

St Anne's Park Community Archaeology



Autumn Programme 19-28 September 2022

Discover the archaeology of Dublin and the history and heritage of St Anne's Park with our autumn programme of events.



Schools Programme

Experimental
Archaeology Day

Community Excavation
and Geophysics Display

All welcome
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Community Archaeology
Facebook page
for further information

Project Report

St Anne's Park Community Archaeology Programme 2022

01.12.2022

Supported by the Heritage Council County Heritage Plan Grant Scheme and
the Creative Ireland Programme

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1 Introduction

This report details the activities of the St Anne's Park Community Archaeology Programme 2022. The programme comprised a series of public outreach events, an educational programme for primary and secondary schools and a community excavation. It commenced in July at the annual Rose Festival and culminated in September 2022 with a community excavation on which post excavation work is ongoing. The project was devised and funded by the Dublin City Council Heritage Office, Archaeology Office and Parks and Landscape Services with grant funding from the Heritage Council County Heritage Plan Grant Scheme and the Creative Ireland Programme.

The St Anne's Park Community Archaeology Project is overseen by a steering group comprising the following:

Charles Duggan, Heritage Officer, Project Lead

Dr Ruth Johnson, City Archaeologist

Dr Niall Colfer, Assistant City Archaeologist

Leslie Moore, Chief Parks Superintendent

Fergus O'Carroll, Area Superintendent

Joseph O'Reilly, St Anne's Park

Archaeology and Built Heritage Ltd. were engaged by Dublin City Council to manage the St Anne's Park Community Archaeology Programme of events.

The St Anne's Community Archaeology Programme fosters deep public engagement at many levels, in the social, architectural, and archaeological history and significance of St Anne's Park as a treasured public amenity and more importantly as a historic designed landscape through a wide-ranging and broad programme of events.

Enhanced appreciation of the historical significance of the park. Positive engagement and well-being benefit to the participating volunteer community archaeologists, and the public more broadly, who got to interact with the professional archaeologists investigating the archaeology of the park.

2 Rose Festival – July 2022

St Anne's Park Community Archaeology Programme organised four individual stands / events at Dublin City Council's 2022 Rose Festival (July 16th & 17th). These included pre-booked events of theatrical and archaeological walking tours and two tents within the main festival arena which were accessible to the public from 10am to 6pm each day. Engagement with all elements was high and feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive. As the two stands were open air and plan,

exact attendee numbers were not obtainable, however, they are estimated at a minimum of 100 per day. Great interest was also expressed in the proposed programme of community archaeology for Autumn 2022.

2.1 Ask and Archaeologist artefact display - ABH Ltd

Staff from ABH Ltd managed an artefact display of items found on excavations in Dublin over the last few years. The display included material of prehistoric to modern date and contained a stone axe, medieval floor tiles and jugs, post medieval wine bottles, ceramics, coins and buttons, clay pipes, a wooden shoe last, a rubber bullet and a whale vertebra. The display was very busy throughout the entire weekend and was popular with attendees of all ages.



Plate 1 Ask an archaeologist artefact display

2.2 A bond that ties us to every stone - Mrs Baker's Medway Theatre Company

This theatrical tour of the walled garden comprised an immersive theatre experience whereby the audience met and interacted with Lord and Lady Ardilaun and their Scottish gardener Andrew Campbell, as they planned major improvements to the estate at St Anne's. The tours were scheduled four times each day and attended by a total of **238** people. Tours were bookable in advance with additional bookings taken each day by ABH. These included several repeat customers who having attended on Saturday returned with friends for a second tour on Sunday.



Plate 2 *A bond which ties us to every stone*

2.3 Experimental archaeology wood carving – Pallasboy Project

The Pallasboy Project, under the leadership of master wood worker Mark Griffiths, provided an experimental archaeology wood working display. Beginning on Saturday morning Mark undertook to carve a replica of the Ralaghan Figure, a Late Bronze Age wooden anthropomorphic figure from Co. Cavan. Public engagement and outreach was provided by both Mark and Dr Ben Gearey (UCC), and included discussion of the figure, it's meaning and manufacture, and a colouring activity for younger children who were rewarded with stickers featuring the face of the original figure.

The experiment was very successful and the replica was completed by Sunday afternoon when it's unveiling was announced to the festival over the public address system. A 3D laser scan of the figure was completed by Digital Heritage Age and has been posted on the project social medial accounts. The results of this will feed into the wider Pallasboy Project research in seeking to understand and replicate prehistoric crafting processes.



