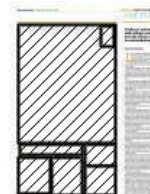


Publication:	Irish Independent	Media Cost (€):	1963.7
Date:	Thursday, August 29, 2024	Reach	83,900
Page:	11	Size (Sq. Cm)	538



‘I discovered that I had a love for archaeology in college’

Brendan Winters

BA (Joint Honours) History and Archaeology, University of Galway

History was always a favourite subject of Brendan Winters, but he is delving even deeper into the past after being introduced to other study topics in college.

While history was his CAO choice, in his earlier post-primary years at Gort Community School, Brendan believed he might pursue a career in IT.

He sought out and enjoyed transition year work experiences exploring IT in a very hands-on way, “but I realised it was not something I felt enough passion about”.

So, Brendan (23), from Co Galway, followed his interest in history into the BA in University College Galway, and had an opportunity to select two other subjects for first year from a choice of 21.

One was archaeology, which “I thought would be helpful because it is tangential to history”, and the other was German.

In the event “archaeology really caught me and realised I preferred it to history”.

So, instead of sticking with pure history, which, a year earlier, is what he presumed he would be doing, he asked could he switch to joint honours, a degree option where students major in two subjects.

And that’s what happened.

Going into second year Brendan dropped German and continued with history and archaeology.

There is a lot of archaeological excavation going on in Ireland and, while in college, he volunteered for post-excavation work, relating to finds arising from a research project at Caherconnell

stone fort, Co Clare, under the renowned archaeologist, Dr Michelle Comber. Now, Brendan has moved on to doing some digging himself.

Brendan completed the three-year degree programme this year and, as he graduated, job offers rolled in for students.

He landed a two-year contract with a cultural heritage consultancy working on the new Limerick to Foynes bypass, a 35km stretch that will connect the Port of Foynes to the motorway network.

It includes a 7km section to bypass the village of Adare, which has been fast-tracked to be finished in time for the Ryder Cup at Adare Manor in September 2027.

In May, Brendan and others from his course started working on the archaeological excavation, which must take place at particular sites before the new road progresses.

While the diggers strip the top soil “any further digging is done by us by hand”, said Brendan. “I’m absolutely loving it. It’s not what expected fully, but it’s really good. I’m learning a lot, complementing what I learned in college.”



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