Examining the Bronze Age quern stone found in Castleconnell during work on the local sewerage scheme, Joe Kennedy, senior engineer, Limerick County Council; Tracy Collins, site director, and Sarah McCutcheon, county archaeologist.

Sewerage scheme work unearths past treasures

By PATRICIA FEEHILY

CASTLECONNELL’s £6.5m sewerage scheme has yielded a rich vein of archaeological treasures.

According to Limerick County Council’s archaeological unit, the range and diversity of finds are unusual for a confined area, and indicate human activity on this section of the Shannon’s banks over thousands of years.

To date, four fulachta fiaadh or ancient cooking places, three hut sites, a furnace and four human burial sites, as well as nine other pits, have been excavated.

“All of these,” said a spokesman for the archaeological unit, “are tentatively dated to the early Bronze Age of 5000BC to 1500BC.”

Charcoal samples have been sent for analysis and the results will clarify the date range, he said.

As well as this, numerous artefacts have been recovered, including 10 stone axes, over 100 pieces of worked flint and a fragment of a rotary quern.

Before laying the pipeline through farmland along the banks of the Shannon, the Council commissioned an archeological assessment of the impact of the sewerage scheme. This was carried out by M Gowan and Co Ltd, and a further riverine study was done at the Mulcair crossing by Underwater Archaeology Ltd.

All of the construction work is being monitored by the Council’s archaeological unit.

Three locations along the route of the pipeline were archaeologically tested in advance of the works by the Council’s unit.

At one of these sites, Hermitage, the Moran farm, significant remains were uncovered. Aegis Archaeology Ltd are currently excavating the area.