

Join Clare's own Time Team

Andrew Hamilton

THE people of Clare have been invited to get their hands dirty and take part in a real life Time Team style excavation in north Clare next week.

The Caherconnell Stone Fort in Carron will be the venue for an open week long excavation, with members of the public being given the opportunity to work side by side with experts.

The excavation will be co-ordinated by Dr Michelle Comber of NUI, Galway and archaeologist Graham Hull of Crusheen company TUAS.

This is the second in a series of open excavations at the Caherconnell fort, which is widely believed to be one of the most archeological significant findings in the area.

Last year excavation revealed the stone fort in Caherconnell was inhabited for centuries later than it had been previously thought, meaning that the traditional Gaelic way of life existed in the Burren for hundreds of years after the Anglo-Norman invasion.

This year's excavation will focus on a souterrain or underground passage which has been recently discovered at the fort. It is believed that the passageway may have been used as a means of escape or even as a primitive refrigerator by the locals, but there is no way of knowing for sure without excavation.

"It's actually very exciting. There is something there, some form of souterrain, but until we excavate we won't be able to find out exactly



what," said Graham Hull of TUAS Ireland Ltd.

"There are a number of different things that the souterrain could have been used for. We don't know all the answers and digging helps us to put together the pieces of the puzzle.

"Volunteers are very welcome. We will give all the basic training needed on site. As well as that people can come up and look at the work and someone will be there to speak with them and explain what is going on."

The fort, which is owned and operated by the Davoren family, has been

described in academic studies as "a perfect fort" as it is twice the size of the standard cashels and is possibly Ireland's best preserved stone forts.

The dig will take place from August 24 to 31 and anyone interested in taking part should call 087 9693189.

Above: Graham Hull - director of TUAS Ireland looking at a 'barged & tanged' iron arrow head which was found in Caherconnell in Carron last September. Yvonne Vaughan

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