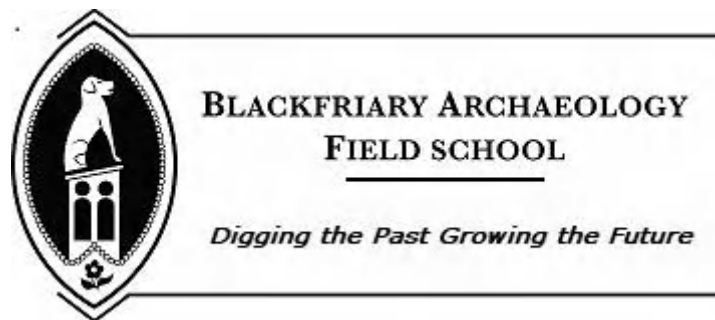


SONAIRTE - PROTECTING OUR HERITAGE

Desktop Assessment of the Archaeological Potential of the Sonairte Site



Blackfriary Community Heritage and
Archaeology Project

An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council



Summary

The principal objective of this project was to assess the archaeological heritage potential of the site and the history and condition of the buildings to ensure their proper management and conservation. The results gathered and recommendations made will be incorporated into the Sonairte Strategic Plan 2021-2026 and will inform future works for conservation, restoration or reconstruction in line with the Burra Charter (2013). Thus the future development of and access to the wider site will be in large part founded on this work.

The members of the core team were Dr. Kim Reilly, Chair of the Sonairte Board, Finola O'Carroll, Consultant Archaeologist, Brendan Matthews Local Historian and Luk Van Doorslaer, owner of the property. Contributors of reports were Finola O'Carroll (Archaeological baseline data survey), Ian Elliott (Geophysical Survey), and Franc Myles (Buildings Survey). Brendan Matthews conducted guided walks and talks on the heritage of the site and the project was co-ordinated by Dr. Kim Reilly.

A recorded monument, ME028-004, is on the grounds of Sonairte. The immediate hinterland is very rich in archaeological remains and a small mound of possible Iron Age date (ME028-006) lies to the east. The geophysical survey took place to the west of the monument and covered 1.2ha. The ground slopes from about 20m OD to 4m OD. The results show that there were many faint but visible circular features which are typically seen in densely inhabited areas, or more likely may relate to forms of burial monuments. In addition there were at least three distinct zones of furrow cultivation suggesting a field pattern that predates any known mapped fields and are historic, if not prehistoric in origin. These appear to overwrite the circular features. Without testing these through targeted excavation their substance remains unclear. Finally, a possible path leading from the direction of the house or farmyard towards the monument was indicated.

The desktop study of the known archaeology within a 3km radius of the site provided contextual information for this monument and its immediate environs and demonstrated the incredible richness and intensity of settlement in the immediate hinterland, in what is essentially a coastal and estuarine zone, from the Mesolithic through to the post-Medieval periods. Excavation results from a number of significant sites in Ninch, Betaghstown and Donacarney Great all have extensive burial evidence. The three main excavated sites have evidence of occupation/activity from the late Neolithic onwards. All clearly show that the traditionally understood form of early medieval habitation, that is the ringfort, was in fact developed into multiple overlapping enclosures of several centuries duration, with, crucially, no surviving above ground expression. This is highly significant as these sites all lie north of the River Nanny, whereas to the south very little excavation has taken place, but there are significant numbers of cropmark sites – again with no above ground expression, which likely were as intensively occupied as their counterparts on the north of the river.

The buildings survey has shown that the farmyard at Ninch West developed in all probability from an early eighteenth-century farmyard and survives in a remarkably intact state. Recommendations as to its management were made and it is considered to be of regional significance.

Table of Contents

Summary	3
Acknowledgements	6
Section 1	7
Desktop Archaeological Study	7
Introduction	7
Site Location.....	8
Geology and Topography.....	8
Solid Geology and Soils	8
Topography and Landscape	8
Description of the Mound ME028-004	9
The desktop assessment.....	11
Selection process	11
Nature of the monuments; Fig. 1, see also Appendix 1.....	11
Nature of the Excavated sites; Figs. 2 and 3, see also Appendices 2 and 3.....	13
Potential sites from aerial photography.....	13
Recorded finds, see also Appendix 6	16

List of Figures

- Figure 1** 3km radius zone of interest around ME028-004- (monument in Sonairte) showing all known recorded Monuments
- Figure 2** All known excavated sites within a 3km radius of ME028-004- indicated by period of activity in each excavated area
- Figure 3** Detail of large-scale excavations carried out in the area, with licence numbers shown for each one.
- Figure 4** Survey of ME028-004- by Drs. Geraldine and Matthew Stout, courtesy of Luk Van Doorslaer
- Figure 11** Figure 11: Mid-Excavation Plan of Test Trench 7
- Figure 12** Figure 12: South-East Facing Section of Test Trench 7

List of Plates

- Plate 1: View of mound ME028-004—from NW prior to road re-alignment. Courtesy of Mr. Kieran Campbell
- Plate 2: The mound at Sonairte from the south side of the River Nanny, obscured by tree growth
- Plate 3: Extract from Samuel Bouie’s map depicting the lands, buildings and possibly ME028-004 at NInch
- Plate 4: Fragment of possible blue glass bracelet terminus, courtesy of Mr. Kieran Campbell
- Plate 5: View from the south side of the River Nanny looking at ME028-006, to right of houses.
- Plate 6: Aerial view of ME028-092- , Sarsfieldstown, Co. Meath showing potential complex
- Plate 7: aerial shot of ME028-069001-2, note the features to east and west

Appendices

- Appendix 1 Gazetteer of Recorded Sites and Monuments within the Zone of Interest
- Appendix 2 Gazetteer of Excavation Licences where reports were received with Summaries from Excavations .ie
- Appendix 3 Summaries of reports from Excavations.ie
- Appendix 4 Excavations immediately outside the zone which produced archaeology
- Appendix 5 Summaries of reports of non-zone sites from Excavations.ie
- Appendix 6 Finds from the study area

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Dr. Kim Reilly for including me in this project. Thanks to the landowner, Luk Van Doorslaer for sharing his knowledge of the site. Grateful thanks to Kieran Campbell for his many observations, assistance with research and photographs of the mound prior to the alteration of the road, and of the blue glass fragment which he found and reported to the National Museum. Many thanks to Rachel Barrett of the National Monuments Service for providing access to digital files of monuments in the core area. Thanks to my colleague Laura Corrway for the maps. All aerial imagery was downloaded from the archaeology.ie website and links to the images are contained within the appendices. Finally, the grant funding from the Heritage Council is gratefully acknowledged. All omissions and mistakes are my own.

Section 1

Desktop Archaeological Study

Introduction

The mound or as it is called locally, the Rath, on the lands at Sonairte, Ninch, Laytown, Co. Meath (RMP No. ME028-004--) is a curiosity. Its prominent location and obvious man-made appearance suggest an antiquity, but its actual date, function or purpose is unknown. It is one of the few upstanding archaeological sites in the area and as it stands on the lands of the National Ecology Centre at Sonairte and there are hopes of putting a detailed conservation and management plan in place for the whole property, it was decided that some study of the site and its context would be appropriate.

A geophysical survey of the available adjacent land was commissioned as part of this project, as the mound itself is too overgrown for such a process, and the results of that will be discussed in conjunction with the results of the desktop study.

As the monument is as yet not clearly identified as to form or function owing to the fact that it has been quarried I shall refer to it as a mound, as a more neutral term than rath or ringfort.

The desktop study was set at a zone 3km in radius with the mound at Sonairte at the centre. As this is located on the River Nanny it means the river effectively divides this zone in two parts. Owing to Covid restrictions it was not possible to visit the National Museum to check files there, information on finds was gleaned from entries on Heritage Maps, and from references in excavation publications. Rachel Barrett of the National Monuments Service facilitated the study by providing access to digital files of the monuments in the core area, where possible. A list of licence numbers issued within the zone as defined was derived from a list on the NMS website, of all licences issued for which reports had been received. Excavations.ie was consulted for summaries of these excavations. This meant that in some instances summaries were found for licences for which no report had been submitted, that is the licence number was not on the NMS list, and sometimes no bulletin had been submitted for a licence issued.

In total there are 61 sites for which excavation licences, and or excavation bulletins or publications were available which have been included in this study. Something of archaeological interest is recorded from 35 of this total. In addition there are 77 recorded monuments from this zone.

Site Location

The site is within the lands of the Sonairte National Ecology Centre at Ninch (West), Laytown, Co. Meath. It is located at NGR 714951 771226 at approximately 20m OD. It overlooks the River Nanny to the south and the estuary of that river is visible to the east. It has extensive views to the east, south and west, though now heavily overgrown. The ground rises slightly to the north.

Geology and Topography

Solid Geology and Soils

The site is located in an area of Irish Sea Till: Sandstone and shale till (Lower Palaeozoic) with a matrix of Irish Sea Basin origin. It is within a Special Protection Area under the Wild Birds Directive. <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/spa/004158>

Topography and Landscape

The site is located on a steep rise overlooking the river. The ground drops to the south and the west, and more gently to the east. It was more level to the north, before the present road was cut beside it and the ground rises slightly to the north from there.



Plate 1: View of mound ME028-004—from NW prior to road re-alignment. Courtesy of Mr. Kieran Campbell

It is on a prominent location and would have been easily visible from the other side of the River Nanny, and from the estuary. However, the view today is obscured by tree growth.



Plate 2: The mound at Sonairte from the south side of the River Nanny, obscured by tree growth

Description of the Mound ME028-004

The mound is sub-circular to oval in shape. The sides are steep on the north side, more graduated on the west, south and east where the slope is more obvious. As it is heavily overgrown it was not possible to do a measured survey. However, a survey carried out by Drs. Matthew and Geraldine Stout was kindly provided by Luk Van Doorslaer (Fig. 4). This shows that the mound is about 30m NW – SE by 35m NE – SW. The interior was quarried possibly prior to the 1800s, and the NE side is broken through. The bank surrounding the central quarried area is relatively flat topped.

This mound is not noted as an archaeological feature on the 1st Edition OS map of the area. A sandpit is noted in its vicinity. The earliest depiction is from Samuel Bouie's map of 1771, where a gazebo like structure is shown on an elevated site west of the house at Ninch West. This suggests that the monument may then have been totally flat-topped, and its present form simply the result of quarrying.



Plate 3: Extract from Samuel Bouie's map depicting the lands, buildings and possibly ME028-004 at NInch

A fragment of what may be the terminus of a blue glass bracelet was found in the interior, on the south-west internal face, by Mr. Kieran Campbell. This is of early Medieval form. Its location may not have been properly stratified and it was found in an area that had been damaged by cattle (K. Campbell pers comm).



Plate 4: Fragment of possible blue glass bracelet terminus, courtesy of Mr. Kieran Campbell

The desktop assessment

Selection process

Given that the site under discussion is located immediately overlooking the River Nanny it follows that in creating a Zone of Interest of 3km radius around the site, that the river would effectively bisect it. The areas included on the north side comprise all of the townlands of Ninch, Julianstown West and East, Ballymad, Ministown, Sevitsland and Betaghstown, and most of Smithstown and Pilltown and parts of Donacarney Great and Mornington. On the south side the townlands of Corballis, Ballygarth, Dimanstown East, Keenoge, Briarleas and Mosney are fully included. Parts of Dimanstown West, Moorechurch, Claristown, Lisdornan, Irishtown and Sarsfieldstown are also within the study zone.

All records of monuments in the area held by the NMS were included (Appendix 1). All records of licences for excavations issued by the NMS for which reports were received are listed and cross-referenced with reports from the Excavations Bulletins, Excavations.ie (Appendix 2). Summary accounts of those excavations where available are collated in Appendix 3. Excavations of interest immediately outside the zone have been tabulated (Appendix 4) and summaries provided (Appendix 5). Finally as files in the National Museum could not be accessed those listed on the Heritage Maps viewer, <https://www.heritagemaps.ie/WebApps/HeritageMaps/index.html>, have been tabulated, with one addition, Appendix 6.

The most famous find attributed to the area is of course the Tara Brooch, said to have come from a small stream at Bettystown on the beach. This is not listed on Heritage Maps.

Summary of information on known monuments

Nature of the monuments; Fig. 1, see also Appendix 1

Of the 77 sites listed only 25 can be seen above ground. Of these only three are earthworks. The remainder are either contained in castle (Ballygarth, 4 records), or Church (Julianstown West, 5 records; Moorechurch, 4 records) complexes, or are various miscellaneous finds. There are three wayside crosses (Whitescross and Sarsfieldstown), three holy wells, one each at Irishtown and at Ministown. A third in Corballis is doubtful as a holy well in my view as it is not recorded as such on the 1st Edition OS map and is given the same attribution as the well in Ministown. Architectural fragments and armorial plaques, not necessarily in their original location are noted in Smithstown (1, plaque) and Mosney (fragment and armorial plaque). The three earthwork monuments with surface expression are all in Ninch; these are the subject of this study, ME028-004-, a nearby mound to the east, ME028-006- and ME028-024-, recorded as a possibly battery. This monument lies west of the subject one and is roughly square, approximately 30 x 30m and has bulbous corners. It may equally be a moated site.

The monument to the east of the subject site, ME028-006-, was damaged in the 1970's by a bulldozer, and subsequent recording and retrieval of human remains (two burials) was undertaken by David Sweetman in 1979 and published (Sweetman, 1982-83). A date of 1510+-55 calibrated to 460+-85AD was obtained from one burial, a late Iron Age/Early Medieval date. Charcoal above the burial returned an earlier Iron Age date. It was accepted by Sweetman that the burials and the monument were Iron Age in date. It too occupies a locally prominent site overlooking the River

Nanny, and is of not dissimilar size, though probably smaller than the subject site. It has a recorded height of 5m, and as the original height of the subject site is not known it is not clear how they would compare.



Plate 5: View from the south side of the River Nanny looking at ME028-006, to right of houses.

Of the remaining monuments I have classified 31 as being sub-surface, that is monuments with no surface expression. Of these one is a battlefield and another a record of a possible cist burial uncovered during quarrying but never further investigated. The remaining 29 monuments are all recorded because they have been found as cropmarks. They are categorized as ring-ditches, enclosures, ringforts/raths, and one habitation site, where medieval pottery was found but nothing else. The ascription of such categories is speculative as they have not been excavated and attributing a date would be equally speculative.

Twenty-two recorded monuments derive from the fact that they were discovered either by development activity leading to excavations, or through accidental discovery. Six burial sites and one souterrain fall into the latter category. These include ME028-073---, the burial of a child found face down in Keenoge townland during widening of a laneway in 1931, and further burials found in the same spot in 1951. These were investigated by the National Museum as an object, described as a gold token was found with them. They are recorded as prehistoric but have not been published.

The cist burial and the nearby cemetery of Iron Age burials found in a housing estate in Betaghstown (Bettystown) in the 1970's investigated by Eamonn Kelly of the National Museum are also recorded as monuments, ME021-010001 and 002.

The excavated sites were mostly discovered as a result of development and were subject to full excavation. Relevant summaries are attached in Appendices 2 and 3.

Nature of the Excavated sites; Figs. 2 and 3, see also Appendices 2 and 3

A total of 61 licences, extensions to licences or unlicensed excavations were carried out in the study zone. Of these, 35 produced archaeological findings (see Fig. 2). They range in date from the Neolithic to the later medieval to post-medieval and many are multi-period complexes (see Fig.3).

Excavations of a number of significant sites in Ninch, Betaghstown and Donacarney Great all produced extensive burial evidence (see Eogan, 2010; McConway, 2002 and 2010; Buckley, 2010). The three main excavated sites have evidence of occupation/activity from the late Neolithic onwards. In fact, the majority of settlement clusters are multi-period and where little survives of the earlier material, it is likely because it has been overlain and obliterated by later, principally early Medieval occupation. A number of sites were excavated in Betaghstown under different licences and at different times, and it is hard to be certain whether they form discrete zones of occupation or were in fact parts of one large multi-period complex. All these sites clearly show that the traditionally understood form of early medieval habitation, that is the ringfort, was in fact developed into multiple overlapping enclosures of several centuries duration, with, crucially, no surviving above ground expression. The debate as to whether cemeteries and settlement sites in the early medieval period were always enclosed, or whether some were not, seems to now rest with the view that they were almost invariably enclosed and perhaps the result of formal land inheritance practices (Bolger, 2011). The work of the Early Medieval Archaeology Project in collecting, analysing and disseminating the results of excavations on early medieval sites throughout the country has brought greater clarity and insight to the this period. And the realisation that the countrywide population might have been anywhere between 1 and 3 million people by the 7th or 8th century is plausible given the density of sites in this area, (see findings from EMAP, <https://researchrepository.ucd.ie/handle/10197/10939>). It may seem all the more surprising then, that so few sites in this zone have any surface expression, as prior to the boom in development-led archaeology the ringfort was understood to be the principal form of habitation in that period. And given the number of them, 40,000 as noted by Matthew Stout (1997), they are the likely most visible form. However, in this area in East Meath, they simply do not register as above ground monuments.

There are equally significant sites just on the periphery of this zone, (see Appendices 4 and 5), such as Colp West and Donacarney Little.

However, virtually all of these sites all lie north of the River Nanny, whereas to the south very little excavation has taken place. Had the zone extended further south, some of the sites excavated as part of the M1 motorway and the gas pipeline would have been included, but apart from those there has been very little development-led excavation, which is the main driver of these discoveries, in that southern part of the study area. But there are significant numbers of cropmark sites – again with no above ground expression, which likely were sites as intensively occupied as their counterparts on the north of the river.

Potential sites from aerial photography

In reviewing these cropmark sites it can be seen that some are simple circular monuments, many possibly small ring-ditch (barrow?) monuments, and some perhaps ringforts. But the majority are of enclosures with additional elements, sometimes superimposed one on the other. These in fact are not unlike the complexes seen in Ninch (McConway 2002, 2010), or Colp West (Murphy 2011). These

kinds of cropmarks can be seen south of the River Nanny as in Sarsfieldstown (ME028-092--) where ring ditches lie north of a series of other possible enclosures and field systems.



Plate 6: Aerial view of ME028-092- , Sarsfieldstown, Co. Meath showing potential complex

Further north in Corballis a ring-ditch appears to sit within an enclosure, but there are distinct traces of other features to east and west. These intensely settled or utilised areas are a feature of the general area. It is the vagaries of soil and weather conditions, coupled with the capacity of someone to capture the shot that renders them visible.



Plate 7: aerial shot of ME028-069001-2, note the features to east and west

Close to the mound in Sonairte and lying just to the north-west are another set of cropmarks suggesting activity along the ridge further north from the site.



Plate 8: ME028-052, centre, with further activity visible to east and west

It has been suggested in a note attached to this image but attributed to the wrong record (see Appendix 1) that there may be a souterrain in this complex.

Recorded finds, see also Appendix 6

As access to the NMI files was not possible because of Covid 19 restrictions only those listed on the Heritage Maps were noted. The fragment of blue glass bracelet (?) found by Mr. Kieran Campbell at the site in Sonairte was added to this list. The finds range in date from the early bronze age to the high medieval period. However, it is clear from the excavations that have taken place that objects such as hiberno-norse pins, anglo-saxon pins, cinerary urns, beaker pottery, stone axeheads and a host of other objects have been uncovered.

