



Remains of teenage girl from about 2500BC found in Burren

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THE PARTIAL remains of a young person, probably female, which could date back to between 2500-2000 BC, have been uncovered during an archaeological dig in the Burren, Co Clare.

The prehistoric remains were found in the passageway to the central burial chamber of Caherconnell Cashel, a well-preserved stone fort, during the dig which began a fortnight ago.

A significant factor of the discovery is that the body had been allowed to decompose elsewhere before some of the skeleton was placed where it was found, according to archaeologist, Graham Hull.

Mr Hull, who runs a private archaeological company TVAS at

Crusheen, Co Clare, said the remains were "disarticulated", meaning that it was not a full skeleton.

The excavation team, which was carrying out the dig as part of Heritage Week events, recovered the skull, rib bones, spine, pelvis and right arm during the dig. With the bones were part of a stone axe and other flints and artefacts which led experts to believe the bones date from 2500-2000 BC.

"The fact that all the bones were not there would suggest that the body was brought from somewhere else and were allowed to decompose before burial," Mr Hull said.

He said this was similar to practices carried out by North American Indians, but there were other examples in Ireland of bones from

bodies being deposited like this.

He said not all of the adult teeth in the skull had "erupted", indicating the probable age of the person as about 15 years. "The facial bones, the eyebrow and the chin bone give some indication of sex, and that indicates a female".

The burial, he said, was likely to be a secondary one to the primary burial site of the central chamber in the area being excavated. The bones would be sent for radio carbon-dating and if they proved to date from the period 2500-2000BC, the find would extend beyond regional significance he said.

"This type of burial and this type of burial chamber in this part of Ireland would be unique," said Mr Hull, who is working with Dr Michelle Comber of NUI Galway.