. A series of postholes and pits were revealed, one of the pits containing a considerable amount of largely undecorated prehistoric pottery of carinated bowl form, as well as several decorated pottery sherds. Of the features found, a linear alignment of postholes suggests a possible fence or palisade extending SW-NE across the area and along with the pits confirms the presence of prehistoric settlement on the site. The date and origin of the stone enclosure itself remains to be confirmed, however a potential development sequence is postulated from the available evidence.

**Profile**

**Email: [malachy.conway@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:malachy.conway@nationaltrust.org.uk)**

**Malachy Conway** graduated in Archaeology from Queen's University Belfast in 1989 and through to 2003 worked as an excavation director and senior archaeologist across several agencies and commercial companies across Ireland, undertaking some significant excavations across the island in that time. He took up the role of Archaeologist with the National Trust in 2003. He has been involved in the UAS survey group since it was set up in 2005 and, from 2021, has served as the UAS Honorary Fieldwork Coordinator.





## SESSION 2: RESEARCH

**Dr Rena Maguire** (Queen's University Belfast)

***'Pict'ure This': Exploring Early Connections Between the North of Ireland and Scotland Through Art and Identity***

### **Abstract**

The decorative flourishes and swirls on Irish iron Age metalwork is considered the epitome of 'Celtic' art of Late Iron Age Ireland. Whether the decorations are on scabbard or snaffle, they are instantly recognisable as examples of a culture which apparently embraced European La Tene art styles and re-imagined them in a regional manner. Yet there is a small collection of objects, mostly found in the north of Ireland, which do not conform to Irish La Tene-derivative decorative styles, so much so that neither Jope nor Raftery knew exactly how to categorise them. The decorations cast into the metal and carved on stones indicate that the makers and users saw themselves as different to those who adopted and reworked the European La Tene styles, as art is a means of demonstrating one's identity. These people maintained a presence in Ireland for several centuries as the artefacts span the duration of the Iron Age. The art styles used to decorate their creations are reminiscent (and on occasions identical) to those used on early medieval Pictish art in Scotland – could these decorations be one of the influences which contributed to Pictish art, which in itself, is being re-examined through new findings of absolute dates and genomic analysis.

### **Profile**

**Dr Rena Maguire** is currently a Visiting Research Fellow at Queen's University Belfast, after completing an IRC-funded postdoctoral project in University College Dublin. Her expertise is Iron Age material culture, especially weaponry, lorinery and equitation. She is the first Irish council member of the Royal Archaeological Institute, and editor of the *Via Archaeologia* series with Trivent Publishing.

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**Gosse Bootsma** (Queen's University Belfast)

***Botanical and Chemical Factors Impacting Recent Carbon Storage Dynamics in Temperate Peatlands***

**Abstract**

Peatlands are a key terrestrial ecosystem, especially in the Britain and Ireland, which support unique biodiversity and form a major carbon store. This ecosystem is highly dependent on climatic factors and can be significantly influenced by human activity. Going into the future, improving understanding of how carbon is sequestered and released is key, as carbon dioxide and methane are major greenhouse gases. Therefore, carbon storage dynamics of peatlands could have a significant impact on future climate change. This project aims to improve understanding of peatland carbon storage dynamics over the last few centuries, by combining information on species diversity and composition, pollution, and the chemical composition of peat, using methods including a range of radiocarbon dating techniques, ramped pyrolysis, bulk density, loss-on-ignition, and X-Ray Fluorescence. The work primarily focuses on peatlands in Northern Ireland and Scotland. In this way, the project hopes to improve understanding of how recent challenges have impacted temperate peatlands.

**Profile**

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**Gosse Bootsma** is a QUADRAT PhD student in Archaeology and Palaeoecology at Queen's University Belfast, focusing on peat, plants, and carbon. Before coming to Belfast, I studied Plant Sciences and Biodiversity. I am also active in climate change and biodiversity advocacy at times. Feel free to ask questions or say hi!



