

In-Site

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND ARCHAEOLOGY FORUM

SPRING 2011

CONFERENCE

'Heritage in Hard Times'

The Northern Ireland Archaeology Forum are holding a conference in Hillsborough Courthouse on Wednesday 23rd March 2011. We will be looking at 'Heritage in the Teens' and 'Adopting Partnership Approaches'.

We have a series of speakers covering the topics followed by discussion groups and in the afternoon we will be looking at how Archaeology can impact on Tourism, Research, Economy and how we can get Public Involvement.

The event is free of charge and we still have a number of places available, if you are interesting in attending please contact Iona on 028 9045 5770 or via email iona@nienvironmentlink.org. We would love to see you there.

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NIAF WEBSITE

The NIAF website – www.niaf.co.uk

The site will act as a web hub for the Northern Ireland archaeological community and the wider public, allowing NIAF members to share news and information on events, vacancies, and training opportunities and allowing wider promotion of events and discoveries.

The site also has a section for the Young Archaeologists Club and an extensive range of links to member's' services and publications.

The support and active participation of member organisations is vital to maximise the site's impact and potential.

To publicise your news or events send them to iona@nienvironmentlink.org. Any comments or suggestions on how the website can be improved would be appreciated.

RECENT EXCAVATIONS AT CARRICKFERGUS CASTLE

EMILY MURRAY, CENTRE FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELDWORK, QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST

Carrickfergus Castle has been continuously occupied throughout its eight centuries of existence. For the most part it functioned as a military base until it was given over to the government in the 1920s. Throughout this period the buildings and grounds have been reworked and refurbished making it often a complex monument to interpret. One of the less well understood buildings is the vaulted storehouse, and Grand Battery above it, that are located just inside the gatehouse along the eastern curtain of the outer ward. Tom McNeill has speculated, on the basis of cartographic and documentary evidence, that the building may be as early as the 1560s and as late as 1715 when a barracks was built at the first storey level. An opportunity arose to investigate the storehouses, and potentially date their construction, through a programme of conservation works that got underway in February of last year.



Removal of the concrete and underlying hard-core across the Grand Battery unveiled remains of the



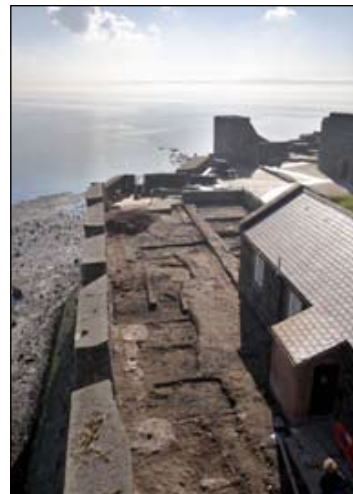
eighteenth-century infantry barracks (there are no known plans or illustrations of this building) and the officers' quarters that succeeded it in

1802 (the northern half of this building still stands).

All surviving architectural features were left in situ but where earlier removal of the building fabric had taken place, small test-trenches were opened to allow investigation of the site stratigraphy.

Over a metre in depth of occupation material survived above the haunches of the vaults and below the cobbled surface of the 1715 infantry barracks. Deposits underlying this eighteenth-century cobbling produced a wide range of predominantly seventeenth-century finds including numerous sherds of North-Devon gravel-tempered ware, Staffordshire-trailed slipware, seventeenth-century clay tobacco pipes and a William and Mary halfpenny (1689-1694).

A lower, previously unknown, cobbled surface was found underlying these seventeenth-century deposits and apart from an in-built drain, no contemporary structural remains were found associated with this surface. cursory examination of finds from deposits below these lower cobbles suggests that they date to the sixteenth-century. Presumably this material did not accumulate in situ but was instead imported, perhaps from the town, to create a level surface for the cobbling. It seems likely that this would have been laid soon after the vaults were built which would therefore suggest a provisional sixteenth-century date, or earlier, for the construction of the storehouses. The relationship between this lower cobbling and the curtain wall also proved interesting with evidence for the location of earlier gun-ports or embrasures.



THE FOLLIES TRUST

The Follies Trust was formed in 2006 by a group of people who share a passion for a motley collection of unusual buildings which enhance and enrich our landscapes, towns and cities. These structures – or ‘follies’ – are part of the intricate fabric of our history but, because they serve no obvious useful purpose, are too often regarded as expendable.