Plate 3 Pallasboy Project

2.4 Archaeological walking tours – ABH Ltd

Archaeological walking tours led by ABH archaeologist Wayne Malone were scheduled twice on each day of the Rose Festival. The tours were bookable in advance and 34 tickets were pre-booked with additional bookings taken each day at the ABH display. Members of the public also joined the tours on a casual basis as they moved through the park and overall attendee numbers were **c. 50**.

The tours commenced in the Red Stables and incorporated the recovered architectural fragments and exhibition panels produced in 2021. The tour took approximately one hour at a gentle walking pace and included the site of the former mansion, the Herculaneum Temple, the Boat House, the Roman Tower and St Anne's Well. Wayne Malone was interviewed for RTE's Nationwide Programme (an entire episode of which was dedicated to the City Council's Rose Festival) on which he spoke about the history and archaeology of St Anne's Park.



Plate 4 ABH archaeologist Wayne Malone interviewed for RTE Nationwide

3 Experimental archaeology day – September 2022

On September to coincide with the start of the community excavation (see below) an experimental archaeology day was organised in the Park. It was located on the mount beside the excavation site. The display included four stalls, one of which was a reprise of 'Ask an Archaeologist' presented at the Rose Festival. The remaining three stalls included two by the UCD Centre for Experimental Archaeology and Material Culture (CEAMC) which explored bronze casting and stone carving, and a return of the Pallasboy Project who further explored wooden anthropomorphic figures and bog butter containers.

The event coincided with the first day of the community excavation was very well attended with audience members engaging with each stand and also visiting the excavation where a guide was available to provide information on the excavation and general history and archaeology of St Anne's Park.

3.1 Bronze casting display – CEAMC, UCD

Experimental archaeologists from CEAMC under the direction of Dr Brendan O'Neill, provided a bronze casting event and undertook live casting of replica Bronze Age objects using ancient technologies. Audience members learnt about the archaeology and technologies involved in casting metals and metalworking generally, as well as the particulars relating to fuel preparation, bellows, furnace control, making bronze, melting bronze and pouring molten bronze into replica clay moulds. This was placed within the context of how people use materials to express their cultures.

Approximately every hour during this event, specific replica objects were cast in front of audience members, demonstrating the range of skills and knowledge that were needed to make tools and weapons during this period. Replica Bronze Age objects were also displayed to show audience members how they would have looked in the past and how they might have been used.



Plate 5 Experimental bronze casting (CEAMC)



Plate 6 Replica bronze objects cast by CEAMC

3.2 Stone carving display – CEAMC, UCD

A demonstration of early medieval stone carving techniques was given by Dr Ryan Lash (IRC Postdoctoral Fellow), accompanied by a number of undergraduate students. This demonstration sought to explore the production sequences and experiences of early medieval stone carvers, focusing on the production of cross slabs and carved stone objects from early medieval monasteries.



Plate 7 Early medieval stone carving demonstration by Dr Ryan Lash (CEAMC)

3.3 Wood carving – Pallasboy Project

The Pallasboy Project, under the leadership of master wood worker Mark Griffiths, once again provided an experimental archaeology wood working display. This event sought to explore the crafting process of making a bog butter container based on the Rosberry Keg which is on display in the National Museum of Ireland. Mark was accompanied PhD candidate Karen O'Toole who is undertaking research into the origins of bog butter. The Pallasboy Project were also joined by several undergraduate students from CEAMC, who following on from the Rose Festival event, worked on the creation of replica anthropomorphic figures.

Public engagement and outreach was provided by Dr Ben Gearey (UCC) and Dr Rosie Everett (University of Northumbria), and included discussion of both the figures and bog butter along with a lino printing and colouring activity for younger children.



Plate 8 Mark Griffiths, Pallasboy Project



Plate 9 Students from CEAMC working with the Pallasboy Project

4 Schools programme

An educational programme for primary and secondary schools pupils took place from September 19th–23rd.

4.1 Primary schools

The primary schools programme was centred on The Big Dig by the SIA. Forty-two primary schools in the wider area of St. Anne's Park were invited to book classes of up to 15 pupils for 40 minute slots. In each slot pupils learnt about the work of archaeologists and participated in the excavation of a replica Viking house. Seven timeslots between 9.30am and 1pm were offered on each date. The programme was fully booked and attended by c. **480** pupils from 12 individual schools.



Plate 10 Students from Scoil Áine, Raheny participate in The Big Dig

4.2 Secondary Schools

The secondary schools programme was centred on the Mobile Museum provided by Claiómh. The Museum comprises a suite of museum-quality replica artefacts, ranging from weapons to domestic items to clothing, which explore different aspects of past life. The display was accompanied by informative and entertaining talks by Claiómh founder Dave Swift, a Heritage Expert with the Heritage Council's Heritage in Schools Scheme. The museum followed a chronological trajectory starting with the Viking Age (x 2 days), moving onto WW I (x 1 day) and Irish War of Independence (x 2 days).