**Dr Jessica White** (Queen's University Belfast)

***The Biomechanics of a Physically Impaired Individual from Early Medieval Ranelagh, Co. Roscommon***

**Abstract**

A gap in research exists between osteological evidence and true biomechanical gait of archaeological remains. Computer simulation of musculoskeletal models is an emerging engineering approach to estimate true gait patterns from skeletal remains. This study paves the way for bridging the gap between osteological evidence and true gait by obtaining information from a physically impaired individual



(Skeleton 67) from early medieval Ranelagh, Co. Roscommon, who suffered a major femoral head fracture. Macroscopic analyses and medical imaging techniques were used to build a 3D musculoskeletal model of SK 67 and simulate their gait post-impairment using biomechanical software. Cortical bone distribution and enthesal changes were also examined in their upper limbs to assess for signs of potential crutch use. The results of these interdisciplinary methods enabled the biomechanics of SK 67 to be revealed and assessed how they would have used walking aids to regain mobility. This method opens new avenues for future research into reconstructing the biomechanics of individuals with physical impairments within archaeological contexts, both temporally and geographically.

### Profile

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**Dr Jessica White** has worked as an osteoarchaeologist at IAC for the past two years and recently completed her PhD at QUB. Her research involved the biomechanics of physically impaired individuals, specifically focusing on developing a technique that can be used globally and temporally to recreate the gait of physically impaired individuals in archaeology.



**David Craig** (Ulster Archaeological Society)

### ***Probing the Ground: UAS Fieldwork Activities in 2024***

#### **Abstract**

The presentation focuses on the programme of field surveys undertaken by members of the UAS Survey Group in 2024. A series of geophysical surveys and UAV drone surveys were conducted at sites including Kilmocholmóg (Co. Down), Murlough National Nature Reserve (Co. Down), Downhill Demesne (Co. Derry) and Divis and the Black Mountain (Co. Antrim), including adjacent to the stone enclosure which was excavated on Divis in 2017 and again most recently in 2024. Along with the geophysical surveys, the group also carried out a walk-over survey at Murlough Nature Reserve to ground truth and verify features identified from a recent LiDAR survey of the area and which revealed previously unrecorded practice trenches and other earthwork features associated with WWII period training activity on the site.

## Profile

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**David Craig**, in his early years worked at the University of Ulster as Senior Technician, School of Environmental and Earth Sciences, after which he moved into the business sector for some years. He then used his previous experience and interest to set up HeritageNI, specialising in drone mapping, GIS and 3D image modelling in the environmental and heritage sectors. He retired in 2021; however, he has been involved with the UAS Survey Group for the past 10 years with a continuing special interest in drone and geophysical surveys.



## SESSION 3: HERITAGE PAST AND PRESENT

**Bronagh Murray** (Historic Environment Division, Department for Communities)

***Archaeology 2030: A Strategic Approach for Northern Ireland – An Update***

### Abstract

Archaeology 2030 is a ten-year project to develop a strategic approach for archaeology in Northern Ireland. The strategic vision of Archaeology 2030 is for “archaeology to be accessed and valued by as many people as possible, led by a sector which is healthy, resilient and connected”. The Strategic Vision has five aims: Archaeology on the ground; Understanding the past; Sustaining the Historic environment; Engaging and enriching lives; Innovation, understanding and skills. Archaeology 2030: A Strategic Approach for Northern Ireland, sets out how Northern Ireland, as a society, can develop our engagement with, and understanding of, our archaeology. This update will highlight Archaeology 2030 achievements to date and spotlight the forthcoming Archaeology 2030: Skills gaps and losses survey for employers, employees and students, developed by the Archaeology 2030 Professional Skills, Training and Specialisms working group.

## Profile

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**Bronagh Murray** is an archaeologist within the Heritage Records and Designations Branch (HED) and Project Officer for Archaeology 2030. Bronagh has a BA in Archaeology (QUB) and an MA in Social Anthropology (QUB). She has worked on numerous excavations throughout Northern Ireland from prehistoric settlements to 19th-century vernacular dwellings.