Sonairte, ME028-004—in context

It is obvious that the coastal/estuarine zone within which this site sits is extremely well settled over a long period of time. It is likely that the peak pre-modern population was in the early Medieval period and that both sides of the river were equally heavily occupied. What does this say about the site in question? The nature of the site is not understood. Its location, commanding the high ground above the river is unlike anything else except its nearest neighbour, the burial mound ME028-006---. While reference to location along a ridge or locally higher ground is frequent in the excavation reports cited, this usually means an elevation of a metre or so.

Geophysics in the field adjacent to the east has tantalisingly hinted at activity, both settlement and later agricultural features superimposed on the potentially earlier sites. Given the nature of the archaeology in the vicinity, to find more settlement, or more likely burial monuments on this ridge and sloping land, south-facing over the river, is not surprising.

However, it would require invasive testing to establish whether there is anything to be found there.

Recommendations

The monument is badly overgrown with trees, scrub and briars. It would be advisable to cut back as much of this as possible over time, without pulling up roots or otherwise disturbing the soil. Ideally, sheep or goats could graze the site to keep the cleared areas clear. When this has been done a detailed survey of the site, both measured and photographic could be carried out, and perhaps geophysics as well, in its immediate vicinity.

It would be very useful to carry out targeted testing of the monument and the adjacent field.

References and Consultations

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SMR No.	Class	Townland	NMS Files	Excavations.ie or Heritage Maps	Publication	Licence Holder
Key	Upstanding	Excavated	Cropmark			
ME028-002----	Castle - tower house	BALLYGARTH	Extracts from J.G. Simms, 'Cromwell at Drogheda, 1649' in <i>The Irish Sword</i> XI (45), 212 - 221 and A. Rowan and C. Casey, <i>The Buildings of Ireland: North Leinster</i> , 1993.	Situated on the S bank of the meandering Nanny Water c. 100m SW of a loop in the river, and c. 2km from where it enters the Irish Sea. According to the Civil Survey (1654-6) Lord Netterville of Ballygarth owned 348 acres at Ballygarth and Corballis in 1640, amounting to the whole parish, and the property included 'one castle, a house and some cabins' (Simington 1940, 5). Following the Restoration in 1660 it became the property of the Pepper family who retained it into the late twentieth century (Casey and Rowan 1993, 323). This is a rectangular three-storey tower house, modernised probably in the mid-nineteenth century, and still occupied. It has projecting rectangular towers with newel stairs at the E and W angles. A Georgian wing was built to the NE in 1782 and a narrow entrance block inserted to connect the two in the early nineteenth century. The above description is derived from the published 'Archaeological Inventory of County Meath' (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1987). In certain instances the entries have been revised and updated in the light of recent research. Compiled by: Michael Moore Date of revision: 28 June 2016	Archaeological Inventory of Co. Meath, (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1987).	
ME028-003----	Church	BALLYGARTH	M. Ward, RMAHS 4, 1968, 79 - 80 C.C. Ellison, RMAHS 4, 1971, 34.	Situated on a slight rise in the valley of the W-E River Nanny, with the meandering stream c. 130m to the N. A church at Ballygarth is not listed in the Ecclesiastical taxation (1302-06) of Pope Nicholas IV (Cal. doc. Ire. 5, 252-4), but Ussher (1622) describes the church and chancel as indifferently repaired (Erlington 1847-64, 1, lxiii). The parish church of Ballygarth was virtually a manorial church as the whole parish amounting to 348 acres and only two townlands was owned by Lord Netterville of Ballygarth in 1640 (Simington 1940, 5). The church is marked on the Down Survey (1656-8) map of Co. Meath.	Archaeological Inventory of Co. Meath, (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1987).	
ME028-003001-	Graveyard	BALLYGARTH	As above		Archaeological Inventory of Co. Meath, (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1987).	
ME028-003002-	Armorial plaque	BALLYGARTH	As above		Archaeological Inventory of Co. Meath, (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1987).	

SMR No.	Class	Townland	NMS Files	Excavations.ie or Heritage Maps	Publication	Licence Holder
Key	Upstanding	Excavated	Cropmark			
ME028-067----	Battlefield	BALLYGARTH, DALYSTOWN, DIMANISTOWN EAST, DIMANISTOWN WEST, JULIANSTOWN WEST, SMITHSTOWN (Duleek Lower By.)	No information	No information		
ME021-010001-	Cist	BETAGHSTOWN (Duleek Lower By.)	Site excavated by Eamonn Kelly. Cist with food vessel and later cemetery attached.	The following description is derived from the published 'Archaeological Inventory of County Meath' (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1987). In certain instances the entries have been revised and updated in the light of recent research. Date of upload/revision: 10 July 2007 Eighteen burials, the majority placed in slab-lined graves, recovered in excavation by E.P Kelly during 1980. Some burials were crouched in pits and all appear to be Iron Age in date. Associated with mound and cist (ME021-010001-).	Excavations.ie 1977-79:0056	Eamonn Kelly, no licence issued
ME021-010002-	Burial	BETAGHSTOWN (Duleek Lower By.)	Lying immediately to east of the cist with food vessel	In October 1979, a cemetery, which lay immediately to the east of a Bronze Age cist excavated in 1977, was discovered by the landowner while erecting a pole in his garden. Fifteen graves were located. Two burials were in long stone cists and two were crouched pit burials. The remaining interments were extended inhumations either unprotected or partly protected by a lining of stones. One crouched burial was accompanied by two penannular brooches and an iron belt buckle. A stone axe pendant was suspended from the neck and a bronze plate, perforated at each end, seems to have served as a hair ornament. Remains of two types of textile and of a hair net were present in the grave. The burial was overlain by a long cist. An iron object, perhaps a strap end, was found in an unprotected extended grave containing the skeleton of a child. The grave group probably dates to between the 2nd and 5th centuries AD	Excavations.ie 1977-79:0057	Eamonn Kelly, no licence issued
ME021-014----	Burial	BETAGHSTOWN (Duleek Lower By.)	Report on location of burials made by Kieran Campbell to NMS, on foot of information from a local man.	Site of excavation report 98E0072.	Excavations.ie 1998:503	James Eogan 98E0072

SMR No.	Class	Townland	NMS Files	Excavations.ie or Heritage Maps	Publication	Licence Holder
Key	Upstanding	Excavated	Cropmark			
ME021-019----	Burial	BETAGHSTOWN (Duleek Lower By.)		2001:945. 1995 OSAP appears to show a circular outline around burial as marked on map, Excavations.ie gives different coordinates, F.O'Carroll, August 2021	Excavations.ie 2001:945	Linda Clarke 01E1170
ME028-008----	Cist	BRIARLEAS	Extract from published account by Michael Ward, (RMAHS 1968, 86).	The following description is derived from the published 'Archaeological Inventory of County Meath' (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1987). July 2007 Discovered in 1946 about 1m below sod on a ridge. Cist and pottery vessel destroyed.	Archaeological Inventory of Co. Meath, (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1987).	
ME028-053----	Ring-ditch	BRIARLEAS	Extract from aerial survey 1995 on file.	An aerial photograph (OSAP, 1995) shows the cropmark of a ring-ditch (diam. c. 10m). (Pers com. Colin Byrne). Date of upload: 15 September, 2017		
ME028-005----	Enclosure	CORBALLIS (Duleek Upper By.)	Situated on the NW slope of a slight hill, the site is defined by a slight depression in the ground.	The following description is derived from the published 'Archaeological Inventory of County Meath' (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1987). Date of upload/revision: 10 July 2007 Oval ploughed-out area defined by slight fosse (dims. 30m N-S, 22m E-W). Possibly a landscape feature.		
ME028-054----	Enclosure	CORBALLIS (Duleek Upper By.)	An aerial photograph (OSAP, 1995) shows the cropmark of a circular enclosure (diam. c. 25m) defined by a single fosse feature. (Pers com. Colin Byrne).			
ME028-064----	Ritual site - holy well	CORBALLIS (Duleek Upper By.)	Not noted on 1st or 2nd Edition maps as a well, marked as a spring.	A natural spring known as 'Colmille's well' that runs out of a rocky crevice in the south bank of the river Nanny. The bank at this point is revetted by a stone masonry wall. There is evidence for veneration with coins placed in the hollow and it is reputed to cure sore eyes (pers. comm. Colin Byrne) Compiled by: Claire Breen Date of upload: 10 December 2013		
ME028-069----	Ringfort - rath	CORBALLIS (Duleek Upper By.)	Date of upload: 15 September, 2017 Amended: 7 February 2020	Situated on a WNW-ESE section of a low ridge on land that was once part of the demesne of Corballis House, it was first identified on an oblique aerial photograph (GB91.ED.28). This is an oval enclosure (dims c. 40m WNW-ESE; c. 30m NNE-SSW) defined by a narrow fosse which widens (max. Wth c. 1m) around the entrance gap (Wth c. 3m) at ESE. It is visible on Apple Maps which utilises a survey conducted by Bluesky International during June 2018. An internal enclosure (int. diam. c. 6m) is inside the fosse at WNW is backing onto it, and there is a small ring-ditch (ME069001-) c. 10m outside the enclosure to the NW. See the attached view from Apple Maps		

Gazeteer of Recorded Sites and Monuments within the Zone of Interest

SMR No.	Class	Townland	NMS Files	Excavations.ie or Heritage Maps	Publication	Licence Holder
Key	Upstanding	Excavated	Cropmark			
ME028-069001-	Ring-ditch	CORBALLIS (Duleek Upper By.)	Compiled by: Michael Moore Date of upload: 7 February 2020	Situated on a WNW-ESE section of a low ridge and c. 10m NW of rath (ME028-069----) on land that was once part of the demesne of Corbally House. A small circular feature (diam. c. 6m) defined by a slight fosse SE-W-NW is visible only on Apple Maps which utilises a survey conducted by Bluesky International during June 2018. See the attached enhanced view from Apple Maps	https://webservices.archaeology.ie/arcgis/rest/services/NM/NationalMonuments/MapServer/0/881697/attachments/666264	
ME028-070----	Embanked enclosure	CORBALLIS (Duleek Upper By.)	Compiled by Geraldine Stout Date of upload: 15 March 2012	This possible embanked enclosure was identified on Lidar cover (pers comm. Steve Davis, UCD). Located on a gradual S-facing slope under tillage. A natural ridge forms the N boundary of the monument and a curving stream the S. Extensive views of the sea to the E. There is no upstanding evidence for the monument with the possible exception of the S field boundary. It is wider in the section that may correspond to the monument and comprises an inner bank (Wth 2.8m; H 0.5m); berm (Wth 5.8m) and outer bank (Wth 3.7m; H 1m) which runs parallel to the stream.		
ME028-094----	Ringfort - rath	CORBALLIS (Duleek Upper By.)	Compiled by: Michael Moore Date of upload: 7 February 2020	Situated on a rise in a low-lying landscape in the valley of the River Nanny, with the stream c. 200m to the NW at the closest point. It is on land that was once part of the demesne of Corballis House. The cropmark of a subcircular enclosure (dims c. 37m E-W; c. 27m N-S) defined by a single narrow fosse NNE-S-W is visible only on Apple Maps which utilises a survey conducted by Bluesky International during June 2018. The fosse is most massive (Wth c. 2m) around the entrance (Wth c. 3m) at ESE. It was first reported by Anthony Murphy. See the attached enhanced view from Apple Maps	https://webservices.archaeology.ie/arcgis/rest/services/NM/NationalMonuments/MapServer/0/881705/attachments/667464	
ME028-095----	Ring-ditch	CORBALLIS (Duleek Upper By.)	Compiled by: Michael Moore Date of upload: 7 February 2020	Situated on an ENE-WSW ridge on land that was once part of the demesne of Corballis House. The cropmark of a circular enclosure (int. diam. c. 5m) defined by a continuous fosse (Wth c. 1m) is visible only on Apple Maps which utilises a survey conducted by Bluesky International during June 2018. It was first reported by Anthony Murphy. See the attached enhanced aerial view from Apple Maps	https://webservices.archaeology.ie/arcgis/rest/services/NM/NationalMonuments/MapServer/0/881706/attachments/667860	

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ME028-096001-	Ring-ditch	CORBALLIS (Duleek Upper By.)	Compiled by: Michael Moore Date of upload: 7 February 2020	Two small ring-ditches are located on a broad undulating E-W ridge that might once have been part of the demesne of Corballis House. They are visible only on Apple Maps which utilises a survey conducted by Bluesky International during June 2018. This is a circular area (diam. c. 4m) defined by a continuous fosse, which is bisected by the cropmark of a N-S field drain. Ring-ditch (ME028-096002-) is c. 40m to the E. It was first reported by Anthony Murphy. See the attached enhanced aerial view from Apple Maps	https://webservices.archaeology.ie/arcgis/rest/services/NM/NationalMonuments/MapServer/0/881304/attachments/667465	
ME028-096002-	Ring-ditch	CORBALLIS (Duleek Upper By.)	Compiled by Michael Moore. Date of upload: 7th February 2020	Two ring-ditches are located on a broad undulating E-W ridge that might once have been part of the demesne of Corballis House. They are visible only on Apple Maps which utilises a survey conducted by Bluesky International during June 2018. This is a circular area (diam. c. 4m) defined by a continuous fosse. The ring-ditch (ME028-096001-) is c. 40m to the W. See the attached enhanced view (right) from Apple Maps	https://webservices.archaeology.ie/arcgis/rest/services/NM/NationalMonuments/MapServer/0/881305/attachments/667862	
ME028-097001-	Enclosure	CORBALLIS (Duleek Upper By.)	Compiled by: Michael Moore Date of upload: 7 February 2020	Located on a rise in a gently undulating landscape that might once have been part of the demesne of Corballis House. The cropmark of a subrectangular enclosure (dims c. 32m E-W; 25m plus N-S) with slightly rounded corners defined by single fosses (max. Wth c. 2m) is visible on Apple Maps which utilises a survey conducted by Bluesky International during June 2018. The ring-ditch (ME028-087002-) is at the centre. The ring-ditch (ME028-087003-) is c. 35m to the NW and ring-ditch (ME028-076001-) is c. 140m to the E. It was first reported by Anthony Murphy, and the enclosure is also visible on the OSI images (1995). See the attached enhanced aerial view from Apple Maps	https://webservices.archaeology.ie/arcgis/rest/services/NM/NationalMonuments/MapServer/0/881306/attachments/667466	

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ME028-097002-	Ring-ditch	CORBALLIS (Duleek Upper By.)	Compiled by: Michael Moore Date of upload: 7 February 2020	Located on a rise in a gently undulating landscape that might once have been part of the demesne of Corballis House. The cropmark of an irregularly circular feature (diam. c. 8m) defined by a slight fosse or trench with an entrance (Wth c. 2m) at SE is visible only on Apple Maps which utilises a survey conducted by Bluesky International during June 2018. It is within the subrectangular enclosure (ME028-087001-), and was first reported by Anthony Murphy. See the attached enhanced aerial view from Apple Maps	https://webservices.archaeology.ie/arcgis/rest/services/NM/NationalMonuments/MapServer/0/881307/attachments/667469	
ME028-097003-	Ring-ditch	CORBALLIS (Duleek Upper By.)	Compiled by: Michael Moore Date of upload: 7 February 2020	Located on a slight rise in a gently undulating landscape that might once have been part of the demesne of Corballis House. The cropmark of a small circular feature (diam. c. 2m) defined by a single slight but continuous fosse or trench is visible only on Apple Maps which utilises a survey conducted by Bluesky International during June 2018. It is c. 35m NW of the rectangular enclosure (ME028-087001-), and was first reported by Anthony Murphy.		
ME021-025----	Barrow - ring-barrow	DONACARNEY GREAT	Date of upload: 15 September 2017	A small circular grass-covered feature (ext. diam. c. 12m) defined by a slight earthen bank is visible on Google Earth (21/11/2005). The barrow (ME021-026----) is c. 60m to the SE. Multi-period archaeological complex discovered through test excavations. See Excavations.ie.	Excavations, 2008:951; 2009:641	Melanie McQuade, 08E0912
ME021-026----	Barrow - ring-barrow	DONACARNEY GREAT	Date of upload: 15/09/2017	A small circular grass-covered feature (ext. diam. c. 15m) defined by a slight earthen bank is visible on Google Earth (21/11/2005). The barrow (ME021-025----) is c. 60m to the NW. Multi-period archaeological complex discovered through test excavations. See Excavations.ie	Excavations, 2008:951; 2009:641	Melanie McQuade, 08E0912

SMR No.	Class	Townland	NMS Files	Excavations.ie or Heritage Maps	Publication	Licence Holder
Key	Upstanding	Excavated	Cropmark			
ME021-029----	Burial ground	DONACARNEY GREAT	Reported by Kieran Campbell in 2016 and again in 2018. Date of upload 19/0/2018	Situated on a slight rise in a fairly level landscape. Archaeological testing (07E0622) of an extensive area covering about 23 acres (c. 9 ha) NE of the R150 Bettystown to Donacarney road identified an area of intensive activity (Duffy 2010) where a number of linear features occurred (L up to 12m). They run either NE-SW or NW-SE, although some spreads of grey silty clays with shell, animal bone and charcoal inclusions that could be quite deep (1m) were also noted as well as drains. The burial of an adult male aged c. 25-35 in a supine position oriented W-E but mixed with the disarticulated bones of a female aged 17-25 were recovered at the E edge of this area. It produced a calibrated C14 date of AD 575-670. More possible grave-cuts were noted and it may be at the edge of an early medieval burial ground. Three skulls were recovered c. 60m to the WSW of the male burial. (Rathbone, S. and O'Reilly 2008; Rathbone 2010)	Excavations, 2007:1301; 06E0413. 2007:1302. 06E0413ext. 2007:1303, 07E0622. 2019:606, 19E0077.	C.Duffy, 06E0413; S. Rathbone, 06E0413ext, 07E0622; N. Garahy, 19E0077; A. Giacometti, 19E0077ext

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MEO21-030----	Habitation site	DONACARNEY GREAT	Reported by Kieran Campbell in 2016 and again in 2018. Compiled by: Michael Moore Date of upload: 19 July 2018	<p>Located on a slight rise in a fairly level landscape. Archaeological testing (06E0413) on an area of about 15 acres (c. 6 ha) SW of the R150 Bettystown to Donacarney road identified a number of features consisting mostly of linear trenches or spreads of silty clays with bone inclusions. There was an L-shaped trench (L 7.2m; 2.3m; Wth 0.7m;) just NE of a curved trench (Wth 1m; D 0.25m) open to the SW. A group of features in a concentrated area (dims c. 60m x 45m) was resolved into eight refuse pits and two, or possibly three, corn-drying kilns. The subrectangular refuse pits (dims 1.67m x 1.4m; D 0.55m to 4.75m x 4.65m; D 0.6m) contained large quantities of animal bone, some burnt in roasting. The faunal assemblage was dominated by cattle, followed by sheep and pig, and the bones represented large animals which were probably slaughtered for immediate consumption. Dog and cat were also present, perhaps as scavengers. Two subrectangular pits (dims 2.4m N-S; 1.2m E-W; D 0.4m: dims 2.7m N-S; 2.3m E-W; D 0.2-0.4m), which from their fills and evidence of oxidisation of the subsoil, are likely to have been for cereal drying were also recorded in this area. Barley, wheat and oats, some of it charred, was recovered close to them, and they are likely to be contemporary with the other pits. Five curvilinear features were also recorded which may have been related to the kilns. A sample of animal bone produced a calibrated C14 determination of AD 320-520 for this open habitation, which may have served a larger settlement in the vicinity.</p>	Excavations, 2007:1301; 06E0413. 2007:1302. 06E0413ext. 2007:1303, 07E0622. 2019:606, 19E0077.	C.Duffy, 06E0413; S. Rathbone, 06E0413ext, 07E0622; N. Garahy, 19E0077; A. Giacometti, 19E0077ext

