

Living Landscapes: Exploring Neolithic Ireland and its Wider Context



Venue: Geography, Room G29, Queen's University Belfast

Date: Thursday 31st May - Friday 1st June 2007

Registration fee: £10/€15 (students, unwaged/retired), £20/€30 (waged)

For the Neolithic of Ireland and Britain, the main focus for many years has been on the highly visible ritual monuments that in large part define the period. Far less is known concerning the domestic landscape, and people's daily lives. This is in contrast to the Neolithic of continental Europe, where settlements have tended to receive more emphasis. However, over the last decade in Ireland in particular, the discovery of an ever-increasing number of apparently domestic structures has provided the opportunity to better situate the domestic landscape, and to learn something of its nature. While the houses themselves have been the subject of a number of studies, there is still little understanding of how the landscapes immediately surrounding them were utilised. Recently, stable isotope studies of human bone have been used to argue for an abrupt and more or less complete shift towards new domesticated plants and animals from the outset of the Neolithic, carrying with it the implication of a significant, though perhaps localised, impact on the environment. To what extent can this impact be traced, and can more detail be provided on the balance between cereals and domestic animals? How intensively were cereal plots maintained, and over what duration? What impact did the new domestic animals have on the environment – an especially germane question in the context of Ireland, with its apparent absence of large grazing mammals. How did these practices change over the duration of the Neolithic? What was the appearance of this landscape and how might it have been perceived? This seminar will address these themes, including papers that have an Irish emphasis, as well as those that seek to draw attention to the similarities or dissimilarities between Ireland, Britain and continental Europe.

Further information is available at <http://www.qub.ac.uk/gap> (please follow links)

FINAL DATE FOR REGISTRATION: 14th May 2007

Seminar organisers:

Nicki J. Whitehouse¹, Rick Schulting² and Meriel McClatchie³

¹ Archaeology and Palaeoecology, School of Geography, Archaeology and Palaeoecology, Queen's University Belfast, Belfast, BT7 1NN. Email: n.whitehouse@qub.ac.uk

² School of Archaeology, University of Oxford. 36 Beaumont Street, Oxford, OX1 2PG. Email: rick.schulting@arch.ox.ac.uk

³ Institute of Archaeology, University College London, 31-34 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PY. Email: m.mcclatchie@ucl.ac.uk