## **Sapphire Mussen & Maia Giles** (Historic Environment Division, Department for Communities) ***HED Artefact Collections: Successfully Transforming Storage and Access***

### Abstract

Since the 1930s, a vast amount of archaeological material has been recovered from licenced excavations throughout Northern Ireland. HED holds significant collections from excavations which it has undertaken, commissioned or funded over the decades. In recent years we have made major strides forward in ensuring the preservation and accessibility of this invaluable and irreplaceable cultural heritage asset for research and public engagement. This short talk will be a whistlestop tour of the collections and a brief overview of some of the challenges the Department has faced in storing, and maintaining the integrity of these collections, and how we have navigated our way through these challenges as they have arisen. We will touch on the steps that are now being taken to mitigate future difficulties, the ongoing work and methodologies that are being used to document, conserve and curate our legacy collections and the standards that are currently being implemented for all future collections.

## Profile

Email: [sapphire.mussen@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:sapphire.mussen@communities-ni.gov.uk)

**Sapphire Mussen** is a graduate of Queen's University Belfast and has a working background in archaeological survey, illustration, excavation and museum documentation. She currently works as a curatorial archaeologist caring for the artefact collections held and maintained by Historic Environment Division.



## Profile

Email: [maia.giles@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:maia.giles@communities-ni.gov.uk)

**Maia Giles** is a 2022 Archaeology-Palaeoecology and 2023 Masters of Research graduate of Queen's University Belfast, with an interest in Neolithic stone tools. She currently works as a Curatorial Archaeologist for Historic Environment Division caring for their artefact collection and enhancing it to ensure long term preservation.



**Maybelline Gormley** (Historic Environment Division, Department for Communities)  
***Galloon East Cross Conservation 2024***

### Abstract

Galloon graveyard sits on the edge of the Upper Lough Erne waterway, south-east of Newtownbutler, Co. Fermanagh. It is the site of an early medieval monastery, founded by St. Tigernach, later left to St. Colman, to whom the church was dedicated. By the 1306 Papal Taxation it was a parish church. The site now is a small graveyard, which belies its earlier, much greater, significance as an ecclesiastical site. Two High Cross shafts, the East Cross and the West Cross, are located within the graveyard. Both cross heads have been lost. The graveyard is scheduled under the Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (NI). In 2022 the top of the east cross shaft was accidentally hit, possibly with a flail trimming the boundary hedge. This caused considerable damage to the existing top of the shaft. Some of the pieces were able to be retrieved. Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, with funding through the HED Historic Environment Fund Revival Stream, undertook a project to repair the top of the shaft, enabling the fragments to be reset. This presentation details the process by which this was done, under Scheduled Monument Consent, the conservation consideration and decision-making that was employed and the ongoing considerations and management of the site going forward.

**Profile**

**Email: [maybelline.gormley@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:maybelline.gormley@communities-ni.gov.uk)**

**Maybelline Gormley** is a Senior Archaeological Inspector with the DfC Historic Environment Division, leading the Scheduled Monument Management team. Along with her team, she regulates work to Scheduled Monuments, advises site owners, other government departments, local authorities and stakeholders on appropriate management of protected and non-protected archaeological sites. Her particular interests are in site conservation philosophy and techniques and heritage management.



**Dr Victoria Ginn** (Historic Environment Division, Department for Communities)

***The Historic Environment in Peatland Restoration***

**Abstract**

This talk will provide an overview of peatlands, their value, their role in meeting climate change targets, and the significance of this for peatland archaeology. Historic Environment Division has been working with other government departments and peatland practitioners to produce associated guidance, to explain why peatland archaeology is so important, and to embed the historic environment into forthcoming restoration projects.

**Profile**

**Email: [vicky.ginn@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:vicky.ginn@communities-ni.gov.uk)**

**Dr Vicky Ginn** MCifFA, MA Oxon, MA has worked extensively as an archaeological consultant researching, writing and editing reports and publications. She received a PhD in Bronze Age Settlement in Ireland from QUB (2012). She is currently working as an Archaeologist in the Historic Environment Division – Scheduled Monument Management Team.





**Dr Greer Ramsey** (National Museums NI)

***Ballintaggart Court Tomb – A 6000 Year Agricultural Journey***

**Abstract**

This talk explores the trials and tribulations of the Ballintaggart court tomb from County Armagh. Rescued and moved from its original location near Portadown, it found a new home recently (via the Ulster Museum) in the rural area of the Ulster Folk Museum, at Cultra. It now acts as a reminder that the origins of agriculture in Ireland are far more ancient than the thatched cottages that pepper the site. It also reflects a desire to bury the dead and to mark their location in a spectacular way which we still marvel at today.