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ME028-063----	Ritual site - holy well	IRISHTOWN (Duleek Upper By., Moorechurch Par.)	Record entered by Colin Byrne, who places the well in Mosney townland and notes that it lies in an extremely overgrown area of beach below the railway line and is in close proximity to two yew trees. The mouth of the well is defined by a roughly circular setting of stone slabs and it runs east to the sea. Date of upload, 28-11-2008	Description: Located on the foreshore above high water mark and just E of the railway embankment. The well is dedicated to St. Patrick and had a pattern from Julianstown in the nineteenth century (Herity 2001, 52) until 1912 when the last one was held (French 2011, 51). There is a folk tale that St Benignus was baptised by St. Patrick at this well and promptly died (IFC: vol. 685, 193, 262). The well is a natural spring (diam. c. 3m) with a surround of stone slabs and it is situated between two bushes, but there is no evidence of veneration.	1. Herity, M. (ed.) 2001 Ordnance Survey Letters: Meath. Dublin. Four Masters Press; 2. IFC Schools' MSS: Irish Folklore Commission Schools' Manuscripts. Department of Folklore. University College, Dublin. 3. French, N. 2012 Meath Holy Wells. Meath Heritage Centre	
ME028-100----	Ring-ditch	IRISHTOWN (Duleek Upper By., Moorechurch Par.)	Compiled by: Michael Moore Date of upload: 7 February 2020. The monument is incorrectly marked on the Historic Environment Viewer. Correct co-ordinates are E716888 N769212. This feature, and ones adjoining and to the west, not recorded, are visible on the 1995 OSAP. F. O'Carroll, August 2021	Located on a level landscape. The cropmark of a circular enclosure (diam. c. 14) defined by single fosse is visible only on Apple Maps which utilises a survey conducted by Bluesky International during June 2018. The fosse is clearly visible E-S-W but its entire circuit can be traced. It was first reported by Noel Meehan. See the attached enhanced aerial view from Apple Maps	https://webservices.archaeology.ie/arcgis/rest/services/NationalMonuments/MapServer/0/882498/attachments/667468	
ME028-098----	Ringfort - rath	JULIANSTOWN EAST	Compiled by: Michael Moore Date of upload: 7 February 2020. This monument is visible on the 1995 OSAP and there are indications of other features between it and ME028-052, Ninch which lies east of it (see below), F. O'Carroll August 2021	Situated on what might be a rise in a fairly level landscape. The cropmark of a circular enclosure (int. diam. c. 43m N-S; c. 40m E-W) defined by a fosse (Wth c. 3m) is visible only on Apple Maps which utilises a survey conducted by Bluesky International during June 2018. There is an entrance gap (Wth c. 6m) at SE, and much of the interior has been quarried. It is also faintly visible on OSI images (1995) and Google Earth (14/07/2018), and was first reported by Anthony Murphy. See the attached enhanced aerial view from Apple Maps.	https://webservices.archaeology.ie/arcgis/rest/services/NationalMonuments/MapServer/0/882497/attachments/667861	

SMR No.	Class	Townland	NMS Files	Excavations.ie or Heritage Maps	Publication	Licence Holder
Key	Upstanding	Excavated	Cropmark			
ME028-001----	Church	JULIANSTOWN WEST	<p>Description: Situated on a rise at the S edge of a plateau with the N edge of the valley of the W-E Nanny Water c. 130m to the S and the stream is c. 450m to the S. References date at least from 1306 and the names of some of the clergy are known (Ward 1967, 65-6). The church of Nany is listed in the ecclesiastical taxation (1302-06) of Pope Nicholas IV (Cal. doc. Ire. 5, 253). Ussher (1622) describes the church and chancel of Nanny or Julianstowne as being indifferently repaired (Erlington 1847-64, 1, lxiv). Dopping's Visitation Book (1682-5) describes the church of the Blessed Virgin at Julianstown as in good repair with a font, a pulpit and seats, although the chancel was roofless (Ellison 1971, 35-6). At that time there was glass in the windows, slates on the roof, and the graveyard was enclosed. The present Church of Ireland church was built in 1770 (Lewis 1837, 2, 32-3) and is in a subrectangular graveyard (dims c. 50-60m NNW-SSE; c. 45-55m ENE-WSW) defined by masonry walls, although in the 19th century the graveyard was D-shaped (dim c. 95m NE-SW), extending further to the SW. Compiled by: Michael Moore</p> <p>Date of upload/revision: 18 August, 2014</p>		<p>1. Ward, M. 1967 The parish of Julianstown. <i>Riocht na Míidhe</i>, 4, 1, 61-7. 2. Cal. doc. Ire. - Calendar of documents relating to Ireland 1171-1307, ed. H.S. Sweetman (5 vols., London, 1875-86). 3. Erlington, C. R. (ed.) 1847-64 The whole works of the most Reverend James Ussher. 17 vols. Hodges and Smith, Dublin</p> <p>4. Harbison, P. 1992 The high crosses of Ireland: an iconographical and photographic survey, 3 vols. Dublin. Royal Irish Academy. Bonn. Dr. Rudolf Habelt GMBH. 5. Ellison, Rev. C. C. 1971-5 Bishop Dopping's Visitation Book 1682-5, <i>Riocht na Míidhe</i>, 5, 1, 28-39; 5, 2, 3-13; 5, 3, 3-11; 5, 4, 98-103; 6, 1, 3-13.</p> <p>6. Lewis, S. 1837 A topographical dictionary of Ireland, 2 vols. London. Lewis and Co.</p>	
ME028-001001-	Font	JULIANSTOWN WEST	<p>There is no evidence of the medieval church, but a font, of uncertain authenticity, is in the present church (Roe 1968, 121). It is a shallow bowl (ext. diam. 0.66m; int. diam. 0.54m; D 0.14m) with the drain hole filled in. It is standing on a low, expanding foot (diam. of base 0.94m; H 8cm).</p>		<p>7. Roe, H.M. 1968 Medieval fonts of Meath. Meath Archaeological and Historical Society.</p>	

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ME028-001002-	Tomb - chest tomb (present location)	JULIANSTOWN WEST	<p>Description: Lining the E side of the path up to the door is the 'Apostle Stone', which is the limestone surround of a chest-tomb in three sections (total L 3.9m; H 0.6m). It is crudely executed and unfinished, probably dating from the 17th century. The head of each saint is surrounded by a cowl of uncut stone, indicating the unfinished state of the carving. All were to be represented as priests or monks with the two ends of girdles almost reaching the ground at the front of the pleated habits. All were bearded, but only three of the beards are pointed and only four are finished. Some saints can be identified (numbered from the left), but at least five are represented with open books floating above and sometimes below their hands, merely indicating their apostolic mission. Amongst those who can be identified is Thomas (1) with a set-square to represent the church he is said to have built in India with his own hands. St Peter (7) has a key almost as big as himself, Andrew (8) has a boat-hook (one of his symbols), and James (9) has a small satchel like a hand-bag, representing pilgrims as he is associated with the pilgrimage to Compostella in Spain. Saint No 5 is carrying weighing scales, which would indicate St Michael, who might be an Archangel but is not an Apostle. The stone is said to have come originally from Ballylehane castle, Co. Laois (LA025-023----) and is associated with the Hovenden and ffolliot families.</p>		<p>https://maps.archaeology.ie/HistoricEnvironment/#:~:text=150212 Julianstown West 001.jpg</p>	

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ME028-001003-	Cross - High cross (present location)	JULIANSTOWN WEST	Description: The head of a 10th century sandstone high cross (H 0.64m; Wth 0.62m; T 0.20m) was excavated from the graveyard of the Church of Ireland church at Colp (ME021-012004-) by K. Campbell, and it is now displayed in the porch of St Mary's Church of Ireland church at Julianstown. There is a roll-moulding on the edge of the cross-shaft and arms, with a narrower moulding inside it. There is a mortise-hole on top. At the centre of the head is a slightly domed boss, surrounded by two circular ribs. The arms are decorated with interlace. The shaft bears an irregular angular interlace. On the W face the centre is occupied by a crucified Christ clad in a short garment. Flanking Him are Stephaton and Longinus. Beneath each of Christ's feet there is a spiral, out of which two serpents unroll themselves (Harbison, P. 1992, 1, 59-60).		1. Harbison, P. 1992 The high crosses of Ireland: an iconographical and photographic survey, 3 vols. Dublin. Royal Irish Academy. Bonn. Dr. Rudolf Habelt GMBH. https://maps.archaeology.ie/HistoricEnvironment/#:~:text=150212_Julianstown_West_005.jpg	
ME028-001004-	Graveyard	JULIANSTOWN WEST	Description: The site of the medieval parish church of Julianstown (ME028-001-----) is in a subrectangular graveyard (dims c. 50-60m NNW-SSE; c. 45-55m ENE-WSW) defined by masonry walls, although in the 19th century the graveyard was D-shaped (dim c. 95m NE-SW), extending further to the SW.			
ME028-073----	Burial ground	KEENOGE (Duleek Upper By., Moorechurch Par.)	In 1931 a laneway was extended by the Land Commission. During the extending of the road a prehistoric burial of a child buried face down was discovered. The existing Land Commission laneway was widened and extended as far as Mosney and opened in 1951. During the widening of the existing laneway two prehistoric adult burials and a gold token were uncovered at the same location where the child burial had been found twenty years earlier. Full Report of finding available in the National Museum in Kildare Street. This burial was not included in the NMI publication <i>Breaking Ground, Finding Graves</i> .	These burials are located on the junction between the townlands of Keenoge and Briarleas. F. O'Carroll, August 2021.		

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ME021-013----	Ritual site - holy well	MINISTOWN	St. Columbkille's Well: This well, marked on enclosed map, is located in the townland of Ministown. It is mentioned in a deed of 1290 (see J. Mills and M. J. McEnery (eds) Calendar of the Gormanston Register, RSAI 1916, 35). Pers Comm Kieran Campbell	Description: Situated on a fairly level landscape, and at the N edge of rath (ME021-013001-). St Columbkille's Well is marked only on the 1908 edition of the OS 6-inch map where it is depicted with a tree beside it, but it had been closed and a pumphouse erected over it before 1987 (French 2012, 18). In the late 1930s it was known to have had an ash tree with no leaves, and a stone wall had been built around it within living memory. The well had a cure for ague or fever, and some cures were known from drinking the water. The pattern was held on the second Sunday in August when decades of the Rosary were said while the well was circumambulated, but it had been discontinued for many years before the 1930s. (IFC: Schools' Collection vol. 0682, 164)	1. IFC Schools' MSS: Irish Folklore Commission Schools' Manuscripts. Department of Folklore. University College, Dublin. 2. French, N. 2012 Meath Holy Wells. Meath Heritage Centre	
ME021-013001-	Ringfort - rath	MINISTOWN	Recent report 2018	Located on a fairly level landscape. The cropmark of a subcircular enclosure (ext. diam. c. 45m NW-SE) defined by a fosse feature E-S-NW is visible on Google Earth (06/06/2018; 27/06/2019). The perimeter is less certain NW-E and no entrance feature is visible. It is also faintly visible on Digital Globe (c. 2013) where three ditch features (int. diam. c. 25m) can be seen, and the W arc of a fosse cuts across the E part of the interior. The holy well (ME021-013----) is at the NE edge of the rath. It was first reported by Tom Condit. Compiled by: Michael Moore Date of upload: 10 October 2019. FO'C: visible on 1995 OSAP as are adjacent circular overlapping features		
ME021-031----	Ringfort - rath	MINISTOWN	Recent report 2018;	Located on a fairly level landscape. The cropmark of a circular enclosure (diam. c. 25m) defined by a fosse feature S-W-NE is visible on Google Earth (06/06/2018). There is an entrance gap (Wth c. 3m) at N and the fosse extends NNE (visible L c. 20m) from the W side of this gap. An outer fosse, separated from the inner SW-N by the lighter colouring of the crop on the site of an earthen bank, is also present. It was first reported by Tom Condit. Compiled by: Michael Moore Date of upload: 10 October 2019		

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ME021-032----	Enclosure	MINISTOWN	Recent report 2018;	Situated on a fairly level landscape. The faint cropmark of a subcircular enclosure (int. dims c. 40m E-W; c. 35m N-S) defined by a slight and uncertain fosse is visible only on Apple Maps, which utilises a survey conducted by Blue Sky International during June 2018. The fosse has many interruptions but a gap (Wth c. 8m) at E could be an original entrance. It was first reported by Anthony Murphy. See the attached enhanced view from Apple Maps Compiled by: Michael Moore Date of upload: 31 January 2020	https://www.heritagemaps.ie/ArcGISProxyApp/services/ArcGISPr oxy.ashx?	
ME028-010----	Church	MOORECHURCH	Description: According to the Dopping (1682-5) and Royal (1693) Visitations the church of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Mora had been unrepaired since 1641 and was not enclosed (Ellison 1971, 34). This is a divided nave (int. dims 15.2m E-W; c. 8m N-S) and chancel (int. dims 7.7m E-W; 6.05m N-S) church (total L c. 26m), but the W wall and the N wall of the nave do not survive and the other walls are reduced and overgrown. There is a W porch (int. Wth 1.4m; L 3.3m) and an E porch (Wth 1.8m; L 2.12m) on the S wall of the nave with the area between them added to the nave as an aisle. The pointed chancel arch (Wth 5.03m) survives complete. A sacristy (int. dims 3.95m N-S; 3.05m E-W) of two stories was added to the N side of the chancel, which necessitated the closing of the E window on the N chancel wall. The sacristy is entered by a pointed doorway (Wth 0.7m; H 1.35m) from the chancel, but no other features of the chancel survive apart from corbels in the E and W walls for the first floor and a small rectangular window in the N wall at the first floor.		Cal. doc. Ire. - Calendar of documents relating to Ireland 1171-1307, ed. H.S. Sweetman (5 vols., London, 1875-86). Ellison, Rev. C. C. 1971-5 Bishop Dopping's Visitation Book 1682-5, Ríocht na Mídhe, 5, 1, 28-39; 5, 2, 3-13; 5, 3, 3-11; 5, 4, 98-103; 6, 1, 3-13.	
ME028-010001-	Graveyard	MOORECHURCH	Description: The parish church of Moorechurch (ME028-010----) is within a rectangular graveyard (dims c. 110m E-W; c. 60-70m N-S) defined by earthen banks and hedges on every side except the E where a masonry wall borders a NNE-SSW public road. It is located on a level landscape.		Erlington, C. R. (ed.) 1847-64 The whole works of the most Reverend James Ussher. 17 vols. Hodges and Smith, Dublin	

SMR No.	Class	Townland	NMS Files	Excavations.ie or Heritage Maps	Publication	Licence Holder
Key	Upstanding	Excavated	Cropmark			
ME028-010002-	Wall monument	MOORECHURCH	Description: The pointed chancel arch of Moorechurch parish church (ME028-010----) survives complete and has a plaque (dims 0.69m x 0. 31m) commemorating Dame Janet Sarsfield, dowager of Dunsany, who died in 1597 and is buried in the church inserted on the N pier (Du Noyer 1896, 325; FitzGerald 1904, 124). The plaque, which had been lying loose in the church (Cogan 1862-70, 2, 254) has Roman lettering in relief and reads: HERE INTER LIETHE / THE BODY OF DAME IE / NET SARSFELD LADY / DOWAGER OF DONSANY / WHO DYED THE XXII OF / FEBRUARY AN. DN. 1597.		Cogan, Rev. A. 1862-70 Ecclesiastical history of the diocese of Meath: ancient and modern. (3 vols) Dublin: John Fowler, Joseph Dollard. Du Noyer, G.V. 1896-7 Moorechurch old church, near Julianstown. Journal of the Association for the Preservation of the Memorials of the Dead, Ireland. 3, 325. FitzGerald, Lord W. 1904 Moorechurch churchyard. Journal of the Association for the Preservation of the Memorials of the Dead, Ireland. 6, 124. 4. 461.	
ME028-010003-	Graveslab	MOORECHURCH	Description: A graveslab of Thomas Buckley dated 1617 that was in the chancel of Moorchurch parish church (ME028-010----) cannot be identified. It is described (Dix 1898-1900, 461) as being in two pieces and having a figure of a man in 'Elizabethan costume' at the centre and a fragmentary inscription around three sides that reads: HERE LIETH THE BODIE OF / THOMAS BUCKELY, GENT, WHO DI-- / --OCTOBER, 1617.		Dix, E. R. 1899-1900 Moorechurch Parish. Journal of the Association for the Preservation of the Memorials of the Dead, Ireland. 4 460-2.	
ME028-011001-	Ring-ditch	MOORECHURCH	The following description is derived from the published 'Archaeological Inventory of County Meath' (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1987). In certain instances the entries have been revised and updated in the light of recent research. Date of upload/revision: 10 July 2007	Two circular cropmarks (diam. c. 25m) on aerial photograph (CUCAP BDS 61).		
ME028-011002-	Ring-ditch	MOORECHURCH		Two circular cropmarks (diam. c. 25m) on aerial photograph (CUCAP BDS 61).		
ME028-009----	Pit-burial	MOSNEY	Burial probably crouched, teeth showed signs of a lot of wear.	In 1951 human remains were discovered during quarrying operations at a gravel pit in a copse to the N of Mosney House. There was no evidence of structural stones around the burial and no associated finds	Cahill & Sikora 2011, 2011, vol 2, 405-6.	

