



Second dig at Caherconnell Stone Fort in Burren begins

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ONE OF Ireland's best-preserved stone forts, Caherconnell Stone Fort in the heart of the Burren, is to have its second archaeological dig during this week's National Heritage Week.

The excavation, which began on Sunday, is being led by Dr Michelle Comber of NUI Galway and archaeologist Graham Hull.

The aim of the dig is to investigate and date what appears to be an underground passage known as a souterrain attached to the fort.

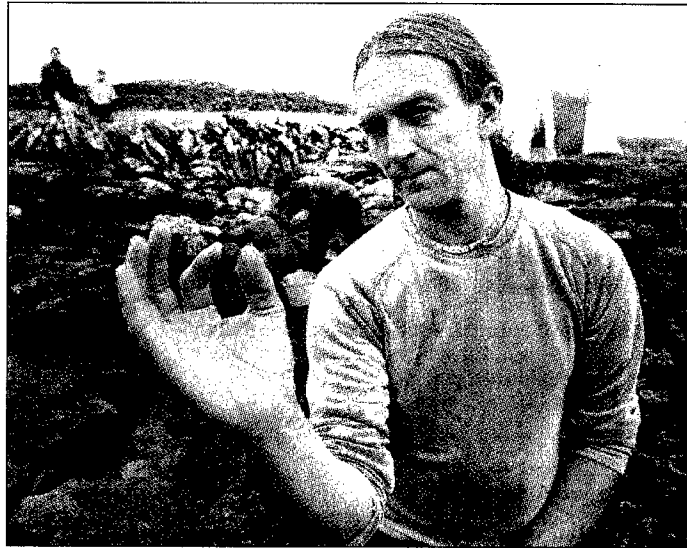
Key insights into the status and use of Caherconnell Stone Fort were unearthed in the 10-day archaeological excavation undertaken last year.

The fort is 40m (131ft) in diameter compared to the average of 20m (66ft) in other forts.

The thick stone walls rising to over 3m (9.9ft) in places "show that considerable resources, particularly labour, would have been needed to build the cashel" according to Dr Comber, who is researching early medieval settlements in the Burren.

The site is open to the public from 10am to 5pm.

Finds during the first ever excavation of the site have highlighted



Graham Hull, with an Edward 1st silver halfpenny from 1300 AD to 1310 AD found at Caherconnell Cashel. Photograph: Eamon Ward

the fort's importance. Artefacts uncovered included two disc-shaped quernstones of the rotary type, used to grind cereals. Also found was an iron arrowhead, three inches in length with barbs at its base, the only one of its type to be found in Britain or Ireland.

Last year's excavation was supported by volunteers from NUI

Galway and specialists from Queens University Belfast.

The results demonstrated that the fort was likely to have been occupied well into the medieval period. "Last year's excavation exceeded our expectations and has produced a lot of information that was previously unknown" said Graham Hull.