Twenty-four secondary schools were invited to book classes for 50 minute slots. Five timeslots between 9.30am and 2.30pm were offered on each date and c. **550** pupils attended. Two last minute cancellations were filled by 5th and 6th class pupils who had participated in the Big Dig.



Plate 11 Pupils from St. Paul's, Raheny attend The Mobile Museum

5 Community excavation

The community excavation took place from 24th–28th September, the start date co-ordinated with the Experimental Archaeology Day to maximise interest and outreach. Many of the volunteers were aware of the project due to the “Ask an Archaeologist” display at the Rose Festival. The remainder were mostly drawn from respondents to a social media post asking for volunteers. This post had a huge response and recruited over 50 volunteers in 36 hours. A small number of volunteers were also recruited from visitors to the excavation who expressed a wish to join the project. In total 23 members of the public took part in the excavation, most for a minimum of two days.

The community archaeology excavation was carried out under an archaeological license from the National Monuments Service. The site director was James Kyle of Archaeology and Built Heritage Ltd.

The 5-day excavation sought to investigate the extent of preservation of the Drawing Room and the Statue Room, which effectively formed the south wing of the former Mansion. In all, the cutting measured 2m east-west by 25m north-south and our community volunteer archaeologists revealed a number of in-situ masonry features corresponding with the plan of the former house. The features included both external and internal walls, surfaces, and architectural features such as window recesses and what was believed to be a substantial bay window located at the southwestern end of the former Drawing Room.



Plate 12 Excavation team 25/09/2022



Plate 13 Excavation team 27/09/2022

5.1 Geophysics display

On Sunday 25th September the excavation was joined by Heather Gimson of Earthsound Geophysics who provided a display of geophysical techniques targeting a known anomaly adjacent to the excavation trench. Both volunteers and members of the public were invited to use the equipment and learn about ground penetrating radar.



Plate 14 Demonstration of geophysics by Earthsound Ltd

5.2 Volunteer mentoring

The volunteers were accompanied by 3–4 archaeologists from ABH Ltd. This resulted in a high staff to volunteer ratio and guaranteed that volunteers were supported at all times with someone on-hand for guidance and advice when needed. It also ensured that an archaeologist was available to engage with public visitors who were constant throughout the week (see below). The staff to volunteer ratio was also instrumental in ensuring that the aims of the excavation and conditions of the licence were met.

Volunteer motivation ranged from a general interest in archaeology to individuals who had grown up nearby and had specific interest in the house, often related to personal memories. Some volunteers also joined in order to meet new people, experience a new skill or to have the opportunity to work outdoors. Many volunteers were motivated by a number of these factors. Volunteer feedback was hugely positive (Appendix 1).

5.3 Public engagement

Visitors to the excavation were frequent with many individuals returning on multiple occasions throughout the course of the week. For the first two days, which occurred over the weekend, professional tour guide Kerrie Clarke provided public outreach utilising maps and historic photographs to discuss the history of the house. These aids were available for the remainder of the week to the ABH Ltd staff who undertook this role on an ad hoc basis.

Visitors to the excavation ranged in age from young children under 10 years old to a gentleman in his nineties who had witnessed the mansion burning in December of 1942. The proximity of the excavation trench to one of the main paths in the park meant that it was visible and also reasonably accessible for pushchairs and wheelchairs. A local wheelchair user visited the excavation every day.



Plate 15 Recording of trench mid-excavation and outreach

5.4 Excavation summary

It was initially planned to open two trenches, however, given the short timeframe it was elected to focus the efforts of the team on one only. This decision assisted not only in the excavation progress and cohesion of the group, but made public outreach easier. The excavation team had the use of two mobile welfare units which ensured there was adequate nearby shelter, toilet facilities, heating, lighting and the means of heating food and water. The same units facilitated the nightly storage of the excavation archive and equipment, and functioned as an office space.

The efforts of the volunteer archaeologists revealed part of the Statue Room and part of the Drawing Room of the former mansion of St Anne's. In addition to numerous ornate plaster mouldings, finds included ceramics dating from c. 1650 to the present day and pieces of stained and painted glass. The recording, photography and planning of the excavated remains took place during the course of the week. These techniques were explained and demonstrated to the volunteers and where possible they were given opportunity to participate in these activities. Ultimately, the excavation was backfilled and the trench was reinstated by hand on the final day.