Gazeteer of Recorded Sites and Monuments within the Zone of Interest

SMR No.	Class	Townland	NMS Files	Excavations.ie or Heritage Maps	Publication	Licence Holder
Key	Upstanding	Excavated	Cropmark			
ME028-012001-	Habitation site	MOSNEY	Large quantities of medieval pottery, perhaps indicating site of a habitation, discovered in building church at Mosney. (RMAHS 1965, 255; JRSAI 1967, 21-3) NMI file.		RMAHS 1965, 255; JRSAI 1967, 21-3; Archaeological Inventory of County Meath' (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1987)	
ME028-012002-	Armorial plaque (present location)	MOSNEY	Description: A stone with an armorial crest supported by two angels that came from the church at Irishtown (ME028-017----) is built into a wall of Mosney House (Ward 1965, 255). It bears the arms of Barnwall with a family represented by a toothed cross, and is probably 16th century in date. A decorated spandrel (ME028-012003-) is also in the wall.		Ward, M. 1965 Moymurthy. Ríocht na Mídhe, 3, 3, 253-5.	
ME028-012003-	Architectural fragment	MOSNEY	Description: A stone that came from the church at Irishtown (ME028-017----) was built into a wall of Mosney House in 1949 (Ward 1965, 255). It is a spandrel decorated in relief with what might be a goad's head. bears the arms of Barnwall with a family represented by a toothed cross, and is probably 16th An armorial plaque (ME028-012002-) is also in the wall.		Ward, M. 1965 Moymurthy. Ríocht na Mídhe, 3, 3, 253-5.	
ME028-066----	Enclosure	MOSNEY (should be corrected to Briarleas)	From file: Aerial photograph (GB90.BY.14) shows cropmark of a curvilinear enclosure defined by a fosse. It is plough-levelled. First recorded as a positive cropmark in July 1990. Very faint curvilinear cropmark located in a field with other irregular cropmarks, some of which may be geomorphological in origin.	F. O'Carroll, August 2021. This is actually located in Briarleas townland, north of Mosney. It is beside a stream (to the south) and the cropmark(s) are visible in OSAP 1995.		
ME028-004----	Earthwork	NINCH	Upstanding monument. Date of upload/revision: 10 July 2007	Raised circular area defined by scarp (diam. 30m) on top of hillock. Interior has been quarried out. No visible fosse or entrance.	M. Moore, 1987, Archaeological Inventory of Co. Meath, No. 1165, p. 112.	
ME028-006----	Barrow - mound barrow	NINCH	File contains copy of report in Ríocht na Mídhe:Upstanding monument	Date of upload/revision: 10 July 2007 Circular mound (diam. 25m., H 6m) partially excavated and restored in 1979 by P. D. Sweetman (RMAHS 1982-3, 58-68) who demonstrated that it was a burial mound of the late Iron Age. This monument is subject to a preservation order made under the National Monuments Acts 1930 to 2014 (PO no. 11/1977).	PD Sweetman 1982-3, RMAHS Vol. 7 No. 2, 59 - 68. Archaeological Inventory of Co. Meath, (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1987)	

SMR No.	Class	Townland	NMS Files	Excavations.ie or Heritage Maps	Publication	Licence Holder
Key	Upstanding	Excavated	Cropmark			
ME028-024----	Battery	NINCH	Square earthwork with scarped sides and broad flat berm. Bulbous corners. 30m x 30m approx. Described as a battery or a landscape feature. Could be a moated site. Located at the west end of a long ridge, overlooks river and Ballygarth castle opposite. Upstanding monument		Archaeological Inventory of Co. Meath, (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1987	
ME028-025----	Fulacht fia	NINCH	Excavated site	Not uploaded	Excavations.ie 1999:695	Eoin Halpin, 98E0501ext
ME028-025001-	Enclosure	NINCH	Multiple enclosures, burials	Not uploaded	Excavations.ie 2001:1007	Cia McConway, 98E0501ext
ME028-025002-	Kiln	NINCH		Not uploaded		
ME028-025003-	Excavation - miscellaneous	NINCH	Pits containing Late Neolithic grooved ware, post-holes; Ring-ditch with LBA date from lower fill and IA date from upper. Finds of E-ware, Early Medieval settlement and Cemetery.	Not uploaded	Excavations.ie 2000:760	James Eogan & Martin Reid; 98E0501ext
ME028-025004-	Ring-ditch	NINCH		Not uploaded	Excavations.ie 1999:705	Martin Reid; 98E0501
ME028-025005-	Ring-ditch	NINCH		Not uploaded		
ME028-025006-	Burial	NINCH	Multiple enclosures, burials	Not uploaded	Excavations.ie 2002:1489	Cia McConway, 98E0501ext
ME028-050----	Excavation - miscellaneous	NINCH	Excavation report by E. Halpin and G. Sheehan. Burials	Not uploaded	No bulletin	Eoin Halpin 02E0017
ME028-052----	Enclosure	NINCH	An aerial photograph (1995) shows cropmark evidence for a double-ditched, sub-circular enclosure (Colin Byrne, pers comm).	An entry from a Blue sky survey is wrongly identified as monument ME028-057001, instead of ME029-052----. This is the description: Situated on a level landscape. The cropmark of a trench (L c. 23m ENE-WSW) lies inside the fosse of rath (ME028-057----) at S and enters it at SSW. Its greatest width (c. 2m) is at the E end where the trench turns N and it could be a souterrain. It is only visible on Apple Maps which utilises a survey conducted by Bluesky International during June 2018. See the attached enhanced view from Apple Maps. The image shown clearly indicates features extending both east and west from this monument ME028-052-, FO'C August 2021	https://maps.archaeology.ie/HistoricEnvironment/#:~:text=D%3A%5CAM%20MEA%20web%201%5CME028-057_1.gif	
ME028-059----	Enclosure	NINCH	An aerial photograph (1995) shows cropmark evidence irregular enclosures. (Pers com Colin Byrne).	The cropmark of a subrectangular enclosure (dims c. 30m E-W; c. 30m N-S) defined by fosse features on each side is visible on an aerial photograph (OSAP: 1995). (Pers. com. Colin Byrne) Date of upload: 15 September, 2017		

SMR No.	Class	Townland	NMS Files	Excavations.ie or Heritage Maps	Publication	Licence Holder
Key	Upstanding	Excavated	Cropmark			
ME028-101----	Enclosure	NINCH		Situated on a broad low rise in a low-lying landscape. The cropmark of a circular enclosure (int. diam. c. 33m E-W; c. 31m N-S) defined by a continuous fosse (Wth c. 2-3m) is visible only on Digital Globe (c. 2013). It was first reported by Joanne Hughes.	https://webservices.archaeology.ie/arcgis/rest/services/NM/NationalMonuments/MapServer/0/882099/attachments/857072	
ME028-014----	Cross - Wayside cross	SARFIELDSTOWN	Late-fifteenth-century memorial cross erected to Christopher Barnwell. Fragment of shaft with figure sculpture in false relief and inscription (PRIA 1984, 102-3). Inscription on base belongs with that on stones at Bellowstown (ME027-007001-). Transcription of article by Ld. Walter Fitzgerald on file.		JRSAI Vol. 42 1912, 151-154; RMAHS 1984, 114-6	
ME028-015----	Cross - Wayside cross	SARFIELDSTOWN	Fragment of shaft of late-fifteenth-century cross with figure sculpture and foliage.		PRIA 1984, 99	
ME028-016----	Souterrain	SARFIELDSTOWN	Drystone-built passage (L 4m) terminating in beehive chamber (diam. 2.5m) discovered in 1978 (NMI file).		Excavations.ie 1977-79:0061; Archaeological Inventory of Co. Meath, (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1987	
ME028-029----	Burial	SARFIELDSTOWN	Burials uncovered during field clearance of a gravel ridge. Deemed prehistoric. Rescue excavation.		Excavations.ie 1999:710	Mary Deevy, 99E0688
ME028-092----	Ring-ditch	SARFIELDSTOWN	Description: Located on a slight E-W ridge in a fairly level landscape. The cropmark of a circular feature (int. diam. c. 7m) defined by a continuous fosse is visible only on Apple Maps which utilises a survey conducted by Bluesky International during June 2018. It was reported separately by Matthew Mullen-Reynolds and Anthony Murphy at about the same time. See the attached enhanced view from Apple Maps. Compiled by: Michael Moore. Date of upload: 7 February 2020		https://webservices.archaeology.ie/arcgis/rest/services/NM/NationalMonuments/MapServer/0/881302/attachments/667461	

Gazeteer of Recorded Sites and Monuments within the Zone of Interest

SMR No.	Class	Townland	NMS Files	Excavations.ie or Heritage Maps	Publication	Licence Holder
Key	Upstanding	Excavated	Cropmark			
ME028-093001-	Ring-ditch	SARFIELDSTOWN	Description: Located on a slight E-facing slope in a fairly level landscape. The cropmark of a circular feature (int. diam. c. 6m) defined by a continuous fosse is visible only on Apple Maps which utilises a survey conducted by Bluesky International during June 2018. There may be a pit at the centre. The ring-ditch (ME028-093002-) is c. 4m to the SE, and both features were reported separately by Matthew Mullen-Reynolds and Anthony Murphy at about the same time. See the attached enhanced aerial view from Apple Maps. Compiled by: Michael Moore. Date of upload: 7 February 2020		https://webservices.archaeology.ie/arcgis/rest/services/NationalMonuments/MapServer/0/881303/attachments/667462	
ME028-093002-	Ring-ditch	SARFIELDSTOWN	Description: Located on a slight E-facing slope in a fairly level landscape. The cropmark of a circular feature (int. diam. c. 5m) defined by a fosse E-S-NW is visible only on Apple Maps which utilises a survey conducted by Bluesky International during June 2018. The ring-ditch (ME028-093001-) is c. 4m to the NW, and both features were reported separately by Matthew Mullen-Reynolds and Anthony Murphy at about the same time.		https://webservices.archaeology.ie/arcgis/rest/services/NationalMonuments/MapServer/0/881704/attachments/667463	
ME028-022----	Souterrain	SMITHSTOWN (Duleek Lower By.)	Portions of four souterrains discovered during monitoring of a gas pipeline. Fully excavated. Also in the vicinity were ditches, gullies, post-holes, pits and at least one kiln. A circular feature can be discerned on OSAP 1995 at this location. F. O'Carroll, August 2021		Excavations.ie 1988:55	Margaret Gowen, No licence No.
ME028-072----	Armorial plaque	SMITHSTOWN (Duleek Lower By.)	An armorial plaque dated to 1599 is mounted on the front of Smithstown House. It contains a coat of arms and a latin inscription(pers comm. Mr Colin Byrne, Briarleas, County Meath). Compiled by Geraldine Stout. Date of upload: 13/03/2012			

SMR No.	Class	Townland	NMS Files	Excavations.ie or Heritage Maps	Publication	Licence Holder
Key	Upstanding	Excavated	Cropmark			
ME028-099----	Enclosure	SMITHSTOWN (Duleek Lower By.)	<p>Located on the S-facing slope of a slight W-E spur. The cropmark of an oval enclosure (int. dims c. 37m WNW-ESE; c. 26m NNE-SSW) defined by the lighter band (Wth c. 4m) of a bank NW-E is visible on Apple Maps which utilises a survey conducted by Bluesky International during June 2018. There are traces of what might be a nearly complete inner fosse or drain. It is also faintly visible on Google Maps (06/06/2018), and was first reported by Anthony Murphy. See the attached enhanced aerial view from Apple Maps. Compiled by: Michael Moore. Date of upload: 7 February 2020</p>		<p>https://www.heritagemaps.ie/ArcGISProxyApp/services/ArcGISPr oxy.ashx?https://webservice.arc haeology.ie/arcgis/rest/services/ NM/NationalMonuments/MapServer/0/882098/attachments/667467</p>	
ME028-007----	Cross - Wayside cross	WHITECROSS	<p>Description: Situated in a level landscape on the E side of the R132 Julianstown to Gormanstown and Balbriggan road, c. 1km SE of Julianstown bridge. Whitecross townland is marked on the Taylor and Skinner Maps of the Roads of Ireland (1783) and the cross is indicated as a feature (Andrews 1969, 2). An octagonal sandstone shaft (dims 0.29m x 0.29m; H 0.8m) has a mortice on top and half the sides have stops morphing into a rectangular form at the bottom. It is set in a rectangular limestone base (dims 0.82m x 0.72m; H c. 0.3m) with chamfered upper edges. There is no inscription. It is now in the front garden of a house.</p>		<p>Archaeological Inventory of County Meath' (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1987). Andrews, J.H. (ed.) 1969 Maps of the roads of Ireland. Shannon. Irish University Press. Ward, M. 1968 The parish of Ballygarth. Ríocht na Mídhe, 4, 2, 79-87.</p>	

List of excavated sites from NMS Files and from Excavations Bulletins					Excavations.ie	NOTES
Licence No.	Site Name	Period	Specific period	Co-ordinates	Y/N or Number	
E000982	KEENOGE		Unknown	715288 768986	N	NMI record, see file ME028-073
000---	Betaghstown		EBA	715932 773319	1977-79:0056	Eamonn Kelly
000---	Betaghstown		IA	715942 773320	1977-79:0057	Eamonn Kelly
E000203	NINCH		Iron Age	715535 771251	N	PD Sweetman. Iron age burial mound
000---	Smithstown	Early Medieval	Early Medieval	712960 770514	1988:55	Margaret Gowen, Gas Pipeline. Souterrains, various ditches, E-ware
98E0038	BETAGHSTOWN, BETTYSTOWN				1998:501	F. O'Carroll, no archaeology found
98E0072	BETAGHSTOWN, CO. MEATH	Multi-period		715846 773448	1998:502	Rosanne Meenan, testing
98E0072 ext	BETAGHSTOWN, CO. MEATH		EBA	715846 773448	1998:503	James Eogan, multi-period, timber circle, prehistoric and early med burials
98E0501	NINCH, LAYTOWN, CO. MEATH		Bronze Age	716025 772039	1999:695	Eoin Halpin, fulacht fiadh
98E0501 ext	NINCH, LAYTOWN, CO. MEATH		Bronze Age	716112 771933	1999:705	Martin Reid, Ring ditch and fulacht fiadh
99E0688	Sarsfieldstown		Unknown date	714726 768352	1999:710	Mary Deevy: Burials in Gravel mound,
98E0501	NINCH, LAYTOWN		Multi-period		2000:0760	James Eogan, Martin Reid: Late Neo and 1st Millenium AD. Cemetery also
98E0501	NINCH, LAYTOWN		Early Medieval	715893 772144	2001:1007	Cia McConway, cemetery and enclosures
01E1175	Laytown - Bettystown, Meath				2001:1008	Rob Lynch, no archaeology. No report
01E1170	NARROW WAYS, BETTYSTOWN, CO. MEATH			714587 773272	2001:945	Partial remains of 2 skeletons
02E1721	BALLYGARTH, JULIANSTOWN, CO. MEATH				2002:1427	F.O'Carroll, no archaeology found
02E1709	BETTYSTOWN, CO. MEATH	Multi-period	Bronze Age	715696 773319	2002:1430	E. Halpin, Triton Lodge area
02E1003	LAYTOWN, CO. MEATH				2002:1488	No result
01E0723	NINCH, LAYTOWN, CO. MEATH		Bronze Age	715760 771941	2002:1490	John O'Connor, monitoring, features
01E0723 ext	NINCH, LAYTOWN, CO. MEATH			715760 771942	2002:1491	John O'Connor, monitoring, fulacht and pits
01E0723 ext	NINCH, LAYTOWN, CO. MEATH			715760 771941	2002:1492	John O'Connor, monitoring fulacht and pits
02E0017	NINCH, LAYTOWN, CO. MEATH		Early Medieval	715695 771989	N	Caroline Powell and Eoin Halpin, no bulletin. Cemetery adjacent to railway line at west side of Inse Bay.
02E1003ext	LAYTOWN, CO. MEATH				2003:1415	No result
01E0723 ext	NINCH, LAYTOWN, CO. MEATH			715760 771942	2003:1416	John O'Connor, monitoring, fulacht and pits
03E0024	NINCH, LAYTOWN, CO. MEATH		Post medieval	715437 771943	2003:1417	J. Hughes, ditches
03E1820	Ninch				2003:1418	Donald Murphy, no result
03E0266	SEVITSLAND, JULIANSTOWN, CO. MEATH				2003:1465	John O'Connor. No result
02E1709ext	Betaghstown, CO. MEATH		Early Medieval	715696 773319	2004:1185	Eoghan Kieran, part of testing of Ninch, Inse Bay
04E1649	MEATH, BETAGHSTOWN		Early Medieval	715437 773197	2004:1186	Deirdre Murphy, enclosing ditch
02E1709ext	BETTYSTOWN, CO. MEATH		Early Medieval	715696 773319	2004:1187	John Lehane, more of Ninch, but also Licence 04E0533
05E0005	MEATH, BETAGHSTOWN		Early Medieval	715437 773197	2005:1158	Deirdre Murphy, Habitation site
05E0013	MEATH, BETTYSTOWN				2005:1159	Linda Clarke, no result
03E1820 ext	INSE BAY, LAYTOWN (PHASE 4)				2005:1208	Donald Murphy, no result
05E0005ext	MEATH, BETAGHSTOWN		Early Medieval	715437 773197	2006:1512	Deirdre Murphy, burnt spreads, a hearth, pits and ditches
05E0005ext	MEATH, BETAGHSTOWN				2007:1266	Deirdre Murphy, Habitation site, extension of this but no result
06E0413	Donacarney Great	Multi-period	High Medieval	714530 773900	2007:1301	Carmel Duffy, testing in two phases, multi-period and burials
06E0413 ext	Donacarney Great		Early Medieval	714530 773900	2007:1302	Stuart Rathbone, habitation, early medieval
07E0622	DONACARNEY GREAT, Bettystown		IA	714530 773900	2007:1303	S Rathbone, further burials
07E0930	Layown		Unknown	715988 772727	2007:1345	John Purcell, ditches. No report to NMS
06E1216	Ninch, Inse Bay		Unknown	715893 772144	2007:1346	Stephen J. Linnane, prehistoric. No report to NMS
07E0967	River Nanny, Laytown				2007:1347	David McCullough, monitoring pedestrian bridge works, nothing
07E0029	Sevitsland				2007:1386	Dominic Delaney, no result

List of excavated sites from NMS Files and from Excavations Bulletins					Excavations.ie	NOTES
Licence No.	Site Name	Period	Specific period	Co-ordinates	Y/N or Number	
07E0184	Sevitsland				2007:1387	Aidan O'Connell, no result, no report
08E0912	Donacarney Great, Co. Meath	Multi-period	EBA	715285 774084	2008:951	Melanie McQuaid, (ME021-025; ME021-026) multi-period
08E0912ext	Donacarney Great, Co. Meath		IA-Medieval	715222 774111	2009:641	Melanie McQuaid, (ME021-025; ME021-026) multi-period
10E0489	Julianstown West, Julianstown, Co. Meath.				2010:522	Dave Bayley, IAC, no result
11E0131	Claristown & Sarsfieldtown				2012:457	Billy Quinn, proximity to ME028-014; no result
14E0185	The Maples, Bettystown (Betaghstown), Meath				2014:595	Niall Roycroft, monitoring, no archaeology.
17E0124	Meath, BETAGHSTOWN (Duleek Lower By.) - Excavation Licence				2018:229	Faith Bailey, no archaeology
18E0284	Meath, NINCH - Excavation Licence				2018:409	K. Campbell, no archaeology
19E0383	Meath, NINCH - Excavation Licence				2019:104	Liza Kavanagh. No archaeological features, one piece of flint debitage
19E0077	Meath, DONACARNEY GREAT		EBA	714530 773900	2019:606	Niall Garahy, burials, pits, EBA pots
19E0639	Sevitsland		Bronze Age	715010 773154	2019:611	Frank Coyne, Ring ditch. No report
19E0077ext	Donacarney Great		Neolithic	714530 773900	Current	Antoine Giacometti, multi-period, ongoing
01E0933	AREA 1, MORNINGTON, EAST MEATH				N	
01E0937	AREA 5, BETAGHSTOWN CO. MEATH				N	
01E0940	AREA 6, NINCH, CO. MEATH				N	
10E0166	Donacarney Great, Co. Meath				N	No Bulletin
19E0582	Meath, BETAGHSTOWN (Duleek Lower By.) - Excavation Licence				N	No Bulletin
04E0236	MEATH,BETTYSTOWN				N	No Bulletin
01E0953	NINCH, AREA 7, CO. MEATH				N	

Keenoge, NMS and NMI record

No report in Excavations bulletin, see Appendix 2

1977-79:0056 - Betaghstown, Meath

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A Licence number: —

Author: E.P Kelly, National Museum of Ireland

Site type: Cist

ITM: E 715826m, N 773018m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.694012, -6.246141

The cist was discovered in December 1977 during building development. The structure was built of four stone slabs and was trapezoidal in plan with inclined sidestones covered by a large capstone. Within the cist was the crouched skeleton of a male aged about 18 years with a Food Vessel which was inverted at the left shoulder. The burial may have been covered by a mound. Fragments of bone from the skeleton of an adult female were collected from bulldozed soil surrounding the cist.