As a body with all island interests, the Follies Trust exists to encourage the appreciation and conservation of Irish follies, to promote traditional construction and building skills and to encourage knowledge and appreciation of Ireland’s artistic and cultural heritage. But what are follies? They

can be grottoes, garden buildings, ruins, bridges, hermitages, shell houses, towers, mausolea or monuments and much else besides! Follies have been described as statements of style, a passion, eye-catchers and buildings to delight. This somehow suggests that they are merely frivolous structures but this is not so. They were often built to provide employment in times of famine and hardship.

The Follies Trust’s first project to restore the Greg and Rainey mausolea in Knockbreda graveyard, Belfast, was completed in June 2009 and the Trust celebrated its first success with the launch of a publication entitled ‘Knockbreda – its monuments and people’. The restoration of a third mausoleum – to Waddell Cunningham - will be complete in November 2010. These mausolea are now transformed from ivy covered structures with plants growing out of them and broken urns lying nearby to fine architectural set pieces.

At present the Follies Trust is working with Galway

County Council and Clonbern Development Association to conserve a magnificent cast iron mausoleum in Clonbern, and with Kilkenny County Council and Duchas –Tullaherin Heritage Society to conserve a delightful fountain near Kilfane. Just to add a final flourish to 2010 the Follies Trust has conserved three amazing follies near Tollymore Park, Co Down with an associated publication which will be launched in November. Designed by Thomas Wright, mathematician, landscape designer and astronomer often referred to as the Wizard of Durham, Lord Limerick’s follies, were conserved in 2010 in memory of Dick Oram, the eminent and much-loved conservation architect who, until his death in December 2008, lived nearby.

The strapline on our website (www.follies-trust.org) says ‘Follies are joyful little buildings which aim to please’. Indeed they are and the Trust is working hard to raise awareness of Irish follies through our lecture series (a total of twenty lectures since 2006). But more importantly we don’t want to lose sight of the glorious nature of these structures – their unpredictability, their mysteriousness and the joy and pleasure it give us all to look at them and wonder!

Primrose Wilson
Chairman
The Follies Trust



NORTHERN IRELAND ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE ECONOMIC DOWNTURN

The Good Years

With the implementation of the Rio Convention¹ private sector archaeology in Northern Ireland grew very considerably from the mid 1990s until 2007. At the outset when most excavations were conducted within government or as academic research it was typical to have about 12 licensed excavations annually. This quickly grew and reached a peak of around 220 excavations each year. This represented an unparalleled opportunity for new knowledge about archaeology in the region. While it did have initial difficulties, much progress has been made in achieving good quality excavations and related reports which are publicly accessible.

Government archaeology has gone through a very positive period with a great deal of research gain and public outreach. The establishment of the Centre for Maritime Archaeology (CMA)² at the University of Ulster in 1999 led to the award winning publication, *Strangford Lough An Archaeological Survey of the Maritime Cultural Landscape*. This presented detailed archaeological research in an accessible informative way for the general reader and really caught the public imagination that archaeology is interesting. It was followed up by the publication on the Nendrum tide mills and the public showed its appetite for engaging with detailed archaeological excavations.

The Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork (CAF)³ was established at Queen's University Belfast in 2002 and the results of this collaboration between government and academia has been outstanding. Excavations reports are routinely placed on the CAF web site giving public access to their projects and the Ulster Journal of Archaeology⁴ is full of good reports in every issue. Books such as *Battles, Boats and Bones* have been produced in partnership with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA)⁵. The publication

of *An Archaeological Survey of County Armagh* and the revised *State Care Guide* have been welcome publications from NIEA.

The National Trust (NT)⁶, supported by NIEA, created an archaeology officer post which has brought archaeology fully onto its agenda in Northern Ireland. The founding of the Northern Ireland Archaeology Forum (NIAF)⁷ represented a significant step forward by the archaeology community in working to develop a shared vision for the subject within the context of the wider environment represented by the Northern Ireland Environment Link (NIEL)⁸. Archaeology was on a roll.