**Profile**

**Email:** [Greer.Ramsey@nationalmuseumsni.org](mailto:Greer.Ramsey@nationalmuseumsni.org)

**Dr Greer Ramsey** is Curator of Archaeology at National Museums NI. His association with the Ulster Museum goes back to his time at Queen's both as an undergraduate and for his PhD research in Bronze Age metalwork.



## **SESSION 4: COMMERCIAL EXCAVATION & POST-EXCAVATION PROJECTS**

**Dr John Ó Néill** (Irish Archaeological Consultancy Ltd)

***Update on Drumclay Crannog Post-Excavation Project***

**Abstract**

Post-excavation analysis and reporting is now nearing completion for the Drumclay crannog assemblage by Irish Archaeological Consultancy Ltd, under the guidance of the Historic Environment Division of the Department for Communities, NI. The crannog was excavated by Declan Hurl and Dr Nora Bermingham in 2012-13. Located within fen peat on the margin of an inter-drumlin lake, Knockalough, Co. Fermanagh, use of the site began just after 800 AD. Due to its weight, the crannog continuously sank below the water table in the fen, preserving surfaces and houses. Some 3m+ of archaeological deposits accumulated in 200 years, burying alder, oak and ash that was used to create closely-dated tree ring chronologies. By 1600, another 2m of archaeologically-rich layers had formed. Use of the site saw periods of intense use, abandonment and changes of use, including one late

medieval burial. A range of craft and agricultural activities can be identified amongst the eclectic assemblage of finds and samples, as well as cultural elements such as musical instruments, collected antiquities, gaming boards and pieces, and other aspects of contemporary life that generally are not preserved. This update will provide an overview of Drumclay's 1000+ wooden artefacts, gold, copper alloy, iron, amber, glass, leather, textiles, bone, antler and stone tools. The artefacts are complemented by detailed contextual studies of faunal, insect and parasite assemblages, plant macrofossil, wood, pollen and other palaeoenvironmental analyses. The post-excavation project is preparing publication of the archaeology of the site, the architectural forms present, environmental conditions and cultural assemblages.

### Profile

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**Dr John Ó Néill** is the Research Manager at IAC Archaeology Ltd where he is responsible for project managing large-scale excavation and post-excavation projects. He is the Project Manager for the Drumclay Crannog Post-Excavation Project.



**Mario Fusco** (Northern Archaeological Consultancy Ltd)

***A Bridge Too Glar: Excavations of a Rath at Randalstown***

### Abstract

The presentation will provide an overview of the results of the excavation of an univallate rath with a wooden bridge at Portglenone Road, Randalstown, Co. Antrim. The excavation work at the site was carried out between November 2022 and April 2023. Any archaeological features within the interior of the rath had been destroyed by the construction of a modern building (c. 1950-1960). Within the ditch the remains of a wooden bridge and around 200 other pieces of worked wood were recovered. This included, cut stakes and timbers, vessel staves and hoops, mallets, lids, bases and a collapsed wooden bucket. Other artefacts recovered from the ditch included 116 fragments of souterrain ware pottery, a complete leather shoe, leather scraps, a few pieces of struck flint and a damaged iron cauldron. This talk shall serve to outline the excavation of the rath with reference to the particular challenges involved and to highlight the results of the excavation.



## Profile

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**Mario E. Fusco** is a fieldwork and post-excavation supervisor at NAC. He graduated with a BA in Archaeology from QUB in 2017. Since then, he has worked as a field archaeologist, in both a fieldwork and post-excavation capacity. His main area of expertise is archaeometallurgy.



**Simon Kane and Bethany Johnston** (Gahan and Long Archaeological Services Ltd)

***More Than we Bargained for: The Excavation of a Lost Medieval Cemetery at Carrickfergus***

## Abstract

An excavation was carried out by Gahan & Long Ltd. in advance of proposed development of a Home Bargains store at Belfast Road, Carrickfergus, Co. Antrim. Initial testing determined that the majority of the site was archaeologically sterile; but human skeletal remains and graves were identified within part of the proposed development area. The area was heavily disturbed by activity relating to a 1950s textile factory, and the excavation was subsequently complicated by the presence of asbestos material throughout the site. The excavation confirmed the existence of 107 grave cuts containing 119 individuals, with the remains of 68 disarticulated individuals also identified. Artefactual evidence indicated that the burials likely relate to the high medieval period and the Premonstratensian Woodburn Abbey, which is known to have previously existed in close vicinity to the development site, but with its exact location not yet been identified.