1977-79:0057 - Betaghstown, Meath

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A Licence number: —

Author: E.P. Kelly, National Museum of Ireland, Dublin

Site type: Iron Age Cemetery

ITM: E 715826m, N 773018m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.694012, -6.246141

In October 1979, a cemetery, which lay immediately to the east of a Bronze Age cist excavated in 1977, was discovered by the landowner while erecting a pole in his garden. Fifteen graves were located. Two burials were in long stone cists and two were crouched pit burials. The remaining interments were extended inhumations either unprotected or partly protected by a lining of stones. One crouched burial was accompanied by two penannular brooches and an iron belt buckle. A stone axe pendant was suspended from the neck and a bronze plate, perforated at each end, seems to have served as a hair ornament. Remains of two types of textile and of a hair net were present in the grave. The burial was overlain by a long cist.

An iron object, perhaps a strap end, was found in an unprotected extended grave containing the skeleton of a child. The grave group probably dates to between the 2nd and 5th centuries AD

1977-79:0061 - Sarsfieldstown, Meath

County: Meath Site name: Sarsfieldstown

Sites and Monuments Record No.:ME028-016--- Licence number: —

Author: E.P. Kelly, National Museum of Ireland

Site type: Souterrain

ITM: E 714826m, N 768219m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.651127, -6.263047

No Licence Number as this was a museum rescue excavation.

In April 1978 a souterrain was discovered during construction work. It consisted of a passage approximately 5m. long and a beehive chamber 2.5m. in diameter. Part of the original fill blocking the passage was excavated. Animal bones, shells and charcoal were found. Part of a polished bone ring-like object with dot and circle decoration was also found.

1977-79:0060 - Ninch, Meath

Sites and Monuments Record No.: ME028-006; Licence number: —

Author: P.D Sweetman, Office of Public Works

Site type: Prehistoric Burial Mound

ITM: E 715626m, N 771018m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.676095, -6.249913

No account. Published in *Ríocht na Midhe*, Vol VII, No. 2, 1982-1983, 58 – 68.

A mound, approximately 24m in diameter and 5m high had had about one third of its western side had been damaged by a bulldozer. Erosion had revealed human remains. Partial excavation, recording and restoration occurred. Two burials were recorded, but more may be present. A date of 460+-85AD was obtained from one burial.

1988:55 - Smithstown, Meath

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A Licence number: —

Author: Margaret Gowen, 5 St Catherine

Site type: Early Christian settlement(?) with souterrains

ITM: E 663930m, N 776458m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.733853, -7.031072

(See Appendix 2.) The site lies at the top of a south facing rise in ground extending north of the River Nanny just about a quarter of a mile to the west of Julianstown on the Duleek road. It was discovered when the soft humic fill of two souterrain galleries, along with spreads of charcoal flecked and oxidised soil, were revealed. In spite of local tradition that large trees had been cut and removed from the area, a decision was made to investigate these features archaeologically. Excavations revealed portions of four souterrains, one of which was only discovered after trenching. To the north of the souterrains a series of gullies and ditches was revealed, at least some of which may be contemporary with the souterrains. An interpretation of these features has not been reached. The remains occur over a 60m stretch of pipeline corridor. There was no evidence for a ringfort type enclosing element, though there was a curious, very wide, ditch-like escarpment at the south side of the site into the fill of which two of the souterrains had been built.

The Souterrains

These all occurred at the south of the area of archaeological activity. After topsoil removal, two well preserved souterrain galleries were located and fully revealed. Investigation of the fill of the ditch like escarpment to the south of these revealed a side wall of another gallery. The fourth structure was not discovered until trenching cut through it.

All the souterrains were built of rounded borders and roughly quarried, blocky slabs, between 0.3m 0.5m in size. None of the walls survived to a height of more than 0.6m 0.7m, indicating a severe truncation of the old ground level. Souterrain 1. This consisted of the gently sloped, cobbled, 2.5m long entrance ramp leading to a neatly constructed souterrain gallery, a 6m length of which was exposed leading westwards under the topsoil spoilheap. It was max. 1 .4m wide.

The exposed portion within the pipeline corridor was filled with two deposits. The upper deposit was a compact clay lying on a second, lower, homogenous, soft, humic, charcoal flecked earth containing a few fragments of animal bone but no artefacts. Souterrain 2. This structure had no obvious entrance and may have been entered through a drop-hole creep or similar type entrance. It ran east-west for a distance of just over 7m and had a slightly expanded terminal at the west. It was 0.6m wide and survived up to 1.4m in depth. It was located at, and ran along, the upper edge of the escarpment described above and its southern wall appears to have been built into/abutting the material backfilled into the scarped feature. The nature of the stratigraphic relationship could not be determined as the soil was loose and friable and no construction-trench edge was located. Excavation of the interior of this structure revealed a number of post-hole-like pits, under the loose humic backfill, which may predate the structure. The fill of one pit at the end wall of the structure produced a decorated bone spindle whorl. Souterrain 3. This structure was revealed at the eastern limit of the pipeline corridor, built into the loose fill of the escarpment. Only one side wall, its stones set characteristically with their long axes at right angles to the wall face, ran for a distance of 5.5m north south and since it was the western wall of the structure it was not possible to excavate the interior. No construction trench could be defined in the fill deposit into which it was built. Souterrain 4. This structure was covered by graded soil when the site was excavated and the unfortunate placing of one of the excavation spoilheap hid it until machine trenching for the gas pipe cut a section through it. The structure was revealed in the eastern section face of the pipeline trench only, and was not revealed on the opposing side, 2m from it. It would appear, therefore, that the structure may have had a drop-hole entrance as in Souterrain 2 and that it ran eastwards. The portion exposed in the section was 1.4m wide and 1m high. The side walls were noticeably corbelled inwards. It was backfilled with three layers of loose, humic, ash and charcoal flecked soil.

Other Features

The Escarpment. This feature ran east-west across the pipeline corridor and when first excavated was thought to represent the remains of a ditch line as it was simply scarped on the down-slope towards the river. At its northern edge it had a depth of 0.8m max., deepening to 1m and it was filled with two deposits. The upper deposit was a loose friable loamy soil, containing animal bone, shell, ashy lenses and charcoal. The lower deposit was a soft, silty clay which also contained some animal bone and shell. Excavation of a 5m long cutting revealed no counterscarp for this feature but examination of the spread of loose humic soil representing the upper fill of the feature and examination of the section face in the trench line, revealed that the escarpment was c. 1.8m wide. It was cut into an isolated beach/river gravel deposit which occurred in this exact position.

Since no opposing ditch was revealed at the north of this site the interpretation reached, after examination of the hand excavated cutting and the cross section displayed in the trench line, was that the area must have been quarried for gravel during the Early Christian period and had been backfilled at that time with material containing occupation debris, prior to the construction of the souterrains.

Features to the north of the site. 15m to the north of the souterrains a series of ditches, gullies and related features were revealed. The first of these to be excavated and which produced a sherd of E-ware in its fill (the only sherd of early Christian pottery retrieved from this site during the excavation), was an annular gully describing roughly one quarter of a circle 7m 8m in diameter, which extended into a wide, deep trench running north/west/south/east to the north. It was felt that this feature, which has a V-section to U-section profile up to 0.5m wide and 0.3m 0.35m deep,

could represent the foundation trench of a structure, but there were no internal structural elements and no subsequent evidence to reinforce this interpretation.

Abutting the inner edge of this feature close to its southern and only terminal, was a curious keyhole plan pit, the circular portion of which measured 0.9m in diameter and up to 0.5m deep. The inner surfaces of this pit were oxidised to such an extent that it appears to have served as a kiln oven, though for what purpose was not discovered. Examination of the soil which filled the feature may help to solve this problem.

A second, curvilinear, V-section gully, an 11m length of which was traced from a shallow terminal, lay to the south-west of the above, extending west towards and under the topsoil spoilheap. It may also have served a structural function. It was nearly 0.7m deep at the limit of excavation. The fill of this feature contained a large percentage of stones in a loose humic fill close to the terminal, but where it extended beyond the limit of excavation it had three deposits of fill which were relatively stone-free humic clays.

Unfortunately the relationships between the fills of the large ditch which extended north west of the former curvilinear gully, and further ditch/gully features lying to the north of these, which were composed of remarkably uniform stoney clays with a very low humic content is unclear. It was impossible during excavation to discern the sequence in which these features were cut. Further work on the plans and details of the fills sampled, may, however, help lead towards an interpretation.

Animal bone was recovered from all archaeological features, though no artefacts were found in the fill of these features apart from the one sherd of F-ware described above.

1998:501 – NINCH (Bettystown), Meath

County: Meath Site name: BETTYSTOWN

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A Licence number: **98E0038**

Author: Finola O'Carroll

Site type: No archaeological significance

ITM: E 715819m, N 773498m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.698324, -6.246068

The site lies on the west side of the Bettystown/ Laytown road, close to the village of Bettystown. Its rear (western) boundary wall separates it from the small housing estate 'Brookside', where an Iron Age cemetery (SMR 21:10) was excavated by Eamonn Kelly in 1979 (JIA 4, 1987-8, 75). The ground level of the housing estate is higher by c. 1m than that on the site, and this rise is artificially continued to the estate wall. Part of the area of the site closest to the wall may have been partially scarped before the erection of a building that stood there, but there is a noticeable, though gentle, ridge running north-south and extending northwards behind the village.

Seven trenches were dug by mechanical digger with a toothless bucket in the area of the main building.

Although a number of features were noted, these proved to be natural, resulting from the overlying of the old shoreline by a deposit of boulder clay and gravels.

1998:502 - BETTYSTOWN (BETAGHSTOWN TOWNLAND), Meath

County: Meath Site name: BETTYSTOWN (BETAGHSTOWN TOWNLAND)

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A Licence number: **98E0072**

Author: Rosanne Meenan, Roestown, Drumree, Co. Meath.

Site type: Iron Age cemetery

ITM: E 715526m, N 773218m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.695874, -6.250606

The site was tested before construction of a large holiday complex. Eamonn Kelly found Iron Age burials in the area to the south of this site in the 1970s.

A total of 27 trenches were excavated over the area of the two fields comprising the development. Two of these produced human burials, while a third yielded evidence of a possible ditch. The burials were exposed underneath the ploughsoil, at the interface between the latter and the natural layers. Subsequently the site was excavated by James Eogan, who recovered Bronze Age and Iron Age burials and evidence of a Late Neolithic timber circle (see No. 503 below).

1998:503 - BETTYSTOWN, Meath

Sites and Monuments Record No.: SMR 21:10 Licence number: **98E0072**

Author: James Eogan, Archaeological Development Services Ltd, Windsor House, 11 Fairview Strand, Fairview, Dublin 3.

Site type: Prehistoric/multi-period site

ITM: E 715526m, N 773218m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.695874, -6.250606

This site is part of a low ridge overlooking the sea just south of the village of Bettystown. Excavations in the late 1970s by Eamonn Kelly on an adjoining site uncovered an Early Bronze Age cist and an inhumation cemetery of 6th-century AD date (JIA 4, 1987-8, 75). A total of 27 test-trenches were excavated on this site by Roseanne Meenan, in response to a condition in the planning permission granted for a mixed residential and commercial development (see No. 502 above). Human remains were found in two of the trenches, and consequently the National Monuments Service required hand-excavation of two specified areas and monitoring of all groundworks associated with this scheme.

Three main phases of archaeological activity were identified on this site, the archaeological features being all concentrated on the top of the ridge.

Timber circle

A total of 27 post-pits formed a circular structure 7.6m x 6.5m (externally). There was an entrance defined by four large pits on the south-east side of the structure; four internal pits were found. Each of the pits held a single upright wooden post. Finds from the fill of the pits include a considerable amount of struck flint, the predominant artefact type being end-scrapers, grooved ware-type pottery, animal bone (burnt and unburnt) and seashells.

Early Bronze Age flat cemetery

Nine graves (two short, one polygonal and one rectangular cist, and five pits) were found c. 40m south-west of the timber circle. They contained nine inhumations and one cremation burial. Four of the inhumations (one teenage girl and three children) were associated with food vessels. The other burials were three children, a middle-aged female and two adult males, one of whom had been cremated, in the same grave. The burials were confined to an area c. 8m x 8m; no evidence was

found of a covering mound or any other above-ground marker; there is stratigraphic evidence of at least two phases of burial.

1st millennium AD inhumation cemetery

A total of 55 inhumation burials were found in a linear cemetery that extended along the top of the ridge. Most were extended inhumations, oriented west-east (heads at the west), buried in simple, subrectangular, stone-lined pits that had been dug into the underlying sand and gravel deposits. Three of the burials were contained within lintel graves; six were found in slab-lined graves. None of the burials were accompanied by grave-goods. Apart from three cases the graves were not intercut; the timber circle had been cut by three of these graves.

Two crouched inhumations were found in simple pit graves. One, a child, was found within the timber circle, it cut one of the post-pits; the second, a young adult female, was c. 25m west of the other; a large rock had been placed on her abdomen during burial.

1999:695 - NINCH, LAYTOWN, Meath

Sites and Monuments Record No.: SMR 28:25 Licence number: 98E0501 ext.

Author: Eoin Halpin, ADS Ltd, Unit 48, Westlink Enterprise Centre, 30-50 Distillery Street, Belfast BT12 5BJ.

Site type: Fulacht fiadh

ITM: E 716126m, N 771918m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.684067, -6.242014

The test excavations were positioned in order to assess the location and complexity of the site of a possible fulacht fiadh, noted during recent episodes of ploughing. The results showed that there was evidence that such a site existed in this area in the past. The remains, in situ, of the heat-cracked stone and black, charcoal-flecked soils attest to this. However, the fact that disturbed burnt mound material also survived in the furrows created by ploughing points to the probability that the site has been badly truncated by relatively recent agricultural improvements.

The area around the test site was field-walked, with numerous fragments of heat-cracked stone noted in the ploughsoil, adding strength to the above interpretation.

1999:705 - NINCH/LAYTOWN, Meath

Sites and Monuments Record No.: SMR 28:25 Licence number: 98E0501

Author: Martin Reid, 37 Errigal Road, Drimnagh, Dublin 12, for ADS Ltd.

Site type: Bronze Age enclosure, fulacht trough

ITM: E 716437m, N 771543m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.680630, -6.237450

Two test-trenches were excavated by Eoin Halpin through the site of a possible fulacht fiadh, and, although no archaeological features were uncovered, burnt stone was identified. Monitoring followed, and the licence was transferred to the writer.

A prehistoric ditched enclosure site was identified on the ridge. This enclosure was c. 33m in external diameter with a V-shaped ditch 1.4-1.8m wide and 0.9-1.2m deep. The lower fill contained

flint, pottery and other stone artefacts. The pottery has been provisionally dated to the mid-Bronze Age. Monitoring also uncovered a number of pits filled with burnt stone. One of these pits was thought to be a fulacht fiadh trough pit.

Further clearances are to be undertaken in 2000 before extensions to the housing development, and these will be monitored for further archaeological features/materials.

1999:710 - SARSFIELDSTOWN, Meath

Sites and Monuments Record No.: **ME028-029---**; Licence number: **99E0688**

Author: Mary Deevy, ADS Ltd, Windsor House, 11 Fairview Strand, Fairview, Dublin 3.

Site type: Burials in a gravel mound

ITM: E 714757m, N 768013m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.649292, -6.264166

The site was in Sarsfieldstown, Co. Meath, c. 7km north of Balbriggan, to the west of the N1. This previously unknown site was uncovered during land development of a gravel mound on a private farm. A machine trench excavated into the east of the mound revealed a number of human skeletons. The topsoil had been stripped surrounding the trench, revealing the presence of further human skeletons. A rescue excavation was carried out on behalf of Dúchas over five days in December, with a remit to retrieve the disturbed human remains from the machine spoil, to record the machine section stratigraphy and to excavate the skeletons truncated by the machine.

The sections revealed the remains of at least eight individuals including one infant, all buried in fairly shallow graves below the topsoil and all truncated by the machine. Many of these individuals had also been disturbed in the past by subsequent burials, ploughing and possibly also animal activity. Those in the north- and east-facing sections were cut through the natural gravel mound, whereas those in the south-facing section were cut through a deep layer of very stony, silty clay. No evidence of stone linings, coffins, shrouds or artefacts was recovered. The intact skeletons were orientated east-west with their heads to the west. It was not feasible to attempt to excavate all the human remains truncated by the machine without uncovering further skeletons, necessitating a large-scale excavation outside our remit. Two of the skeletons were excavated, and the rest were covered so that the trench could be backfilled and the mound restored.

Preliminary examination of the skeletons by Laureen Buckley suggested that they are very likely to be pre-medieval in date.

2000:0760 - NINCH, LAYTOWN, Meath

County: Meath Site name: NINCH, LAYTOWN

Sites and Monuments Record No.: SMR 28:25 Licence number: **98E0501 ext.**

Author: James Eogan and Martin Reid, ADS Ltd, Windsor House, 11 Fairview Strand, Fairview, Dublin 3.

Site type: Multi-period

ITM: E 716076m, N 772198m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.686592, -6.242665

A large residential development is under construction on a phased basis at this site, overlooking the sea just north of Laytown village. The site occupies part of a ridge that runs parallel to the coast. Planning permission for the second phase was granted in February 2000. As a result of the discovery and excavation by Martin Reid of a ring-ditch and other features during the construction of Phase 1 (Excavations 1999, 242), the developers were required to employ a licensed archaeologist to monitor the topsoil-stripping associated with Phase 2.

A large number and variety of subsoil-cut features as well as extended inhumation burials were identified during the topsoil-stripping. Following discussions with Dúchas The Heritage Service and the developer, construction works were suspended pending the completion of an assessment of the exposed features to place them in their temporal and cultural context, to define the limits of the inhumation cemetery and to assess the impact of the development on the archaeological features. The assessment of the exposed features was carried out based on fourteen 3m-wide hand-dug test-trenches, which varied in length from 10m to 70m. A fifteenth trench (6m wide and 16m long) was cleared around a complex of pits and post-holes. In total, an area measuring 1408.5m² was investigated.

The developer also undertook to fund the test excavation of the rest of the development site to the west and north of the area where the remains were found. Twenty 2m-wide machine-dug test-trenches were excavated, varying in length from 20m to 115m, the total area investigated measuring 2134m².

Activity on the site can be separated into at least three phases.

Late Neolithic pits and post-holes

A series of approximately 23 subcircular pits/post-holes extended over an area 16m long; they were orientated in a general north–south direction. One of these features, a shallow (0.12m-deep) pit, contained a large number of undecorated potsherds, which have been identified as coming from a single vessel, most likely Grooved ware (A.L. Brindley, pers. comm.). Grooved ware was identified in the fill of four similar features. Post-pipes were found in at least two of these features, and packing-stones were noted in a number of others. One of the pits appeared to have been cut by a ditch, which has been dated to the mid-first millennium AD. These features were all truncated by ploughing.