The Downturn

¹<http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?documentid=78&articleid=1163>

²<http://www.science.ulster.ac.uk/esri/Centre-for-Maritime-Archaeology,65.html#page=introduction>

³<http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/CentreforArchaeologicalFieldworkCAF/>

⁴<http://uas.society.qub.ac.uk/>

⁵<http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk/>

⁶<http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/>

⁷<http://www.niaf.co.uk/>

⁸<http://www.nienvironmentlink.org/>

Estate agents claim to know the exact week in Northern Ireland when things turned from grin to grimace. It was then we learned just how directly affected we are by the fortunes of the international financial community. The Planning Service⁹ was the first to feel the direct impacts with a significant reduction in receipts linked to planning applications. This in turn had an impact on the resources of NIEA, the largest agency within the Department of Environment (DOE)¹⁰ with a one third reduction in its Public Expenditure allocation. This has had a direct influence on government archaeology with a 30% reduction in spending and the loss of a significant number of vacant posts within the Built Heritage Directorate.

News

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) were quickly targeted and government funding was removed from the NT archaeology post and most of the funding taken from NIAF. Funding has been reduced at the CMA and CAF and valued members of those organisations have lost their jobs. At the time of writing in mid October we await news of further anticipated cuts to be announced in London on 20 October.

Developers who provided the funding for the boom in archaeological investigations were suddenly faced with the reality of the downturn. Some have found it difficult to continue funding the costs of report writing of excavations undertaken in more prosperous times and the financing of new excavations has become a significant factor in deciding whether to or not to proceed with developments.

Rising to the Challenge

Despite the challenges there are a number of positive ways to respond to the situation. The Historic Environment Strategic Forum was set up in 2008 and is made up of a panel of senior decision makers and chaired by the Minister of Environment, Edwin Poots. This has put archaeology issues on the agenda for senior decision makers for the first time. The Forum has considered what the historic environment brings and can bring to the economy, regeneration and social development. As a profession we should consider what archaeology brings to society and what can be done to make the subject more economically and socially relevant.

Despite the cutbacks the CMA and CAF are still committed to producing high quality products. Work is well underway on the publication of survey volumes on Rathlin Island and County Fermanagh and work is nearing completion on a book on megalithic tombs. In collaboration between Belfast City Council (BCC)¹¹, NIEA and CAF a book on the archaeological excavations in Belfast is soon to be published.

The NT has responded to the challenge of loss of

funding for the archaeology officer post by fully meeting the costs itself. This is a welcome affirmation from the wider NT of its commitment to archaeology in Northern Ireland. Similarly NIAF has risen to the challenge and is continuing to advocate the subject to the community with volunteer and professional assistance.

⁹ <http://www.planningni.gov.uk/>

¹⁰ <http://www.doeni.gov.uk/>

¹¹ <http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/>

In challenging times it is advantageous to look for shared research and outreach projects. Preliminary discussions have been held with a range of organisations and there are signs that there may be collaborative projects in the future.

Despite the reduction in overall planning applications the number of planning consultations remains strong with some 1800 cases requiring archaeological response from NIEA in the current year. The number of licensed excavations remains high too and the consequent reports are being prepared and submitted to NIEA. Meetings are ongoing between NIEA and developer's groups and a very positive relationship is emerging with positive gains for everyone.

To rise to the challenge and progress as a discipline we should think and act as a community of colleagues seeing the best interests of Northern Ireland as a community and how our profession can contribute to it and make it a better more prosperous place in which to live.

Professor Brian Williams FSA
Assistant Director
Built Heritage Directorate
Northern Ireland Environment Agency



BORD GAIS EIREANN (NI) PIPELINE EXCAVATIONS BY ADS LTD.

1 Introduction

In the summer months of 2010, Archaeological Development Services Ltd (ADS Ltd.) undertook the archaeological investigations associated with the construction of a 12.5km gas pipeline by Bord Gais Eireann (NI), running between Kernan near Gilford in County Down and the townland of Derryhale in County Armagh. This project involved the monitoring of the topsoil stripping of a 24m wide corridor which crossed 12 townlands, 11 of which revealed archaeological deposits. There were a total of 147 separate areas of archaeological potential uncovered; these areas of investigation were grouped by townland under 11 separate excavation licences.

