Galway Community Archaeological Advisory Project
in partnership with
Kilconnell Tidy Towns Committee
are hosting a free one day
Archaeology Seminar in Kilconnell Community Centre,
Saturday 12th September 2015

In the centre of Kilconnell Village stands the ruins of an important Franciscan Friary founded in the late medieval period by the native O’Kelly overlords. With its imposing bell tower, it survives as an iconic building in the East Galway Landscape. This free public seminar will explore aspects of its rich history and archaeology.

County Galway has a very rich archaeological heritage, encompassing archaeological sites spanning from the Mesolithic Period, (some 9,000 years ago), to monuments of the more recent past. Monuments such as ringfort’s, churches and castles are to be seen in abundance throughout the county. When examined closely this important archaeological legacy can help us as a Nation to understand how past societies lived and to better understand where we came from ourselves. Apart from its intrinsic cultural value, archaeology has the potential when used as a tourism product to contribute significantly to the local economy.

This community led event is being organised with the support of Kilconnell Tidy Towns Committee under the auspices of the recently initiated Galway Community Archaeological Advisory Project formerly delivered under the auspices of Galway Field Monument Advisor Scheme and is being used as a means of placing archaeology at the heart of the community.
SEMINAR PROGRAMME

9.15   Registration

10.00  Welcome and address by Cllr. Tim Broderick

       Mike Blehean ‘Unwelcome Guests!’

Session 1

10.20  Eamon O Fearghail  ‘The Franciscans - a Permanent Revolution’

10.50  Tea/Coffee

11.10  Yvonne McDermott 'Kilconnell friary and the late Irish Gothic architecture of the mendicant friars'

11.50  Eve Campbell  ‘The early modern funerary monuments of Kilconnell Abbey in their social context’

12.30  Christy Cunniffe ‘A brief insight into the ecclesiastical treasures of Kilconnell Friary based on surviving material and a number of published inventories’

1.00   Lunch

Session 2

2.00   Joseph Mannion  ‘The Ó Mainnín tomb in Kilconnell Abbey: a local chieftain’s burial place in context’

2.40   Gary Dempsey  ‘Revealing the Past in 3D’. Followed later by a practical demonstration in the friary.

3.10   Tea/Coffee

Session 3

3.30   Tour of the friary - and

       Paul Naessens ‘A practical demonstration of Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) in aerial photography’.

This will be followed by a short presentation in the Centre of the results of the aerial survey.

5.15   Summing up and close of Kilconnell Archaeology Seminar.
Mike Bleahen is a Kilconnell native with a deep interest in the Abbey. His father owns the property referred to as Monabraher an area of land associated with the Abbey where the friars are believed to have resorted to during times of religious strife. Mike is going to give us a brief introduction and share a short story about the destruction of the friary and its monuments.

Eamon O Fearghail was born in Kilconnell and grew up in the shadow of the Abbey. Went to St Gabriel's N.S. and Garbally College. Started work as truck helper with Tim Broderick's father Bob - and they brought butter to Dublin like "Kerrs big ass" in Cavanagh's poem. He hurled with Cappy, kicked football with St Gabriel’s and played handball with Ballymac. Did the State some service in the F.C.A. He left the village in Autumn 1967 to study Psychiatric Nursing in Dublin - subsequently joined Customs & Excise and spent over 40 years on the Border and was a Union Activist during work life.

In this talk Eamon will speak about the Franciscans - the real "why" of Kilconnell Friary.

Dr Eve Campbell is an independent archaeologist from Co. Louth. She graduated from NUIG with a first class degree in history and archaeology in 2005. In 2012 she completed an IRCSS-funded PhD examining the archaeology of the Cromwellian transplantation to Connacht and Clare at NUIG. She has worked in the commercial, research and community sectors. In 2013 she co-ordinated the Louth Field Names Project. More recently she has conducted research into the archaeology and place names of the Cooley Mountains, and supervised excavations at the Irish Field-school of Prehistoric Archaeology.