Mid-first millennium AD enclosure and settlement activity

A large subcircular or subrectangular enclosure c. 120m (north–south) by 80m, defined by a ditch up to 5m wide and 2m deep, was identified. In one test-trench there appeared to be three parallel ditches of similar scale. A possible incurving entrance was identified midway along the western side of the enclosure. The base of a possible ploughed-out internal bank was found on the south-eastern side of the enclosure.

Two sherds of E ware (D.L. Swan, pers. comm.) and a fragment of a jet bracelet were found in the lower fills of the enclosure ditch. A fragment of a second jet bracelet, a bronze toilet implement and a series of bone pins (one crutch-headed) were found in the upper fills of the ditch. A pin from a ring-pin or brooch and a barbed and tanged arrowhead were found in the topsoil clearance.

Within the enclosed area a mass of features was identified. These included gullies, pits and post-holes. Two curvilinear gullies (up to 0.6m wide and 0.3m deep) formed enclosures measuring c. 9m in internal diameter. It is not certain if these represent wall slots for round houses or if they are ring-ditches.

A possible drystone-built kiln was found 21m from the enclosure ditch on its western side.

Various other features (gullies, pits and post-holes) were identified to the south-west, west and north of the enclosure. They appear to be broadly contemporary with the enclosure; a stick-pin was found in the fill of one curvilinear gully. The total area containing archaeological features is 225m (north–south) by 160m.

Mid-first millennium AD inhumation cemetery

Sixty-one extended inhumations were excavated in an area (25m north–south by 12m) within the northern half of the enclosure; the cemetery has not been fully excavated. The cemetery may be defined on its northern side by a curvilinear ditch. Many of the graves had been disturbed by later interments, suggesting that the cemetery did have defined limits and that it was in use over an extended time-span. Three burials were cut down into the fill of a substantial ditch 3.2m wide and 1.5m deep on the northern side of the cemetery. This ditch contained a large amount of occupation debris and is similar to the main enclosure ditch.

Most of the inhumations were orientated west–east (head at the west) and had been placed in a supine position. An exception was the prone burial of a child at the eastern edge of the cemetery. A number of burials in the south-eastern part of the cemetery were orientated north-west/south-east. Most of the burials were in stone-lined and slab-lined graves; a number had covering slabs. No definite lintel graves were found.

Single sherds of E ware were found in the fill of five graves. A corroded piece of iron (possibly a fragment of a blade) was found in the fill of a grave containing an older adult female. An annular bronze ring was found in the fill of a second grave containing an adult female.

Discussion

A large number of archaeological features have been identified on this site in an area of 36,000m². At least three phases have been identified: Late Neolithic pits and post-holes associated with Grooved ware pottery; mid-first millennium AD enclosure and settlement; and mid-first millennium AD inhumation cemetery.

The Late Neolithic features can be compared to activity at Fourknocks Ridge, where similar pits associated with Grooved ware were uncovered (King 1999). Grooved ware was associated with a timber circle excavated by James Eogan in Bettystown, c. 3km to the north (Excavations 1998, 161, 98E0072).

The latter phase consists of a very substantial enclosure. A large amount of animal bone (twenty fertilizer sacks-full) has been recovered, mostly from the fill of the enclosure ditch. The presence of E ware and a number of personal ornaments suggests that it was a relatively high-status settlement site. However, it would be unusual to have an inhumation cemetery in the middle of a settlement site (the discovery of E ware in the fill of the ditch and with the burials implies contemporaneity). The presence of burials suggests that the site may have had ecclesiastical associations, though no structure that could be identified as a church has been found. The excavated remains can be compared to a similar site excavated by Margaret Gowen at Colp, c. 4km north of Laytown (Excavations 1988, 31–2), where part of a large ditched enclosure (containing B and E ware) was subsequently used as a cemetery; at Colp most of the burials were found within a penannular ditched enclosure (O'Brien 1992, 133; 1993, 98).

Dúchas has recommended extensive excavation of the site before development takes place; the developers are currently assessing their options, and it is probable that further excavation will take place in 2001.

14C dates from ring-ditch excavated in 1999

Two samples of animal bone from the fill of the ring-ditch were submitted for radiocarbon dating. Sample 1 (UCD-146), from the upper fill (F2), is dated to 2075±50 BP; it has a maximum calibrated range of 206 cal. BC to 57 cal. AD (95% certainty). Sample 2 (UCD-147), from the lower fill (F10), is dated to 2410±80 BP and has a maximum calibrated range from 798 to 212 cal. BC (95% certainty).

The results indicate that the lower fill of the ring-ditch was deposited in the Late Bronze Age or Early Iron Age. The upper fill was deposited between the 2nd century BC and the middle of the 1st century AD. The significance of these results is that it places the construction of this monument in a period when there are few other dated archaeological monuments in the country. The dating also reveals that two quite separate phases of activity occurred at this site during the Iron Age.

References

King, H.A. 1999 Excavations on the Fourknocks Ridge, Co. Meath. *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 99C, 157–98.

O'Brien, E. 1992 Pagan and Christian burial in Ireland during the first millennium AD: continuity and change. In N. Edwards and A. Lane (eds), *The early church in Wales and the west*, 130–7. *Oxbow Monograph* 16. Oxford.

O'Brien, E. 1993 Contacts between Ireland and Anglo-Saxon England in the seventh century. *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History* 6, 93–102.

2001:1007 - Ninch, Laytown, Meath

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A Licence number: 98E0501 ext.

Author: Cia McConway, ADS, Unit 48, Westlink Enterprise Centre, 30–50 Distillery Street, Belfast BT12 5BJ.

Site type: Multi-period

ITM: E 716437m, N 771543m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.680630, -6.237450

See report 2002:1489 below for more complete account

The site is located between Beach Park and the railway line at Laytown, Co. Meath. The area currently under excavation comprises the second phase of a housing development. The first phase uncovered evidence for a fulacht fiadh, pits filled with burnt stone and a large ring-ditch. Evaluation of the site carried out in 2000 by James Eogan and Martin Reid (Excavations 2000, No. 760) had suggested a series of ditches, possible Early Christian house slots and an early burial-ground. The ongoing excavation has surpassed all expectations and has revealed a multi-period site ranging from the late Neolithic to the early medieval period.

The site measures 180m north–south by 130m, with a central green area 70m east–west by 55m. This green area will not be developed during the current project and an agreement has been made with Dúchas to allow the preservation in situ of any archaeological deposits there. Site evaluation has shown that archaeological deposits continue for a further 100m north of the northern limits of the current excavation.

The site occupies the summit and the eastern slope of a low ridge and would have originally had a fine view overlooking the sea. Excavations are completed in the southern half of the site and are near completion in the northern half. Initial results would suggest at least six main phases of activity on the site.

Phase 1, late Neolithic

This is identified as a series of over twenty small, circular, subsoil-cut pits and stake-holes and at least one hearth concentrated in an area c. 5m by 3m in the south-western part of the site. In general they had mostly survived in isolation from one another, though a few cut through earlier pits and a later ditch truncated the easternmost pits. None of the pits appeared to form a formal structure, but the survival of the hearth would suggest occupation of at least a temporary nature. Pottery recovered from the pits during the 2000 assessment has been identified as being of the grooved ware tradition, dating from the later Neolithic, c. 2500 BC.

A barbed and tanged arrowhead was found in the immediate vicinity of these pits and suggests the presence of Bronze Age activity in the locale.

Phase 2, Early Christian, c. 4th–8th centuries

The site has produced evidence for an extensive Early Christian landscape, particularly in the northern half. Here the ongoing excavations have revealed a small burial-ground, a double-chambered souterrain and a series of circular enclosures that initially appeared to be concentric, although excavations have since shown that none are contemporary.

The two inner enclosures pre-date the burials and delineate the higher ground along the ridge. Other than a few small pits and a hearth pit, these ditches do not appear to enclose any formal structures such as houses, though it is likely that such structures could not have survived the scarping and deep ploughing that had taken place across the site. The innermost ditch is the earliest and measures 25.5m east–west by 36m, 2m wide by 1.5m deep, and has a terminal along its eastern edge. The second enclosure measures 35m east–west by 40m+ and runs beyond the limit of excavation into the northern edge of the green space. It measures 2.5m wide by 2.5m deep, deepening along the western side. Several sherds of E-ware were recovered from the upper fills of this ditch, along with fragments of bone combs, bone points/needles, knife blades, shell and animal bone.

A large irregular-shaped pit, c. 3.5m east–west by 2m by 1.2m deep, was excavated along the north-eastern area of the southern half of the site. It was filled with soils identical in colour and nature to that infilling the second enclosure and would suggest that contemporary activity was occurring beyond the limits of an enclosure. Iron slag, burnt clay (possibly daub), burnt bone and worked wood were recovered from the pit. It was surrounded by several shallow rectangular pits, which had burnt clay sides and charcoal-rich fills. These have been identified as hearth pits and were probably associated with the large pit, the fill of which suggests domestic and industrial waste.

Around 80 burials were excavated from stone-lined graves, some of which lay in the upper fills of the two inner enclosing ditches. Most of the burials lay within an area measuring 5m north–south by 10m, suggesting that they were enclosed, possibly within a church, although there was no surviving evidence for such a building. In general the remaining burials lay to the south and east of the main group, although one was found some distance away to the west. Pottery recovered from the grave-fills has been identified as E-ware, AD 600–750.

The third enclosing ditch measures 42m east–west by 48m+, again running into the northern edge of the green space and beyond the limit of excavation. It cuts the two earlier ditches along their northern limits and increases significantly in dimensions along its western edge to 4m wide by 2.2m deep.

Phase 3, Early Christian, c. 8th–10th centuries

Evidence for an unenclosed Early Christian settlement site includes at least six circular slots, a double-chambered souterrain, an extensive cobbled pathway and field boundaries. The slots are located along the brow of the ridge and along the eastern slope and vary in diameter from 4.5m to 10m. Several have an entranceway along their eastern edge, though this is not always the rule. The slots are likely to have served as run-off gullies, each surrounding a wattle and daub house, the remains of which did not survive the deep cross-ploughing practised across the site.

A double-chambered souterrain has been excavated along the northern limit of the site, cutting through the second and third enclosures. The souterrain consists of well-crafted drystone passages with two chambers, one to the north and the other to the east. The chambers are also of drystone construction and the curvature of the walls would suggest that the roof was corbelled.

An extensive cobbled pathway has been uncovered running east–west to the north of the souterrain. This pathway can be traced for over 30m and leads to two of the circular run-off gullies.

One ditch can be traced running north–south for over 140m, along the western limit of the excavation. The ditch measures up to 1.5m in width and 1.2m in depth, though there was no

surviving evidence for an associated bank. In general it is V-shaped in profile, though it can be more rounded, and filled with a compact orange boulder clay with the occasional crushed shell and fragmented animal bone throughout. This ditch runs beyond the limit of excavation to the north and has been interpreted as being a field boundary of considerable antiquity.

Phase 4, early medieval, 10th–12th centuries

The early medieval period saw the construction of a series of subrectangular enclosures within the southern half of the site. Here, the earliest enclosure measures 24.6m in diameter (internally), although in plan it appears more subsquare than circular. In general the ditch was 2.3m wide by 0.9m deep and was U-shaped in section. As with most of the ditches along the southern half of the site, its depth increased as it ran down the slope; this may have been due to the variation in subsoil and in particular to the depth at which loose coarse sands were reached.

An entranceway has been identified along the south-west of the ditch and measured c. 2m in width. Along the western and south-western limits the ditch was filled with compact, stony clay, while along the north and east it was filled with grey/orange silty clay. This variation appears to follow the natural variation of the subsoil and would suggest that a bank associated with the construction of the ditch had been deliberately pushed back into the enclosing ditch, perhaps to accommodate the larger second enclosure.

A second enclosure as excavated measures 50m east–west by 30m and continues into the southern edge of the green space. The ditch measures 1.46m by 0.87m and is V-shaped in section. Again the fills vary around the ditch, suggesting redeposited bank material.

A third enclosure entirely dominates the excavations along the southern half of the site, although the northern line of its ditch remains within the green space. It measures 80m east–west by 60m (internal dimensions) and its ditch is up to 2m deep and 3.5m wide. It is assumed that such a ditch would have been defensive and would have had an internal bank, although no direct evidence for one has survived. It has been noted, however, that there is a paucity of archaeology along a 10m-wide band inside the ditch, presumably the result of a large bank having been there.

The fills vary along the length of the ditch, but deposits would suggest that it had remained open for some time, and had silted up gradually. A stave of a small bucket made out of yew was recovered from the basal fill.

A terminal has been identified along the south-western edge but its partner, the eastern terminal, had been removed by an extensive recut, which can be traced along the length of the ditch. This recut suggests the deliberate re-establishment of the line of this, the largest enclosure, and, together with the preceding enclosures, illustrates the longevity of a defended settlement on the site.

Finds from this ditch include a bone peg, animal bone, shell, some undiagnostic hand-built pottery, a few glass beads, a fragment of a jet bracelet, and two very poorly preserved ring-pins, possibly relating to 10th–12th-century deposits.

To the south-east of the site, a north–south-oriented ditch cut through the second enclosure but was in turn cut by the third, large enclosure. A beautifully decorated ring-pin was recovered from the upper fill of this ditch and has been dated to the late 10th/early 11th century, as it is comparable

to ring-pins from Viking deposits in Dublin excavations. This would suggest that this period of constructing defensive enclosures dates from in and around the 9th–12th centuries.

It is suggested that the construction of a rect-angular enclosure is not indigenous but may have been the result of outside influences: the Vikings or the later Anglo-Normans. Presumably these enclosures contained houses and industrial and craft areas, but little survives in the area under investigation.

Phase 5, medieval, post-12th century

A fourth circular enclosure encloses all three enclosing ditches, the double-chambered souterrain, house slots and cobbled pathway along the northern area of the site. This enclosure measures 70m in internal diameter and runs both north and south beyond the limits of the current excavation. The ditch is massive, almost 6m wide and up to 2.5m deep, and a recut has been identified along its western edge. Such a ditch, together with its associated bank, would most certainly have been an impressive earthwork and defensive in nature. No terminals have been identified within the limits of the excavation.

This fourth circular enclosure and the third subrectangular enclosure both ran into the green space along the western edge in close proximity to one another. Dúchas gave permission to topsoil-strip a small area of the green space to try to identify their relationship. On plan it would appear that the subrectangular ditch is cut by the recut within the circular ditch, but radiocarbon dates may show that the subrectangular enclosure pre-dates the original circular enclosure.

Phase 6, later medieval

The later medieval activity includes pits, curvilinear slots, gullies, two kilns and a small souterrain and is located along the north-western area of the site. The souterrain and some of the pits cut through the upper fills of the fourth circular enclosure, while one of the kilns was constructed within the upper fill of the third subrectangular enclosure.

The two kilns were of identical construction — drystone walling with a circular chamber leading off from a short flue. Charred wheat was recovered from one kiln, while glass slag was recovered from the other. The second souterrain is much smaller than that described above, though it is also constructed from drystone corbelling. A short passage widens along its western edge to form a small chamber, while another short passage leading off to the north ends in a semicircular chamber.

Many of the pits are similar in size and nature, which would suggest that they are contemporary, but they do not form a structure. Several very large pits have evidence of a lime/ash basal fill which would suggest their use as tanning-pits.

Conclusion

Excavations are expected to finish soon but already it is clear that, in general, the archaeology in the northern half of the site dates from much earlier than that in the southern half. It is thought that the northern half of the site was the focus for the original settlement — possibly a tuath, the limits of which were re-established over time. During the 9th–12th centuries, the emphasis shifted to the southern area of the site, probably the result of an invading group of people — possibly the Vikings.

2002:1489 - Ninch, Laytown, Meath

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A Licence number: **98E0501 ext.**

Author: Cia McConway, ADS Ltd, Unit 48, Westlink Enterprise Centre, 30–50 Distillery Street, Belfast

Site type: Multi-period

ITM: E 716437m, N 771543m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.680630, -6.237450

Excavations of Phase 2 at the Inse Bay Development, Ninch, Laytown, Co. Meath, have uncovered an extensive and multi-phased complex site. In general the site can be dated to the Early Christian period, but there is also evidence of a temporary Neolithic campsite and early medieval kilns and occupation. The northern half of the site consisted of four large, subcircular, roughly concentric but not contemporaneous defensive ditches dating to around the 6th–10th centuries. In addition to these were an Early Christian graveyard, five oval enclosures, which have been interpreted as animal enclosures, circular house slots and cobbled surfaces of c. 8th–10th-century date, two souterrains, a well/fishpond and pits, and slots and gullies that date to around the 11th century. Along the southern half of the site there was evidence of a temporary Late Neolithic campsite, Early Christian ring-ditches and house slots, three sub-rectangular defensive enclosures dating to around the 11th/12th century and two kilns of c. 13th-century date.

The northern half of the site appeared to have been predominantly a secular, multi-phased rath, perhaps even a tuath of the Ciannachta, and it was perhaps because of the importance of the site that its function changed in the later stages to an ecclesiastical centre. There are strong parallels to the Millockstown site in County Louth, which also has a secular ringfort that was reused as an ecclesiastical site in and around the 8th/9th century.

Later, the southern half of the site was the focus of a series of defensive subrectangular enclosures, a site type not indigenous to Ireland. A Hiberno-Norse ring-pin has dated this phase to the later 10th/early 11th century. Whether the subrectangular enclosures represent an invading people or the adoption by the native Irish of a different site type, they illustrate the return of the site to a secular function. A summary of the excavations of the southern half of the site has been published in *Excavations 2001* (No. 1007).

The archaeology of the northern half of the site can be divided into nine distinct phases of activity, although many of these phases can be subdivided. There was no surviving evidence of a bank associated with any of the ditches, although it should be assumed that they had originally existed and were most probably defensive earthworks lying along the inner edge of the ditches. The southern edges of all four large enclosures and the northern edge of the largest enclosure, F4200, ran into unexcavated green spaces and will be preserved in situ.

Phase 1 saw the construction of several linear and curvilinear ditches culminating in an oval ditch, F3449, and its recut, F3010, which enclosed the highest part of the site. Both ditches measured 38m north–south by 25m, and both used the same entrance, 1.5m wide, to the east; however, the recut had a second entrance opposite this, to the west. F3010 was filled with redeposited subsoil, probably bank material, to facilitate the construction of the second large enclosure, F3145.

Phase 2 is essentially defined by the construction of a second large subcircular enclosing ditch, F3145, with extant internal dimensions of 34m east–west by 39m (projected dimension of 46m). It completely enclosed F3449/F3010 and cut through another ditch associated with Phase 1. F3145 was filled with thin bands of friable, red/orange, ash-like deposits, charcoal-rich bands, and loose clays and sands. Several pits with fills identical to this were found outside the ditch to the east and south, suggesting that contemporaneous activity, probably industrial, took place beyond the relative

safety of the enclosure. A large quantity of animal bone and shell was recovered from the ditch fills, as were metal slag and several sherds of E-ware pottery. 14C dates are not yet available, but the pottery suggests a date no earlier than the early to mid-7th century for the filling of the ditch. This enclosure was a single-phase construction and was generally narrower and shallower along the eastern side, 3.5m by 1.4m, than the western, 3.8m by 2.1m; it was generally V-shaped in profile. Several burials (Phase 7) cut through the upper fills of this ditch along the east.