2 The Archaeology

During the archaeological investigations, among other isolated groups of pits and post-medieval activity, there were a number of substantial sites uncovered. These included the remains of ten fulachta fiadh, one area of Bronze Age settlement and funerary activity, a partial oval enclosure, a rath, two possible medieval grain-drying kilns, a hilltop industrial area with multiple small scale kilns and clay extraction pit and one site of metal-working activity.

2.1 Fulacht Fiadh

There were the remains of ten fulacht fiadh found during the archaeological investigations along the pipeline. These varied in size and form but were all located towards the eastern end of the pipeline, beyond the Newry Canal. All of these fulachta fiadh were located close to a water source. Fulachta fiadh are generally dated to the Bronze Age. The two most extensive examples found were located in the townlands of Kernan and Loughans.

2.1.1 Fulacht in Kernan

This fulacht in Kernan townland, 2 km southeast of Gilford, was truncated on its western side by the former line of the Great Northern Railway opened in 1859 and closed in 1955. The remains of the fulacht

covered an area measuring 20 by 20m in plan. The spread of burnt stone and charcoal associated with this fulacht overlay two large trough/pit features. Both of these trough features measured approximately 2 by 2m in plan and between 0.3 and 0.6m deep. There were some remnants of wood in the base of one of the trough features. This was much degraded but it may have been the remains of a wood lining; samples were retained for further analysis.

2.1.2 Fulacht in Loughans

This 20 by 20m fulacht lay 1km west of Gilford below the edge of a peat accumulation in a hollow between two slopes rising to the east and west in the townland of Loughans. The spread of burnt stone and charcoal overlay several subsoil-cut features. One of these features may have been a pit/trough for holding water. This trough had the remains of wooden planks laid parallel along its base. Some of this material and samples from the other features and main spread were recovered for further analysis.

2.2 Possible Bronze Age settlement and funerary activity

This area of settlement and funerary activity was located 2km north of Tandragee in the townland of Mullahead. This lay on a west facing slope overlooking an area of peat accumulation. The archaeological deposits included a 3.5m diameter pen-annular ditch representing the possible remains of a small barrow. There was also one stone-lined hearth which was encompassed by a curved arrangement of multiple stake-holes. This stake-hole structure may have been the remains of a hut circle or simply a wind-break. There were also numerous post-holes present across the site with a series of large pits located on the lower slope which contained decorated pottery of a possible Bronze Age date.

2.3 Oval Enclosure

This site was situated approximately 2km north of Tandragee in the townland of Mullahead. This Partial oval enclosure extended beyond the edge of stripped to south and the probable full extent of the enclosure ditch would measure 12m in diameter. There were no internal features although this may be due to

agricultural truncation. There may have been a mound central to the enclosure which has now been denuded accounting for the lack of features at the same level as the ditch. If this enclosure is the remains of a barrow it is likely to be Bronze Age in date. Further analysis and dating of the material retained will determine the function and period of this site.

2.4 Rath

This site was located 3km northwest of Tandragee on a hilltop approximately 40m above sea-level in the townland of Brackagh. The main period of rath/ringfort construction in Ireland was from 500 – 1000 AD although some of these were used into the medieval period. These sites represent a high status settlement and for this reason they tend to command favourable views over the surrounding landscape. It is also common to have inter-visibility between raths in a landscape.

Approximately 1/3 of the enclosure was present on the strip. The full extent would measure 40m in diameter. One terminus was observed to the west suggesting a possible entrance to the enclosure from this direction; two post-holes extended west from this terminus to perhaps channel traffic towards the entrance. The ditch was V-shaped with a thin slot-trench at its base. There was evidence for two re-cuts of the ditch around the eastern side of the enclosure. Possible Souterrain ware pottery sherds were recovered from basal fills as well as one whetstone. Post-medieval ceramic sherds were recovered from the upper layers of the ditch suggesting that it open up to this period. Internal features included a curvilinear slot-trench forming a 180° arc along with multiple post-holes and stake-holes. There was no direct relationship between this slot-trench and the main ditch so it is uncertain whether they are contemporary. It may be the rath ditch has been sited over an earlier enclosure. An additional internal slot-trench extended beyond the edge of the strip to the north. The continuation of the enclosure can be seen in the form of a curve in the boundary to the north (Plate 1).