### Profile

**Simon Kane** graduated from QUB in 2016 with an MSci in Archaeology & Palaeoecology with GIS & Cultural Heritage. He has worked on and directed sites across Ireland since joining Gahan & Long Ltd as a field archaeologist in 2017, becoming a licensed director in 2022.

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### Profile

**Bethany Johnston** graduated with a BA in Archaeology from the University of Chester in 2015 and a MSc in Osteoarchaeology from the University of Sheffield in 2016. Since graduating she has worked in commercial archaeology on projects throughout Ireland. At present she is an excavation director and osteoarchaeologist with Gahan and Long Ltd.

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## Further information and Acknowledgements

### **Information about the Ulster Archaeological Society**

The current Committee of the Ulster Archaeological Society comprises: Anne MacDermott MBE (President), John Moore OBE and Professor Eileen Murphy (Vice Presidents), Patrick O'Neill (Honorary Secretary), Lee Gordon (Honorary Treasurer), Cormac Bourke (Honorary Editor, *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*), Grace McAlister (Honorary Assistant Editor, *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*), Dr Duncan Berryman (Honorary Editor: *UAS Newsletter*), Malachy Conway (Honorary Fieldwork Coordinator), Dr Courtney Mundt, David Craig, Cherie Edwards, Nicole Finlay, Barrie Hartwell, Dr Rena Maguire, Bronagh Murray, Roisín McCaughan, Randal Scott, Brian Sloan and Leo van Es (Committee members).

### **For further information about the activities of the Ulster Archaeological Society please see our**

Website: <https://ulsterarchaeology.org>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/UlsterArchaeologicalSoc>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@TheUlsterArchaeologicalSociety>

Email: [secretary@ulsterarchaeology.org](mailto:secretary@ulsterarchaeology.org)

The Ulster Archaeological Society is registered with The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland NIC101151

### **Further information about the Centre for Community Archaeology and Archaeology & Palaeoecology at Queen's University Belfast**

For further information about Archaeology & Palaeoecology at Queen's and our activities please see our websites: <https://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/communityarchaeology/>

<https://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/byac/>

<https://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/NBE/>

Facebook: @archaeologyatqueensbelfast

Twitter: @ArcPalQUB

YouTube: [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCGI1c\\_dt-Mg58f9nELc93zA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCGI1c_dt-Mg58f9nELc93zA)

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Last, but not least, we would like again to thank all the participants in the conference who have so generously agreed to share their discoveries with us.