Phase 3 is a complicated sequence of events, especially in the south-eastern area of the site. It includes the third large enclosing ditch, F3538, and its recut, F3146, and can be subdivided into six phases of discrete pockets of archaeological activity.

F3538/3146 enclosed the two large ditches described above and partially obliterated the northern edge of F3145. It enclosed an area measuring 50m east–west by 43m and continued into an unexcavated green area to the south. It had quite steep sides and a V-shaped base and was filled with a series of sandy/silty clays with a high gravel content, which was presumably slipped bank material. It was extensively removed by the construction of the souterrain, F3006 (Phase 8), to the north.

The enclosure increased dramatically in width and depth from the east (c. 2m by 0.7m) to the west (4.8m by 1.8m), probably owing to the stratigraphy of the subsoil, which was prone to collapse along the east. The smaller, eastern ditch may have been compensated for by a larger, associated bank using subsoil from the western section.

The three enclosures described above have been interpreted as substantial raths and would have enclosed houses, workshops, hearths and probably animal pens. However, the communal interior of these enclosures was completely devoid of archaeological activity directly associated with Phases 1–3. This is likely to have been due to the extensive deep ploughing along the crest of the ridge, which demarcated the interior.

Phase 4 indicates a significant change in the nature and function of the site. The large ditched enclosures were abandoned and filled, and in their stead was an unenclosed settlement site consisting of circular houses, 6.5–7m in diameter, slots, gullies and cobbled pathways. This activity was primarily situated to the north and along the eastern slope and was probably associated with the archaeology described in Phase 2 along the southern half of the site (Excavations 2001, No. 1007), which had similarly sized house slots.

Six separate areas of cobbling were uncovered and have been interpreted as originally forming a single stretch, 48m long. Its location, apparently leading up to the annexe of House 3, suggests that it functioned as a formal trackway running east–west along the northern limit of the site. These metallised surfaces were constructed primarily from small beach-rolled stones and almost entirely directly overlay subsoil.

After House 3 fell into disuse, the immediate area was criss-crossed primarily by a complex series of short linear slots and gullies with no surviving associated bank.

Phase 5 describes a series of five oval enclosures, F4874/F4977, F5327/F6666, F4909/F5782, F3151/F6427 and F3234/F6291, situated along the eastern slope of the site, between the third and the fourth large enclosures, F3538/F3146 and F4200. The ditches post-date the houses assigned to Phase 4 and often recut part of the line of an earlier enclosure. They were similar to the four large enclosures, F3010, F3145, F3146 and F4200, in that no two were contemporaneous, they increased

in enclosed area with time and there was no surviving evidence of a bank associated with any of them. All five post-date the three large enclosures described above and pre-date the fourth, F4200, described below.

F4874/F4977 was the earliest and the smallest of the oval enclosures, measuring 16m by 10.5m, and the latest and largest ditch, F3234/F6291, which was truncated by F4200 to the east, measured 30.4m by 22.5m (projected). All five enclosures were oriented north-west/south-east. Four had formal entrance-ways, upslope along their western edges, suggesting contemporaneous activity to the west.

The widths and depths of these oval enclosures suggest that they were not defensive in nature, as does their location downslope. There was no evidence to suggest that they had enclosed houses, slots, pits, post-holes or hearths, and, apart from F5278 (which has been interpreted as the result of continuous trample through the entranceway of the three earliest enclosures), none of the features were contemporary with the ditches that enclosed them. It is likely, then, that the oval enclosures functioned as animal enclosures, presumably with an associated settlement upslope to the west. The re-establishment of these enclosures suggests longevity of the associated settlement. Unfortunately no evidence of such a settlement was uncovered in the area of the excavation.

Phase 6 describes the archaeology that post-dated either Phase 4 or Phase 5 and pre-dated Phase 7 but cannot be directly associated with the oval enclosures of Phase 5. Four pockets of activity are assigned to this phase, and, although each describes a sequence of events, there is no direct stratigraphic relationship between the areas. In general these features consist of gullies, slots and ditches producing charcoal, crushed shell and animal bone. A fourth house, F4613, also belongs to this phase. This house was much bigger than the others, 8.5m in diameter, and, like the others, was not associated with an enclosing ditch.

During Phase 7 the nature and function of the site changed from an unenclosed settlement to an enclosed ecclesiastical site with burial-ground. The fourth and largest of the circular enclosures, F4200, occupied an area measuring 80m east-west by 80m (projected) and fully enclosed all of the archaeology described above. This ditch cut through archaeology associated with Phases 4–6 and was in turn cut by small pits and a small souterrain assigned to Phase 8. This was a massive earthwork, almost 5m wide and 2m deep. A recut, F1368, was identified along the western half of the ditch, up to 4.4m wide and 1.5m deep. Being downslope, the eastern section of the ditch was permanently flooded during excavation, resulting in some organics, including a barrel hoop, being recovered from the fills. It is likely that the continuous silting here necessitated a massive clean-out, effectively obliterating the original ditch cut.

There was no evidence of an upstanding bank associated with this ditch; however, redeposited subsoil that sealed the cobbled surfaces described above in Phase 4 was probably the basal material of the bank. Likewise, the eastern area of the site was sealed with a black sandy soil that has been interpreted as the original ground surface and then sealed with material cast up for the bank.

A number of burials were revealed at the midpoint of the area enclosed by this ditch. E-ware pottery was found associated with both the burials and the ditch, and their location with respect to one another suggests that they are contemporaneous. This has parallels with Millockstown, Co. Meath, where a rath was superseded by a large enclosure containing lintel graves.

A total of 79 burials and a further thirteen disarticulated burials were excavated. Most of the burials lay in an area of 7m by 4.5m, suggesting that they were enclosed, and two burials in well-constructed lintel graves lay to the west of these. Although no evidence of this survived, the plan of the burials and their density here suggest that they had lain in a small wooden church. The remainder of the burials, apart from the two described above, lay to the east and south of this concentration. Most were in simple subsoil-cut graves, with no lining or coffin. There were a few stone-lined graves, some of which were intact and had capping stones covering the burial, but others had been reused, resulting in part of the stone lining being disturbed.

Most of the burials were oriented slightly north-west/south-east, with the head to the west. Most of the remainder were oriented west–east. However, three burials had slight south-west/north-east orientations. All of the burials except one were supine; however, one poorly preserved and disturbed burial, F6946, found in an oval subsoil-cut grave, appeared to be in a crouched position.

All of the skeletons from the 2001–2 season were examined in situ by osteoarchaeologist Laureen Buckley, and a number of pathological lesions were noted. Although these will require further analysis, at least three of the individuals examined showed signs of osteoarthritis, two in the vertebrae, and the third in the left shoulder and hip. Two individuals had osteophytosis of the lumbar vertebrae, and three to four of the thoracic vertebrae of another individual were collapsed and fused, possibly indicating tuberculosis.

Two souterrains and a large pit, interpreted as either a well or a fishpond, can be assigned to Phase 8. The pit was in the south-eastern area of the site and cut through the old ground surface, identified above, that had been sealed by the bank associated with the fourth circular enclosure, F4200. It was 7.5m in diameter and 0.6m deep and was filled with a series of heavy, grey, gritty clays with large, heavy boulders throughout. A subcircular stone setting was uncovered at the base of the pit. Throughout the excavation the pit filled with salt water, making it more likely to have been used as a fishpond than as a well.

Two souterrains were excavated on the site. The larger, F3006, cut through a junction of ditches associated with Phases 1–4 and 6 to the north of the site, and the smaller, F4158, cut through the inner edge and upper fills of F4200. It is assumed that the two souterrains were contemporaneous; however, the larger souterrain had no direct stratigraphic relationship with F4200. Its position in the area that would have been occupied by the bank associated with F4200 may suggest that it was strategically placed in order to use the bank as cover for its chambers. This would suggest that, although the larger souterrain technically post-dated the ditch, it was in use during the lifetime of the ecclesiastical site.

Phase 9 covers the western area of the site. Lying to the west of F4200 was an area of c. 50m by 25m in which lay a series of slots, gullies and pits and a north–south linear ditch, F580. These all lay outside the circular enclosures and had no direct stratigraphic relationship with any of the phases described above. In the absence of 14C dates, it is suggested that the features here are contemporaneous, and the finds recovered from the fills indicate that they may be prehistoric and therefore contemporary with Phase 1 along the southern half of the site. Pottery from a small pit has been identified as Bronze Age (A. Brindley, pers. comm.), and animal bone recovered from ditch F580 appears to be too small for the standard Early Christian dimensions (J. Hughes, pers. comm.). This appears to have parallels with the Colp site, excavated by Donald Murphy, where a linear ditch was bounded a series of prehistoric pits (Excavations 2000, No. 748, 99E0472).

2001:1008 - Laytown–Bettystown, Meath

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A Licence number: 01E1175

Author: Rob Lynch, Irish Archaeological Consultancy Ltd, 8 Dungar Terrace, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin.

Site type: No archaeological significance

ITM: E 715819m, N 773498m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.698324, -6.246068

The East Meath Sewerage Scheme involves the construction of a sewage pipeline c. 20km in length running through areas of land in Mornington, Donacarney, Bettystown, Betaghstown, Laytown and Julianstown to service existing and future residential housing. The scheme also involves amendments to the existing pipeline and modifications to six existing pumping stations along the route.

Monitoring commenced on site in July 2001 and will continue until December 2002. To date nothing of archaeological significance has been discovered.

2001:945 - Narrow Ways, Bettystown, Meath

County: Meath **Site name:** Narrow Ways, Bettystown

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A

Licence number: 01E1170

Author: Linda Clarke, Archaeological Consultancy Services, 15 Trinity Street, Drogheda, Co. Louth.

Site type: Partial remains of two disarticulated skeletons

ITM: E 714587m, N 773272m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.696569, -6.264794

An assessment was carried out on a proposed residential development site at the Narrow Ways, Bettystown, Co. Meath, on behalf of Dúchas, following the discovery of human remains on the site during groundworks. The purpose of the assessment was to define the extent of the burials on the site, and an osteoarchaeologist was also present.

The skeletal remains had been removed and so no on-site assessment of the burials could be made; no obvious cut for the burial was visible at the time of assessment. The skeletal remains were later identified as the partial remains of two young male adults of prehistoric/Early Christian date.

Two large areas were subsequently stripped to establish the presence or absence of more burials. Area 1, which surrounded the location of the burial, measured 270m² and Area 2, which was located south-south-west of the burial, measured 66m². Small fragments of human bone were recovered from the spoil removed from Area 1. One relatively large piece was recovered and a preliminary identification would suggest that it belonged to a teenager. The original location of this bone is uncertain and it is possible that it is related to the burial. No other burials were exposed during this

assessment. Conditions were, however, quite difficult as Areas 1 and 2 were filled with gravel. Grave-cuts can be difficult to identify in such conditions. As a result 0.5m of the gravel was removed to confirm the absence of burials. An oval feature was, however, exposed east of the location of the burial within Area 1. The function of this feature is not certain but it may have been a pit.

An overall site assessment also showed that there was no evidence for archaeological stratigraphy or burials within any of the service trenches excavated. This is not to say, however, that there are no more burials or archaeology contained within the site. Only a small portion of this site has been disturbed to date and there is a possibility that it contains more burials or associated archaeology. All subsequent phases of activity on this site should therefore be monitored and the possible pit feature exposed within Area 1 should be fully investigated if there is to be an impact upon it.

2002:1427 - Ballygarth, Meath

County: Meath Site name: Ballygarth

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A Licence number: 02E1721

Author: Finola O'Carroll, Cultural Resource Development Services Ltd, Unit 4, Dundrum Business Park, Dundrum, Dublin 14.

Site type: No archaeological significance

ITM: E 714372m, N 770129m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.668379, -6.269207

Monitoring took place of the groundworks associated with the construction of a storm drainpipe at a new housing development site in the townland of Ballygarth, 6km south of Drogheda town, in County Meath. The pipeline/storm drain crossed a field sloping down to the River Nanny and was oriented north–south. Monitoring was required because of the proximity of the development to SMR 28:1 (enclosure), 28:7 (cross), 28:2 (tower-house), 28:3 (church) and the River Nanny. These sites are within 250–550m of the development.

Monitoring revealed no archaeological features. Subsoil was exposed c. 1m below the existing surface level. The only finds recovered were of modern date.

2002:1430 - Betaghstown, Bettystown, Meath

County: Meath Site name: Betaghstown, Bettystown

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A

Licence number: 02E1709

Author: Eoin Halpin, ADS Ltd, Unit 48, Westlink Enterprise Centre, 30–50 Distillery Street, Belfast BT12 5BJ.

Site type: Various

ITM: E 715726m, N 773518m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.698524, -6.247468

Testing took place at Betaghstown townland, Bettystown, Co. Meath. The site is on a plot of pastureland measuring c. 5.3ha on the outskirts of Bettystown village and is the location of a new development that will form part of the proposed town centre. The development will involve the construction of a hotel, residential blocks, retail and commercial buildings, including two basement areas, associated services and surface car-parking.

A total of 25 trenches were excavated by a mechanical digger fitted with a toothless bucket. Any archaeological features uncovered were excavated by hand in a limited area to establish their date, depth and state of preservation.

Trenches 1–18 were excavated in the field immediately east of the demolished remains of Triton Lodge. Trenches 19–25 were excavated in the field west of the remains of Triton Lodge.

Nineteen trenches contained features that appeared to be archaeological. The most significant were a partially exposed arc of a circular ring-ditch, 0.8–0.9m wide, a disarticulated human burial, and two areas of burning. These features were uncovered on the gently sloping, north–south-running ridge that dominates the terrain in this area. These features suggest that the area has been subject to intensive archaeological activity.

Little of archaeological significance was uncovered in the field west of the remains of Triton Lodge.

In total 53 features were revealed during testing; 23 were of definite archaeological importance, and three features were deemed to be of possible archaeological significance. Two of the features were modern field drains; ten were indeterminate remnants of artificial cuts/depositions, and a further fifteen were fills of a non-archaeological nature.

2002:1488 - Alverno Hotel, Laytown, Meath

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A Licence number: **02E1003**

Author: Tom Rogers, Moore Ltd, Unit 6, Riveroaks, Claregalway, Co. Galway.

Site type: No archaeological significance

ITM: E 716437m, N 771543m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.680630, -6.237450

Testing was undertaken to the rear of the Alverno Hotel on 26 and 27 June 2002, before the construction of 36 houses and three shop units. The site lay on a slight rise to the north of the River Nanny, at the point where it enters the Irish Sea. A multi-period site was excavated by James Eogan and Martin Reid at Ninch, c. 1km to the north-west (Excavations 2000, No. 760, 98E0501).

The site surrounds the hotel on three sides. Eight test-trenches were opened, each 15m long and 1.6m wide. Stratigraphy was generally similar. Topsoil, c. 0.6m deep, was a loose, mid-brown, sandy silt, with inclusions of small round stones and occasional flecks of charcoal, brick and modern glazed pottery. Beneath was a layer of gravel with inclusions of round cobbles (up to 0.1m in diameter) and a layer of bright yellow, sandy clay with few inclusions. This in turn overlay a loose, fine beach gravel with inclusions of small round stones.

No features or finds of archaeological significance were uncovered. The field was tilled within living memory to grow vegetables for the hotel.

2002:1490 - Ninch, Laytown, Meath

Sites and Monuments Record No.: SMR 28:25 Licence number: **01E0723**

Author: John O'Connor, 2 Walnut Rise, Courtlands, Dublin 9, for ADS Ltd.

Site type: Monitoring

ITM: E 716437m, N 771543m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.680630, -6.237450

Monitoring for Phase 3 of a housing development at Ninch, Laytown, Co. Meath, was carried out from 3 December 2001 to 15 January 2002. The housing development was being constructed in a number of phases on a large site between the Dublin–Belfast railway line and the Irish Sea. Testing carried out between April and September 2000 by James Eogan and Martin Reid resulted in a recommendation that all groundworks associated with the development be monitored (Excavations 2000, No. 760, 99E0501). Excavations were being carried out by Cia McConway in an area to the east of Phase 3 (No. 1489 above) at the time of writing.

Topsoil was stripped using machines fitted with toothless grading buckets from the level of topsoil down to the top of archaeological features or to undisturbed subsoil. The stratigraphy was uniform across the area. Topsoil was a loose, mid-brown, clayey silt, c. 0.15–0.6m deep. The topsoil directly overlay the natural subsoil, an orange/brown clay with a moderate amount of charcoal inclusions. Nine possible archaeological features were exposed in four distinct areas of the site.

Most of these features were circular or subcircular cuts, which were cleaned and recorded but not excavated. Two of the features were small spreads of burnt stone, which may be connected, possibly parts of a fulacht fiadh. Further investigations of these features are to be carried out under a separate excavation licence. Some or all of these features may be associated with the large complex to the east of Phase 3. However, it is also possible that some of the features are the result of modern field clearance or related to recent farming activity in the field.

2002:1491 - Ninch, Laytown, Meath

Sites and Monuments Record No.: SMR 28:25 Licence number: **01E0723** ext.

Author: John O'Connor, 2 Walnut Rise, Courtlands, Dublin 9, for ADS Ltd.

Site type: Monitoring

ITM: E 716437m, N 771543m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.680630, -6.237450

Further monitoring of topsoil-stripping at a housing development at Ninch, Laytown, Co. Meath, was carried out between August and October 2002. This site, known as Phase B, is north of the area monitored in January 2002 (No. 1490 above). Topsoil was stripped by mechanical excavators fitted with toothless buckets. The topsoil was a mid-grey/brown silty clay, 0.15–0.4m deep. It lay directly over glacially derived subsoil that varied greatly from yellow sandy clays to light brown, sticky clays and loose gravels.

Fourteen areas of archaeology were uncovered (Areas A–N). Most consisted of between one and eight features, but the two main areas (Areas M and N), along the railway track, contained around 67 features between them. The features uncovered were mainly charcoal spreads, areas of fire-reddened clay, linear features, numerous pits, a ring-ditch, a semi-ring-ditch and evidence of a

cremation burial. Three patinated, convex flint scrapers were recovered from the topsoil in Area N. Further investigation of these features is to be carried out under a separate licence. It is possible that some of these features are the result of relatively recent, or indeed modern, agricultural activity.

2002:1492 - Ninch, Laytown, Meath

Sites and Monuments Record No.: SMR 28:25 Licence number: **01E0723 ext.**

Author: John O'Connor, 2 Walnut Rise, Courtlands, Dublin 9, for ADS Ltd.

Site type: Monitoring

ITM: E 716437m, N 771543m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.680630, -6.237450

Monitoring of services associated with Phase 3b of a housing development at Ninch, Laytown, Co. Meath, was carried out from 16 December 2002 to 6 January 2003.

Topsoil was stripped using a machine fitted with a toothless grading bucket down to the top of archaeological features or to undisturbed subsoil. The topsoil directly overlay the glacially derived subsoil, which varied from an orange/brown clay with a moderate amount of charcoal inclusions to a yellow sandy clay with areas of gravel.