Plate 16 Final excavated trench, facing west



Plate 17 Backfilling of excavation trench 28/09/2022

5.4 St Anne's Park Community Archaeology Programme 2023

The ambition for the St Anne's Park Community Archaeology Programme 2023, subject to funding, is as follows:

- To undertake professional archaeological excavation and community excavation of sections of St Anne's house to expand our understanding of what remains of the house and how best to present the house to the public in the longterm.
- It is envisaged that in 2023 the St Anne's House Community excavation will uncover a larger area and will take place for a two week period, under professional archaeological supervision.
- Continue archaeological testing of the North and South mount that is not considered safe for community archaeology to examine the extent of survival of the remains of St Anne's House.
- Archaeology Open Days – to host further open days to engage the public with the park as a designed landscape and with archaeological practice more broadly.
- To repeat the costumed and scripted living history performances in the Park
- To continue the schools programme for schools throughout the North Central Area.

St Anne's Park Community Archaeology Programme 2022 Budget

Supplier	Description	€ Cost ex VAT	€ Cost Incl. of VAT
Mrs Bakers Medway Theatre Company	Research, write and perform 'A Bond that ties with every stone'	8,976.00	8,976.00
Archaeology and Built Heritage Ltd.	Archaeology Exhibits and event management at Rose Festival 16 th and 17 th July 2022	9,780.00	12,029.40
Archaeology and Built Heritage Ltd.	Management of schools programme September 19 th to 23 rd September	3,049.00	3,750.00
Archaeology and Built Heritage Ltd.	Community Archaeology Programme 24 th – 28 th September 2022	12,200	15,006.00
CEAMC, UCD and Pallas Boy Project, Marquee hire	Experimental Archaeology Day	11,999.00	12,658.87
Claoimh	Secondary Schools Workshops 19 th to 23 rd September	4,500	4,500.00 Vat N/A
School of Irish Archaeology	Secondary Schools Workshops 19 th to 23 rd September	6,500	6,500 Vat N/A
Arcade Film Ltd	Documenting programme from 19 th to 28 th Sept & production of short film	4,175.00	5,135.25
Bidvest Noonan	Provision of night-time security in St Anne's Park from 18 th to 28 th September	3,142.70	3,865.52
Total Expenditure		€64,141.70	€72,421.04
A total of €51,000.00 has been granted to the St Anne's Park Community Archaeology Programme in 2022 (€30,000.00 will be recouped from the Heritage Council Grant €21,000.00 Creative Ireland Grant).			

Appendix 1 – volunteer feedback

The following comments were submitted by volunteers on the St Anne's Park Community Excavation 2022.

"As a local who's always had an interest in the history of the park and in historical buildings generally, I was delighted to be able to volunteer for the dig at St Anne's park. It was such an enjoyable couple of days. I learned so much and there was a real sense of achievement in gradually uncovering a piece of history. The team were so friendly and welcoming, while also being very professional and safety conscious. There was a huge amount of interest about the dig in the community, with people constantly stopping to have a look at how it was progressing. Many of them had memories of the old house and some even brought along pictures, and were keen to share stories and point out where things were etc. They were all saddened that we weren't going further with the dig as they'd have loved to see a wider exploration of the site. That was one of the loveliest things about the dig, that universal excitement at uncovering some of the history of our gorgeous park and an important historical building. I'm hoping to volunteer again if there is future exploration of the site"

"Thank you, and all the team, for tolerating my silly questions and providing such an informative, productive and interesting couple of days. I got so much out of the experience - learning about the area, meeting new people and being physically active made such a difference to my week. I spent most of this year in a psychiatric hospital (St. Pats) due to a number of mental health issues. The dig was the first time that I've done something on my own. I know you didn't know that, but I'd like to say it because you have no idea of the difference it made to me. I'm incredibly grateful to you all for being so welcoming and tolerant of someone who finds even leaving their house hard!"

"It was a real pleasure to take part in this year's Community Archaeology Dig in St Anne's Park. I grew up in the area, but knew very little about the history of the mansion. I have learned so much through my participation in the dig, working with you, Rory, Peter and Wayne. Thank you to all of you for sharing your expertise, and for answering all of our questions so well. All of the volunteers felt valued and appreciated. For many it was their first real life experience of seeing archaeologists at work, and everyone came away with a better understanding of how a dig is conducted. Thank you to Dublin City Council for their support for this really worthwhile project. Hopefully another community dig will happen again with their support in 2023. Perhaps that could happen over a longer period, as 5 days seemed far too short."