The abbey of Kilconnell has a fine array of early modern funerary monuments adorning its walls. Sharply contrasting from their later medieval antecedents in form, content and context these monuments offer tangible testimony to the social upheaval that rocked Ireland in the seventeenth century. This talk will look at the people behind the stone monuments, asking what they can tell us about changing identities and society in this fraught period of Irish history.

Dr Yvonne McDermott lectures on the Culture and Environment programme in GMIT Mayo campus where she teaches archaeology and folklore. She graduated from NUI Galway in 2012 with a Ph.D. in Archaeology and has published a number of articles on the mendicant friaries in the west of Ireland.

In this lecture Yvonne will examine and discuss the architecture of Kilconnell Friary, placing it in its regional and national context.

Gary Dempsey Archaeologist and 3D designer with RealSim ltd. based in NUI Galway. Having assisted many of the leading 3D teams in Scotland and Ireland he organised the Roscommon Cross Slab Project to train groups in the art of Photogrammetry, and is currently working to develop 3D projects in Co. Galway.

Gary will discuss the benefits of using 3D recording techniques to record historical monuments. The creation of 3D interactive images is as simple as taking photos of the object and uploading them to your computer. The result can help to reveal long hidden carvings or create a digital museum of heritage artefacts.

Dr Joseph Mannion holds a PhD in history from NUI Galway, awarded for his dissertation on the Tudor lordships of the Clannrickard Burkes and the O’Kellys of Hy Many. His published works include a biography of Galway’s earliest known ecclesiastic entitled The life, legends and legacy of Saint Kerrill, a family history study called Clann Uí Mhainnín: the Mannion Clan historical trail: a guide to residential, ceremonial and burial sites, as well as a wide range of journal articles and book chapters dealing with diverse aspects of the medieval and early modern history of the South Connacht region.

This lecture will explore the medieval background of the Ó Mainnín chiefs of Soghan in East Galway, with special reference to their defining association with the local O’Kelly overlords and their Uí Maine ancestors. It will endeavour to assess this relationship in the historical context of the early fifteenth century, when the Franciscan friary of Kilconnell was founded (or re-founded?) by William Mór O’Kelly. The significance of the location and style of the Ó Mainnín tomb with its mid-seventeenth-century dated grave-slab in the chancel of the friary will also be examined and discussed.

Christy Cunniffe is employed as a Community Archaeologist and Field Monument Advisor by Galway County Council. His role is to create greater public awareness of archaeology within the county. This seminar is one of the ways in which information is delivered to the wider community.

In his presentation Christy will look at two previously published documents that are quite useful in helping to determine at least some of the many ecclesiastical treasures that once graced the altars and library of Kilconnell Friary.

Dr Paul Naessens is an archaeologist who applies modern technology to aid him in his archaeological work. He has previously undertaken archaeological investigations at Kilconnell Abbey and plans to follow that by undertaking a phase of targeted excavation at Kilconnell in the near future. In this practical demonstration of an UAV (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle), Paul will undertake a fly over of the Abbey. After the demonstration we will return to the lecture room to view a quick presentation showing the results of the survey.
* Kilconnell Tidy Towns was established with the aim of making Kilconnell a clean, inviting and attractive place to live, work and visit.
* The ethos has always been to use recycled and renewable items when and where possible. Kilconnell Tidy Towns has an open door policy and welcomes all ideas and suggestions and volunteers of all ages, interests and abilities.
* Enthusiasm, commitment and motivation increase year on year with the village receiving a well deserved Endeavour Award in the 2014 Tidy Towns competition.
* The newest project for 2015 was the establishment of a Community Garden. This project is still ongoing.

A number of copies of an interesting historic pamphlet written by Patrick Conlan OFM 2007 *The Franciscan Friary Kilconnell, Co. Galway* will be on sale on the day at €5 each. The proceedings from sales will go towards a community initiative.
The seminar organisers wish to acknowledge the assistance of Kilconnell Hall Committee for kindly providing us with the venue for the days event

For further information or directions to the seminar

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Galway Community Archaeological Advisory Project is an initiative of Galway County Council and The Heritage Council.