## **NOTES**

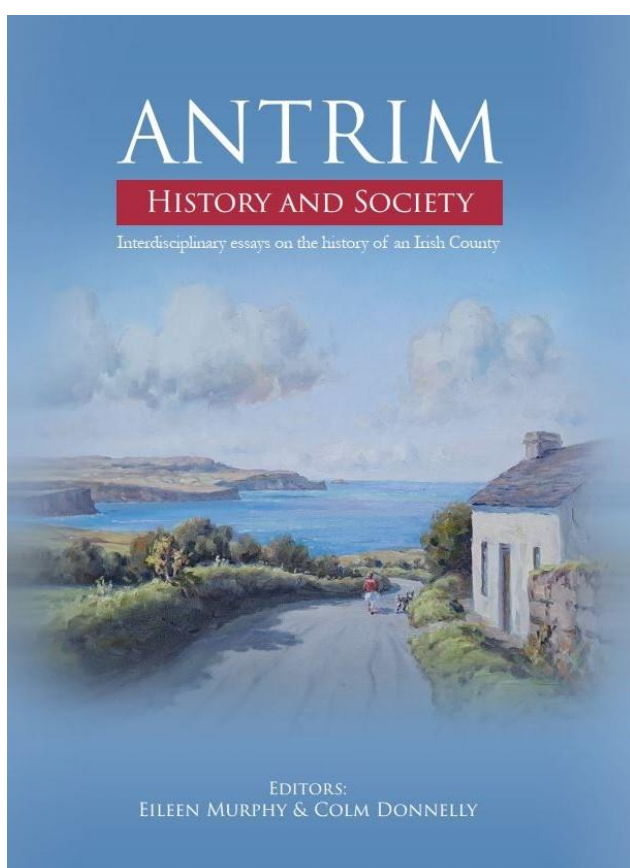
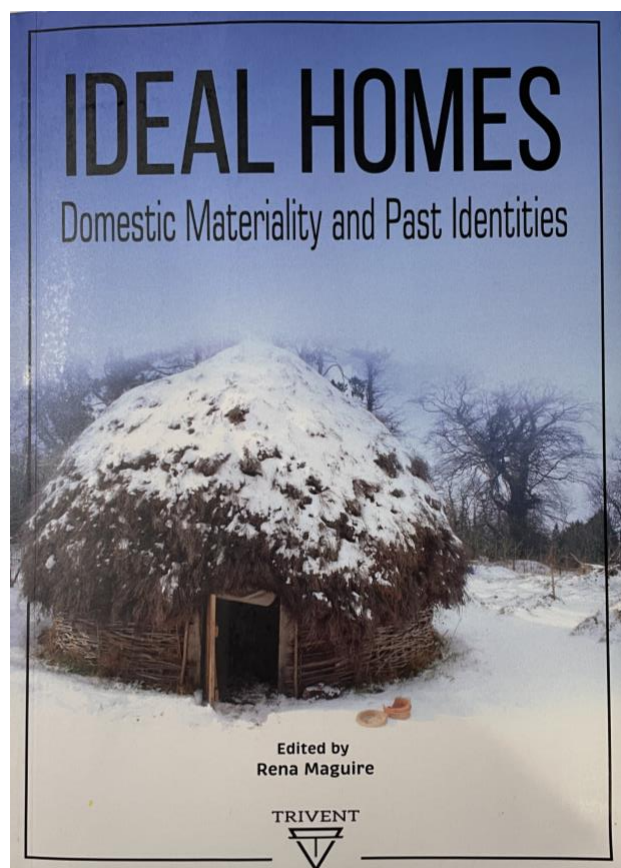
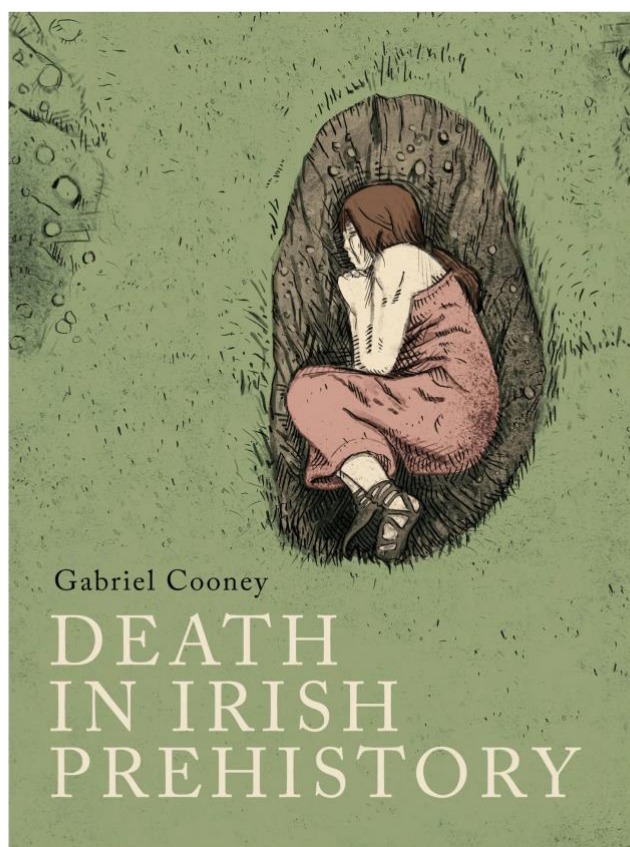
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