Plate 1

2.5 Kilns

There were three kiln sites uncovered; a large keyhole-shaped kiln, a hilltop enclosure with possible multiple kilns and a stone-lined rectangular kiln. These kiln sites had some similarities but each will be described separately.

2.5.1 Keyhole-Shaped Kiln

This was the site of a possible medieval grain-drying kiln situated 1km west of Gilford east in the townland of Loughans. This kiln was keyhole shaped in plan with a stone-built internal chamber. Several sherds of possible early medieval pottery were retrieved during investigations. The sub-circular bowl measured 3.5m across and approximately 0.6m deep. The flu measured approximately 7m in length. An additional possible flu extended beyond the edge of the strip to the north. There were also four post-holes around the periphery of the main kiln perhaps representing the remains of a housing or cover.



Plate 2

2.5.2 Hilltop enclosure with possible multiple kilns

This site lay 4km south of Portadown off the A27 and may be the remains of a multiple kiln site. The site consisted of a double curving line of post-holes enclosing a west facing slope in the townland of Ballyworkan. These lines of posts extended beyond the stripped area to the north and south. Between the outer and inner lines of posts there were multiple irregular shaped features, with some of a key-hole form suggesting kilns possibly for grain-drying. Within the inner line of posts there was a 6m diameter, 1m deep clay extraction pit. This clay may have been used for covering the nearby kilns when in use. Samples have been retained for further analysis to determine the function of the multiple possible kilns.

2.5.3 Rectangular Kiln

This kiln site was situated 3km south of Portadown on a south-facing slope overlooking a wide expanse of peat land in the townland of Artabrackagh. This possible medieval grain-drying kiln consisted of a stone lined rectangular chamber with multiple flues and one exhaust outlet. There was evidence of wooden plank in a section of the exhaust outlet; this may have been used to control airflow and heat retention in the kiln.

Large quantities of pottery sherds were found in the main flu leading into the kiln chamber. A sub-rectangular post-hole built structure was set around the kiln, possibly the remains of a structure overlying or housing the kiln. The main rectangular chamber of the kiln measured 1.5 by 4m and 0.5m deep (Plate 3).



Plate 3

2.6 Metal-working area

This small-scale metal-working site was situated 2.5km north of Tandragee, near Prospect House, on an east facing slope overlooking a small stream in the townland of Mullahead (Plate 4). There were two metalworking furnaces, 1 keyhole shaped and one circular, with three peripheral features. There was a total of 3Kg of tap slag retrieved from the circular furnace. A smaller quantity was retrieved from the keyhole furnace. Samples of the deposits and the slag were retrieved for further analysis; this will establish a date and typology for the site.



Plate 4

3 Summary

The archaeology uncovered during this project in Counties Down and Armagh shows a broad range of activity in terms of period and typology with sites provisionally dating from the Bronze Age though to the Early Medieval period. This project is in the early stages of post-excavation at the time of writing. The findings from these archaeological investigations and forthcoming analyses will be compiled into Archaeological Data Structure Reports for submission to NIEA.

Warren Bailie
Field Director
Archaeological Development Services Ltd.

Events

YOUNG ARCHAEOLOGISTS

Downpatrick Young Archaeologists' Mega-megaliths booklet and Megaliths in Northern Ireland exhibition launch at Down County Museum, 7.30pm 9th March 2011

We are the Downpatrick Young Archaeologists Club and we meet at Down County Museum once a month to find out about archaeology. We are all aged between 8 and 16 and some of us have been with the Club for more than 5 years. The Club has been going 9 years and there are over 20 of us at the moment. We like going on special trips to archaeological sites, hunting for artefacts on fieldwalks and digging with archaeologists, and this year also finding out a lot about geology. We had a great time visiting sites made of giant stones in 2010, some that were over 5000 years old, and we even got to go inside Newgrange. But we like our own stone circle at Ballynoe best!

We could only do this project because a lot of people helped us. Mainly it was people from Down County Museum in Downpatrick and the Somme Heritage Centre near Newtownards who helped us. We also joined up with the Little Diggers who meet at North Down Museum in Bangor, and we went to see a replica prehistoric roundhouse at Castle Espie with them. We also wanted to make links with children interested in archaeology from Poland, and with families from Poland who live nearby, and so we decided to get our booklet and exhibition translated into Polish!

