Title The palaeoenvironmental potential of waterlogged deposits and their contribution to archaeological investigations

Speaker Scott Timpany

Scott Timpany graduated from Coventry University in 1999 with a BSc (Hons) degree in geography. This was followed by an MSc in quaternary science in 2001, also at Coventry University, where he investigated the impact of Early Mesolithic people on the environment on the Mizen Peninsula, Co. Cork. In 2005 he completed a PhD in archaeology at the University of Reading. Here he reconstructed the environments of submerged forests along the coast of the Severn Estuary and Bristol Channel. Scott joined Headland Archaeology Ltd in 2005 as their in-house archaeobotanist and is responsible for pollen, plant macrofossil and wood/charcoal identification analyses. Scott is currently undertaking studies on the N25 Waterford City Bypass in addition to the N7 Limerick to Nenagh road scheme. He continues to have an active interest in research and has published papers on the vegetational history of the Mizen Peninsula and submerged forests of the Severn Estuary.

Organisation Headland Archaeology Ltd

Road Scheme N7 Limerick to Nenagh

Waterlogged deposits have the potential to provide a wealth of information on the environmental history of sites as well as being one of the best environments for the preservation of archaeological material such as wooden artefacts.

This talk aims to inform the listener on some of the methods used to sample such environments and the techniques (e.g. pollen, plant macrofossils, diatoms) we can then use to maximize the environmental information from sites. In doing so, examples will be used from current and future work being undertaken on road scheme sites across southern Ireland such as the N7 and N25 by Headland Archaeology Ltd.

This palaeoenvironmental reconstruction work then helps to place the archaeology of the site into its landscape context. For example a trackway found in a peat bog may indicate unstable ground, but by reconstructing the environment at the time of the trackway it can be shown that that ground was a reed swamp environment fringing a salt marsh. This then aids in the interpretation of the trackways function e.g. to provide access to the salt marsh for fishing and fowling.