

Discovering Our Past

Learning Outcomes. Pupils will:

- Be introduced to archaeological concepts and skills
- Take part in archaeological exercises
- Discover the significance of Hill of The O'Neill as an historical site of national and international importance

Hill of The O'Neill & Ranfurly House Arts & Visitor Centre is on the site of the medieval capital of Ulster, the location where the O'Neills ruled as Gaelic chieftains from 1305. It is the place where the last of the O'Neill chieftains, Hugh O'Neill, ruled and led the Nine Years' War.

The Noble 99 gathered in Dungannon prior to the Flight of the Earls in 1607, and following their journey into exile in Rome, Arthur Chichester rebuilt the O'Neill castle in order to fashion his own military fort, referring to Dungannon as the "centre" of Ulster.

The importance of Hill of The O'Neill was recognised in 2007 when the Channel 4 TV archaeology programme "Time Team" visited. Experts from the programme and from the Centre for Community Archaeology at Queen's University Belfast carried out a three day dig. They found a wall from the O'Neill tower house, as well as bastions from the Chichester fort.

The Centre for Community Archaeology facilitates *Discovering Our Past*, an introduction to archaeology for KS2/3 pupils. In this activity, pupils work alongside these experts so that they will be introduced to archaeological concepts and skills and also discover the significance of Hill of The O'Neill as an historical site of national and international importance.

Pupils find out about the unique history of the Hill of The O'Neill by exploring it in the company of the archaeologists, and by examining copies of documents from the early 17th century. They also take part in a series of measuring activities at the Knox-Hannyngton house, before participating in a workshop in which they handle and discuss a range of archaeological artefacts.

As this programme is held mostly outside, pupils should arrive at the centre appropriately dressed. Each class will be divided into two groups so that two activities can take place during the two and a half hours allocated. The starting time each day is 10.00am.

For more information about *Discovering Our Past* contact the Visitor Experience & Education Officer, Peter Lant:

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