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**Dig!**

**Volunteer registration form**

We require volunteers to take part in a community dig at Arney Fort. This is a rare and exciting opportunity to become involved in an excavation of a scheduled monument about which we know very little. Whether you can commit to one day or ten, we welcome your participation!

**Background**

Arney Fort is located on the south bank of the River Arney close to the location of the Battle of the Ford of the Biscuits (August 1594) which was fought between an English force marching from Dublin to relieve Enniskillen castle, and local Gaelic chiefs led by Hugh Maguire. The battle was the opening round of what became known as the Nine Years War.

The route taken by the English relief column across the fording point on the Arney River is now believed to have been previously known as *atha na Meirleach* (Ford of the Robbers), or *atha na nGall* (Ford of the Foreigners), and was part of an ancient routeway between Ulster and Connaught along the western shores of Upper Lough Erne. At that time Arney Fort and the ancient routeway may have been located at, or close to, the furthermost inland extent of flood water around Upper Lough Erne which had water levels 10-12 feet higher than today’s level.

Other research points to possible links between the fort and the writers of the Annals of Ulster which was compiled in nearby Belle Isle. A late bronze age sword (750 B.C.) came to light in 2015 at the 16th century battle site, and as recently as May 2019 a late bronze age axe head was uncovered at the same location providing further evidence that the sword, axe head, fort, ford, battle site and ancient routeway may have been connected as far back as the bronze age. Finding out who built the fort may unlock a great deal about this part of our ancient landscape.

**Professional Archaeologists**

Five archaeologists from Northern Archaeological Consultancy Ltd (NAC) will work on the excavation under the leadership of Jonathan Barkley the site director. NAC archaeologists will supervise volunteers and train them in archaeological excavation techniques and recording. This excavation project is community-led, and we would like as many local people as possible to take part in it.

**Location**

Arney Fort is accessible via a lane from Druminiskill Road. The site will be signposted from the Derrylin and Swanlinbar Roads.

**Essential Information**

1. **Dates & Times -** the dig will be open for six days a week from Monday 16th September 2019 until Monday 30th September 2019. It will be closed on Sunday the 22nd and 29th September. From Monday to Thursday the dig will start at 9.00 am and finish at 4.00 pm. There will be a 30-minute lunch break at 12.30 pm. Fridays start at noon and finish at 7.00 pm.
2. **Facilities -** there will be a site hut (in which to have lunch and change clothes), chemical toilets, a kettle and microwave. We advise that you bring a packed lunch & water with you each day and your own cup. We will provide tea/coffee and biscuits throughout the dig period.
3. **Clothing -** you will be working outside so make sure you have clothing for all weathers. Bring sunscreen and a sun hat. The site may be wet and muddy so wear old clothes. Wear layers of clothing so if you get too hot or cold you can adjust. We advise that you bring wellies to wear onsite, and a change of shoes & socks for arriving and leaving the site.
4. **Water** - you are advised to bring a refillable container for drinking water, particularly if the weather is hot.
5. **Medication** – bring any personal medication that you might need.
6. **Equipment** – we will provide all equipment, including kneeling mats, trowels and gloves.
7. **Health & Safety** is taken seriously. The dig is close to the Arney River and therefore additional awareness is required. You will be given a **mandatory** H&S briefing on your first day. During the excavation you will be provided with a range of tools and equipment, and we will give you instructions about their safe use. Hi-Viz vests will be provided.
8. **Fitness -** the excavation work will be physically demanding and will involve digging and shovelling. There may be a lot of kneeling for long periods when hand excavation will be done with small tools. Access to the site is via a field with uneven ground and will involve climbing up an earthen bank. To take part in this project you must be reasonably fit and healthy and have no problem with walking or kneeling.
9. **Public Open Days -** the site will also be open to the public from 1.00 to 4.00pm on **Saturday 21st** and **Saturday 28th** September for tours given by the archaeologists and volunteers.
10. **Parents and Youngsters** - both Friday afternoons from 4.00 to 7.00pm have been set aside for mums, dads and young people. There will be two one-and-a-half hour slots at 4.00 to 5.30, and 5.30 to 7.00. Registration is required as parents and children will be given a mandatory briefing at the start of each session. Both sessions on Fridays can be booked back-to-back.
11. **Travel and parking -** volunteers must make their own travel arrangements and are encouraged to share cars as parking is extremely limited. More information on parking to follow.

**Volunteering**

Thank you for your expression of interest. We require a minimum of 10 people per day. We understand that committing to two full weeks on the project is a lot to ask but we would like volunteers to commit to as many days as possible to get the full benefit of both the excavation and the training experience. Please complete the attached form and indicate when you would like to take part. We will then let you know which days you have been allocated no later than Friday 30th August 2019. Email the form to [info@c2c.org.uk](mailto:info@c2c.org.uk)

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. **Adult registration form**   (please also fill out the attached C2C volunteer form) | | | |
| Name |  | | |
| Address |  | | |
| Contact number |  | | |
| Tick the boxes for each day you would like to work on the dig. You may choose as many as you like. | | | |
| **Week 1** | | | |
| **Monday 16th Sept** | 9.00am – 4.00pm |  | Excavation |
| **Tuesday 17th Sept** | 9.00am – 4.00 pm |  | Excavation |
| **Wednesday 18th Sept** | 9.00am – 4.00pm |  | Excavation |
| **Thursday 19th Sept** | 9.00am – 4.00pm |  | Excavation |
| **Friday 20th Sept** | 12.00 noon –3.30pm  4.00pm – 7.00pm |  | Excavation  Help with parents and kids |
| **Saturday 21st Sept** | 1.00pm – 4.00pm |  | Help with tours on Open Day |
|  | | | |
| **Week 2** | | | |
| **Monday 23rd Sept** | 9.00am – 4.00pm |  | Excavation |
| **Tuesday 24th Sept** | 9.00am – 4.00pm |  | Excavation |
| **Wednesday 25th Sept** | 9.00am – 4.00 pm |  | Excavation |
| **Thursday 26th Sept** | 9.00am – 4.00pm |  | Excavation |
| **Friday 27th Sept** | 12.00 noon –3.30pm  4.00pm – 7.00 pm |  | Excavation  Help with parents and kids |
| **Saturday 28th Sept** | 1.00pm – 4.00pm |  | Help with tours on Open Day |
| **Monday 30th Sept** | 9.00am – 4.00pm |  | Back fill trenches |

Please come on the dates you have booked. If you cannot attend, please let us know as early as possible so that places can be reallocated. Tel 07734847470. Email: [info@c2c.org.uk](mailto:info@c2c.org.uk)

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| 1. **Parents and children registration form**   Friday 20th & 27th September 4.00 to 7.00 pm. | | | |
| Name of parent(s) |  | | |
| Name of child |  | | |
| Name of child |  | | |
| Name of child |  | | |
| Name of child |  | | |
| Address |  | | |
| Contact number |  | | |
| Tick the boxes for each session you would like to work on the dig. You may choose as many as you like. | | | |
| **Week 1** | | | |
| **Friday 20th Sept** | A. 4.00pm –5.30pm  B. 5.30pm –7.00pm |  | Excavation  Excavation |
|  | | | |
| **Week 2** | | | |
| **Friday 27th Sept** | C. 4.00pm –5.30pm  D. 5.30pm –7.00pm |  | Excavation  Excavation |



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