"I just want to say a huge Thank You to you and all your team for such an informative and interesting day at the community excavation at St Anne's park last weekend. It was fantastic to be involved in the project and to learn so much about excavation and geophysics. All the staff were so friendly and shared some fascinating information about the dig and the history of the house. It was great to see so many people visiting the excavation site and sharing their own stories and memories of The Guinness family home. I was amazed but not surprised at how much interest there still is in the house and regrets that the site had not been preserved. It would be fantastic and so beneficial if another excavation project was undertaken with the intention to have an area permanently exposed and protected with a plaque or information board on the site to inform visitors of what lies beneath the mound. Consideration should be made by Dublin City Council of the cultural and historical value of this site and how it is a very important part of our local history"

"Thanks for the opportunity to participate in the dig. It was different from other digs I've done in that we knew in advance what we were looking for! I found the archaeologists to be friendly, knowledgeable & delighted to impart information to us. The facilities on site were brilliant & of course it was fantastic to have the Red Stables Cafe beside us to."

"I was involved in the first two days of the dig. It was a great experience to be involved with. I was so excited when things started to be discovered and when I dug out a wall!! It was organised so well and the team included us from the start. They explained the plans on what they hoped to find, the history of the house and wanted to involve us in the entire process. They organised a talk about the surveying the area which was very insightful. After two days I walked away knowing a lot more about the entire process of archaeology and felt a part of something special. The only negative, it was too short! I wished they could have gone for longer. I would love to see a longer project involving the community and including Schools, perhaps who could do an arts project with small finds. Of course I would love to return too."

"I would like to give a special thanks to James, Wayne and Rory who showed us the ropes they went above and beyond. They are so passionate about this project and it's contagious. I had great fun and learned so much."

"Thanks for the great experience! I had an absolute blast. Please keep me on the mailing list so I can stay in the know."

"I thought it was a fantastic experience. There was a very nice atmosphere and I enjoyed having people over to see the site and getting the community involved. Although I wasn't able to visit after Sunday, I think that the stalls were a great idea and they should be implemented on all days of the dig (if possible). Besides that, everyone was super friendly and passionate. This made the whole experience more interesting and exciting. I hope that there will be more digs in St. Anne's in the future, as everyone I knew loved the idea of uncovering the history of such an iconic piece of the community's history. If possible, please keep me updated on any future projects!"*

**Experimental archaeology display*

"Thank you for the amazing opportunity to participate in the recent dig. I arrived nervous, out of my comfort zone and with no knowledge. I left fulfilling a lifelong dream of being part of an archaeological dig despite having no education or training. I was taught so much in a relaxed environment and made feel so welcome and a valuable part of the team. The knowledge I have learnt will stay with me forever and the excitement of the dig also. I honestly can't express my gratitude enough and honestly hope I can be part of your team as often as possible. To you and your amazing team my heart-felt gratitude and hope to join you again soon."

"Thanks for the email James, it was a fantastic experience and myself and E enjoyed it thoroughly. I would love to be involved in any further digs as a volunteer. It really was so well organised and a lovely atmosphere to work in."

"I thoroughly enjoyed my couple of days with you and your team. It was a very memorable experience and I would love to be involved again if you are back next year. Please keep me on your mailing list for the report and dig information gathered. Thank you for the opportunity to learn more about St Anne's."

“James and the team were very kind, welcoming and patient in showing us the ropes and in answering our questions. It was fascinating to learn a small part of the process of uncovering history. It was great to meet like-minded amateurs and share their excitement at discovering the bay window. We went home mucky and happy.”

“A big thank you to Cathy for selecting me as a volunteer, to you James and to Rory, Peter, and Wayne, for the encouragement, the help, explaining on what to do and what was happening as we went along the dig was invaluable and it made our work all that more interesting. I have to say that I thoroughly enjoyed the excavation dig, it was a complete new experience and learning time for me and one I will always remember. I would like to be on the mailing list for any info about our dig or indeed about St Anne's house that you may find of interest to me and also to let me know if and when another St Anne's dig is happening, I would certainly like to be there. If it suited, you could furnish me with a email address for Dublin city council, I have no problem in contacting them directly about further archaeological digs in St Anne's and the benefits of same. I think it is immeasurable the benefits from these digs to learn more about the St Anne's mansion House. I also think photos of the foundations exposed by digs and some items from the digs should be put into the red stables for viewing by the general public. As I live in the area I know there is a great interest with the public in the house and its history. Photo displays in outdoor fixed units could be put around the mounds of the house to show the original layout of the house. I also think a way should be found to leave the digs opened and safe for visitors to view the foundations, and to understand the scale of the house, it would be an added asset to St Anne's park.”