Our special project in 2010-11 was on MEGALITHS – an ancient Greek word for 'Big Stone' monuments. They date from the Neolithic, when farming first came to Ireland, to the Bronze Age, between about 4000BC and 2500BC. We went by minibus mainly around Co. Down but also enjoyed going to Co. Londonderry, Co. Tyrone and Co. Meath. Megaliths are places where people were buried, we don't know much about who the people were, except that we did find some of their belongings on a dig at Tirnony portal tomb! As well as seeing tombs - passage tombs (Giant's Ring, Annadorn, Knockmany, Newgrange, Knowth), court tombs (Audleystown, Knockoneill, Tamnyrankin) and portal tombs (Goward, Legananny, Kempe Stones, Tirnony) - we also visited some stone circles (Ballynoe, Beaghmore) and some other places. We made up a booklet using our photos and drawings and helped make an exhibition on megaliths, and we will be launching both at Down County Museum at 7.30pm on 9th March. We hope that people will have fun reading it and maybe some more young archaeologists will join our club and make friends like we have. And lots of people will go and visit megaliths and find out more about them!

The free booklet and touring exhibition have been supported and funded by the PEACE III Programme managed by the Special EU Programmes Body and delivered by the North Down, Ards and Down Council cluster.

Club Leader: Mike King (Curator, Down County Museum)



Goward Portal Tomb



Events

ARCHAEOLOGY DAYS 2011

Sorry I haven't been in touch sooner about this year's Archaeology Days events. Due to the "cuts", there was a bit of uncertainty about whether we could continue to co-ordinate events and produce a brochure - this is still uncertain and unless we can find a partner to help with print and distribution costs, the programme will only be available on our web site, backed up with flyers advertising the event and directing people to web sites. If your organisation could possibly help with this, please let me know.

Events are still based around the Summer Solstice, but any events taking place in the month of June will be considered a part of AD and be publicised in the programme. We can also briefly mention events taking place during the summer months. If you can let me have a heading and dates and a bit of descriptive text as soon as you have them, I'd be grateful

I would be grateful for any feed back from you on - numbers of visitors, any comments from them and/or you on the event/s, any suggestions to improve Archaeology Days or the events, any comments on last year's brochure from yourself or your visitors. If you have any photographs of your event (with permissions for use where appropriate) that we could use in this year's programme of events or a possible web gallery, I'd be grateful if you could send them to me.

Look forward to hearing from you soon.

Gail Pollock

NIEA-BH

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Wednesday 9th March

Belfast Natural History and Philosophical Society are holding a lecture in the Linen Hall Library at 6.30pm on **Patrick** - The Archaeology of a Saint by Cormac Bourke.

Monday 21st March

Ulster Archaeological Society Lecture. **Medieval Trim**. Lectuere: Dr Mark Hennessy (University College Dublin) 8pm. QUB Elmwood building, Elmwood Avenue , Belfast BT9. Mark Hennessy is a lecturer in the Geogrpay Department, Trinity College Dublin.

Wednesday 30th March

Carrickfergus and District Historical Society are holding a lecture in the Dobbs Room, Carrickfergus Town Hall at 8pm **Colonel Crawford: His Life and the 1912 gun-running**. The lecture will be given by Keith Haines who has recently published a book on this famous event in the history of Ulster.

Friday 1st April

NIEA are holding a lecture at 1pm in the Monuments and Buildings Record public reading room in Waterman House, Hill Street, Belfast entitled **Recent Excavations at the Whitehouse** by Joanne Vuolteenaho from Archaeological Development Services.

Join NIAF

Membership of NIAF is free, and brings a range of benefits to the individuals and organisations who join.

- Receive copies of all publications (pdf) including a newsletter twice per year;
- Priority invitations to events and conferences organised by the Forum;
- The opportunity to promote your events and disseminate information to a wide readership;
- Develop contacts within the heritage sector and outreach to communities and other bodies;
- Receive support and advice on promotion of heritage and archaeology within communities, including schools educational programmes;
- Raise your particular site, area or interest within a wider context to our decision makers;
- Have your contact details listed on the NIAF website, which will be developed as a focal point for information on the historic environment of Northern Ireland;
- Contribute to activities and help to promote heritage matters among local and national decision makers.

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FORUM MEMBERS



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