Nineteen linear features were uncovered, some of which may be modern field drains, but others may be of archaeological significance. Three areas of dark silty clay were also revealed. Two oblong features were uncovered in the eastern part of the site, along with a spread of stones. Fragments of animal bone and evidence of charcoal were also discovered. Further investigations of these features are being carried out under a separate licence and will be reported on in Excavations 2003 (03E0024). Some or all of these features may be associated with the large complex to the east of Phase 3. However, it is also possible that some of the features are the result of modern activity in the field.

2003:1415 - Laytown, Meath

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A Licence number: 02E1003

Author: Martin Jones, No. 6 Newgarden, Belclare, Tuam, Co. Galway.

Site type: Monitoring

ITM: E 716437m, N 771543m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.680630, -6.237450

Topsoil-stripping was monitored at the proposed location of a development of 38 houses, three shop units and their associated services and access at the rear of the Alverno Hotel in Laytown Village, Co. Meath.

A desk-top assessment and testing were carried out by Tom Rogers in June 2002 (Excavations 2002, No. 1488). Nothing of archaeological significance was uncovered in the course of testing. It was recommended that an archaeologist carry out monitoring of the proposed development. The development is relatively close to several monuments and recent excavations 1km to the north have also revealed a site of multi-period activity.

Fieldwork was carried out on an intermittent basis between 14 and 29 of July 2003. Work was then postponed until further notice. Topsoil was stripped to a maximum depth of 0.45m. No deposits of an archaeological nature were found. A number of cut features noted were modern and associated with the former use of the site as a caravan park. Finds retrieved included modern pottery, glass, plastic drainage piping and domestic refuse.

2003:1416 - Ninch, Laytown, Meath

Sites and Monuments Record No.: SMR 28:25 Licence number: **01E0723**

Author: John O'Connor

Site type: Monitoring

ITM: E 716437m, N 771543m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.680630, -6.237450

Monitoring of services associated with Phase 3b of a housing development at Ninch, Laytown, Co. Meath, was carried out from 16 December 2002 to 6 January 2003. The development is being constructed in a number of phases on a large site located between the Dublin-Belfast railway line and the Irish Sea. Testing carried out by James Eogan and Martin Reid between April and September 2000 resulted in a recommendation that all groundworks associated with the development should be monitored (Excavations 2000, No. 760, 98E0501 ext.).

Topsoil was stripped using a machine fitted with a toothless grading bucket. The stratigraphy of the site has been uniform across the area. Topsoil consists of loose, mid-brown clayey silt. The depth of topsoil removed has varied from c. 0.3 to 0.65m. The topsoil directly overlay the glacially derived subsoil, which varied from an orange/brown clay with moderate stone inclusions to yellow sandy clay and areas of gravel.

In all, some nineteen linear features were uncovered, some of which may be modern field drains but others may turn out to be of archaeological significance. Three areas of spreads of dark silty clay were also revealed. Two oblong features were uncovered in the eastern portion of the site, along with a spread of stones. Fragments of animal bone and evidence of charcoal were also discovered. Further investigations of these features are due to be carried out as a separate excavation. Some or all of these features may be associated with the large complex located to the east of Phase 3. However, it is also possible that some of the features may be the result of modern field clearance events or related to recent farming activity in the field.

2003:1417 - Ninch, Laytown, Meath

County: Meath Site name: Ninch, Laytown

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A Licence number: 03E0024

Author: Joanne Hughes, Boscabell, Cashel, Co. Tipperary.

Site type: Gullies, post-medieval ditches and drains

ITM: E 716437m, N 771543m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.680628, -6.237450

Previous work on this development site by James Eogan, Martin Reid and Cia McConway identified substantial multi-period archaeological remains (Excavations 2000, No. 760; 2001, No. 1007, 98E0501). Phase 3b works were located to the north of the Phase 2 investigations (ibid.) and

involved the resolution of features identified during testing on the site (02E0017 ext.). The majority of features consisted of post-medieval field drains and field boundaries. Three undated north-south-oriented gully features (no more than 6m long, 1m wide and up to 0.5m deep) were identified; all extended beyond the northern limits of excavation. Other than a possible hammer/rubbing stone, no other diagnostic dating evidence was found. An anomalous crescent-shaped feature (less than 2m long, 0.3m wide and 0.2m deep) was identified close to one of these gullies. Its function remains unclear. Two north-south-oriented ditches were also identified, one of which may be related to a similarly oriented ditch found during Phase 2 investigations (Excavations 2001, No. 1007, Phase 3, Early Christian). Both of these ditches continued beyond the northern limits of the excavation.

2003:1418 - Ninch, Laytown, Meath

County: Meath Site name: Ninch, Laytown

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A Licence number: **03E1820**

Author: Donald Murphy, Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd, Unit 21, Boyne Business Park, Greenhills, Drogheda, Co. Louth.

Site type: No archaeological significance

ITM: E 715674m, N 771943m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.684392, -6.248842

Monitoring was carried out on Phase 4 of a residential development at Inse Bay, Laytown, Co. Meath. The site is within an area of high archaeological potential; substantial archaeological deposits were uncovered and excavated by Eoin Halpin, James Eogan and Martin Reid during Phases 1-3 (Excavations 1999, Nos 695 and 705, 98E0501; Excavations 2000, No. 760). These included a fulacht fiadh, a large ring-ditch, an extensive multi-phase settlement including prehistoric pits and hearths, three pre-7th-century circular enclosures, a 7th-century burial ground, an 8th-10th-century settlement site with house slots, a souterrain and cobbled pathways, three 10th-12th-century subrectangular enclosures, a 13th-century circular enclosure and an early medieval souterrain, kilns and industrial area.

Previous testing of Phase 4 of the development by Eoin Halpin indicated that the archaeological activity associated with Phase 2 extended into the southern portion of Phase 4. This area of activity will be preserved below green space within the development, as already agreed with the Heritage Service. This testing indicated that the northern portion of Phase 4 had low archaeological potential but may nevertheless include pockets of archaeology.

The entire area to be developed was stripped of topsoil over a two-week period from 17 November to 1 December 2003. No features of archaeological significance were exposed. The area stripped was located just off the ridge on which the multi-phase settlement site was exposed. A large quantity of land drains, all modern in date, were uncovered cut into the natural marl and boulder clay. This suggests that this area was extremely waterlogged in the past and may account for the notable absence of any archaeological deposits.

2003:1465 - Sevitsland, Meath

County: Meath Site name: Sevitsland

Sites and Monuments Record No.: SMR 21:10; 21:13; 21:14 Licence number: 03E0266

Author: John O'Connor

Site type: No archaeological significance

ITM: E 714357m, N 772909m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.693356, -6.268409

A mixed housing development at Sevitsland, Julianstown, Co. Meath, required monitoring of all subsurface works. The site is west of the village of Bettystown on the outskirts of an area known to be rich in archaeological remains. The entire site, c. 4 acres, was stripped down to the top of the subsoil by a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket. Finds included clay-pipe stems, post-medieval and modern pottery sherds and fragments of red brick. No features of archaeological significance were discovered.

2004:1186 - BETAGHSTOWN, Meath

County: Meath Site name: BETAGHSTOWN

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A Licence number: **04E1649**

Author: Deirdre Murphy, Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd, Unit 21, Boyne Business Park, Greenhills, Drogheda, Co. Louth.

Site type: Prehistoric enclosing ditch

ITM: E 686647m, N 742427m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.424830, -6.696300

Testing in Bettystown, Co. Meath, was carried out in compliance with planning permission for a proposed hotel development. The site is located in the townland of Betaghstown near SMR 21:10, a cemetery, and 21:14, a holy well. Six trenches were excavated and archaeological deposits were identified in three of these. A curving ditch measuring 0.4m in depth and 1.2m in width was evident in two of the trenches along the western part of the site. The fill of this feature contained animal bone, shell, charcoal flecks and a waste flint core. To the east of the site two further parallel east-west-oriented ditches were identified. Both of these had similar fills to the ditch on the western part of the site and it is likely that the most northerly ditch represents a continuation of the western ditch. Two further features identified in the eastern part of the site were interpreted as pits of probable 17th-century date.

2004:1187 - BETTYSTOWN, Meath

County: Meath Site name: BETTYSTOWN

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A

Licence number: 02E1709, 04E0533

Author: John Lehane, Archaeological Development Services Ltd, Windsor House, 11, Fairview Strand, Fairview, Dublin 3.

Site type: Prehistoric; early medieval

ITM: E 715819m, N 773498m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.698324, -6.246068

A new town centre consisting of various commercial and residential units is being constructed. Testing by Eoin Halpin in 2002 (Excavations 2002, No. 1430, 02E1709) had found a skeleton and other possible archaeological features. This licence was reactivated to strip the topsoil and fully assess the archaeological material in situ. Excavations by James Eoghan in 1998 (Excavations 1998, No. 503, 98E0072) and Eamonn P. Kelly in the 1970s had revealed multi-period features in the adjoining properties.

As the extent of the site became apparent, an excavation licence was obtained.

The features excavated comprised a fulacht fiadh trough with associated midden and roasting pits, linear ditches, an unstratified skeleton, possible cremation pits and a series of curvilinear ditches defining an enclosure that contains a souterrain. An unusual stone feature was also discovered that has as yet defied identification.

The fulacht trough was relatively large, measuring c. 8.5m by c. 3m deep, and was disturbed by modern field drains and wastewater pipes. Unusually, the lowest fill contained an amber bead; post-excavation analysis may locate additional artefacts. The nearby roasting pits displayed signs of being heat-affected.

The linear ditches were found to run roughly parallel to each other and may have been boundary delineators. No structural features were observed during excavation, though several probable hearths were cut by the ditches. These ditches terminate at the north-western limit of a roughly circular enclosure.

The northern portion of the enclosure was first excavated. Within that portion a rectilinear undifferentiated souterrain was uncovered, which measured c. 18.9m east-west by 2.7m by 1.7m deep. The walls were constructed of water-rolled stones, average dimension 0.25m by 0.2m by 0.2m, with the upper portion of the wall corbelling in. Several habitation layers were recorded. A stone floor at the western terminus, where the apparent entrance was located, when lifted revealed a decorated riveted bone comb.

A skeleton found during testing was removed from the site, though its condition was too poor to allow interpretation of burial rite. The skull was not in situ.

Ten pits were found located to the east to the enclosure. Two appear to have well-burnt bone in their fills and several pieces of worked flint were removed for post-excavation analysis.

A stone feature was located at the northern side of the enclosure. Orientated west-east, with a possible entrance to the west, it measured c. 4.5m east-west by 1.8m maximum by 1.65m deep. It was lined on its north and south sides with water-rolled stones. The eastern terminal was disturbed by a later pit. The deposits within the stone feature were composed of several dozen layers and lenses of small burning events. Possible burnt bone was observed during excavation and a possible iron blade was located high up in the stratigraphy.

Overall, very few diagnostic artefacts were found during the excavation. The possible three forms of burial rite: inhumation, cremation pit and stone feature, imply multi-period usage of the site. It is expected that post-excavation analysis will aid the interpretation of this site. The future excavation of the southern portion of the enclosure will also increase the information available.

2004:1185 - BETAGHSTOWN, Meath

Licence number: 02E1709

Author: Eoghan Kieran, c/o Archaeological Development Services Ltd, Windsor House, 11 Fairview Strand, Dublin 3.

Site type: Various

ITM: E 686647m, N 742428m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.424830, -6.696300

A series of 25 test-trenches were excavated by mechanical digger fitted with a toothless bucket. Nineteen trenches contained features which appeared to be archaeological. The most definitive features were a partially exposed arc of a 0.8-0.9mwide circular ring-ditch, a disarticulated human burial, an area of burning and an additional area of burning. These features were uncovered on the gentle sloping north-south-running ridge which dominates the terrain in this area. These features are indicative of the area having been subject to intensive archaeological activity.

Editor's note: Though carried out in 2002, this summary was received too late for inclusion in the bulletin of that year.

2005:1158 - BETAGHSTOWN, Meath

County: Meath Site name: BETAGHSTOWN

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A

Licence number: **05E0005**

Author: Deirdre Murphy, Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd, Unit 21, Boyne Business Park, Greenhills, Drogheda, Co. Louth.

Site type: Habitation site

ITM: E 686647m, N 742427m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.424830, -6.696300

Testing in Bettystown, Co. Meath, was carried out in December 2004 in compliance with planning permission for a proposed hotel development (Excavations 2004, No. 1186, 04E1649). Archaeological features were identified and hence excavation was undertaken in 2005. The site is located in the townland of Betaghstown near a cemetery, SMR 21:10, and a holy well, SMR 21:14. Two areas of archaeological activity were identified. To the east of the site the remains were post-medieval in date and comprised a pit and recut grave pit. The pit had dimensions of 3m by 3.8m by 0.64. At its base this pit was recut and it held the remains of an articulated middle-aged donkey. To the west of the site a curving ditch was identified; it had dimensions of 1.5m by 25m by 0.3m. It was almost semicircular and as it extended eastwards it was cut by existing buildings. Hence it is probable that the feature was originally a complete enclosure that has since been heavily truncated. It was filled with shell, animal bone and pieces of waste flint. This ditch feature partially enclosed three large oval-shaped pits, with dimensions of 4m by 3m, 3.5m by 2.75m and 1.05m by 1.68m respectively. They had a maximum depth of 0.4m and were probably the remains of refuse pits. Charcoal recovered from one of these pits returned a radiocarbon date of cal AD 430–620 (BP 1520–

1320). Charred plant remains within the fills of these pits were identified as hulled barley, oats and a single pip of blackberry (probably intrusive). Charred wood was identified as apple, cherry/plum, willow, ash and hazel. Four roughly circular pits with average diameters of 0.5–0.6m were identified to the north of the ditch. A scatter of small charcoal and oxidised clay spreads were also identified across the site. Charcoal recovered from one of the spreads returned a radiocarbon date of cal AD 550–660 (BP 1400–1280). Animal bone recovered from the features in this area of the site was identified as cattle, sheep, pig, horse, dog, deer and cat. This type of assemblage is typical of occupation debris and may represent waste from a nearby settlement. The molluscan remains also represent food debris and were predominantly cockles and mussels.

2005:1159 - BETTYSTOWN, Meath

County: Meath Site name: BETTYSTOWN

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A Licence number: 05E0013

Author: Linda Clarke, Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd, Unit 21, Boyne Business Park, Greenhills, Drogheda, Co. Louth.

Site type: No archaeological significance

ITM: E 715819m, N 773498m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.698324, -6.246068

An assessment was carried out at a proposed development site in Bettystown, Co. Meath. Twenty-one test-trenches were excavated within this site; 2,971.5m² out of a total of 31,660m² was archaeologically assessed providing a testing coverage of 9.5%. A portion of the site to the east was not assessed, as spoil heaps and rubble were present.

Prior to this assessment, a geophysical survey was carried out by Earthsound and various anomalies were identified. Test-trenches were excavated across all the anomalies identified. No features of archaeological significance were identified and no finds were recovered.

2005:1208 - INSE BAY, LAYTOWN, Meath

County: Meath Site name: INSE BAY, LAYTOWN

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A Licence number: **03E1820**

Author: Donald Murphy, Unit 21, Boyne Business Park, Greenhills, Drogheda, Louth.

Site type: No archaeological significance

ITM: E 715626m, N 772068m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.685525, -6.249522

Monitoring was carried out on the site of two proposed houses at Inse Bay, Laytown, Co. Meath. This was the site of an old site compound between No. 11 The Rise and No. 21 The Grove. Monitoring revealed that the area of the compound had already been stripped of topsoil and partially disturbed to a depth of 0.3m. The sod and topsoil measured a maximum of 0.32m in thickness and lay above a layer of mid- to dark-brown coarse clay containing builders' rubbish. No archaeological features or deposits were exposed and no finds were retrieved.

2006:1512 - Betaghstown, Meath

County: Meath Site name: Betaghstown

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A

Licence number: 05E0005 ext.

Author: Deirdre Murphy, Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd, Unit 21, Boyne Business Park, Greenhills, Drogheda, Co. Louth.

Site type: Habitation site

ITM: E 686647m, N 742427m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.424830, -6.696300

Archaeological excavation was carried out in Bettystown, Co. Meath, in 2005 (Excavations 2005, No. 1158) in advance of the construction of a hotel/apartment development. Two areas of archaeological activity were identified, comprising a post-medieval pit and recut grave pit and a habitation site dating from the 5th to 7th centuries ad. Further excavation was carried out at this site in 2006. The area resolved was located south of a possible souterrain and 4–5 inhumations that were excavated by John Lehane in 2004 (Excavations 2004, No. 1187, 04E0533).

Archaeological features exposed included burnt spreads, a hearth, pits, linear ditches and a section of a curving ditch. The features occurred randomly over an area of 50m by 30m and did not form any coherent pattern. The linear ditches were of modern origin and were unrelated to the archaeological features. The curving ditch was almost semicircular and had dimensions of 1.5m by 10m by 0.8m. It had vertical sides and a flat base and the western section was cut by a slot-trench. The northern extent of the ditch was outside the scope of works and was within the area excavated by Lehane in 2004. Animal bone recovered from the fill of the ditch has been sent for analysis. Charcoal was recovered from some of the features and radiocarbon dates are pending. With the exception of a bone-comb fragment recovered from the fill of a charcoal pit, no other finds were recovered.

2007:1266 - Betaghstown, Meath

County: Meath Site name: Betaghstown

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A

Licence number: 05E0005 ext.

Author: Deirdre Murphy, Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd, Unit 21 Boyne Business Park, Greenhills, Drogheda, Co. Louth.

Site type: No archaeological significance

ITM: E 715566m, N 773328m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.696853, -6.249960

Excavation was carried out in Bettystown, Co. Meath, in 2005 and 2006 in advance of the construction of a hotel and residential development (Excavations 2005, No. 1158; Excavations 2006,

No. 1512). Areas of archaeological activity were identified comprising a post-medieval pit and recut grave pit and a habitation site dating from 5th–7th centuries ad. Additional archaeological features including burnt spreads, a hearth, pits, linear ditches and a section of a curving ditch were excavated in 2006. These features were located south of a possible souterrain and 4–5 inhumations that were excavated by John Lehane in 2004 (Excavations 2004, No. 1187, 02E1709; 04E0533).

Further monitoring was undertaken in 2007 at the extreme eastern extent of the development on a site that was previously occupied by a modern bungalow and garden. The yard, driveway and lawn sealed a mid-brown garden soil that extended to a maximum depth of 0.4m. The natural sand was exposed at this level. No features of an archaeological nature were identified and no further archaeological work was considered necessary.

2007:1301 - DONACARNEY GREAT/BETAGHSTOWN, Meath

County: Meath Site name: DONACARNEY GREAT/BETAGHSTOWN

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A Licence number: **06E0413 ext.**

Author: Carmel Duffy, Umberstown Great, Summerhill, Co. Meath.

Site type: Testing

ITM: E 714070m, N 774407m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.706875, -6.272209

Assessment in two phases was carried out in advance of the construction of 375 dwellings. The planning permission was appealed and then referred to An Bord Planála, which then required archaeological assessment. The site was situated in north-east County Meath. It lay on both side sides of the R150 road from Bettystown to Donacarney. It consisted of two fields west of the road in Donacarney Great townland, which were tested in Phase 1, and three fields east of the road, which were tested in Phase 2. The easternmost of the three fields east of the road was located in Betaghstown townland, while the western two fields were in Donacarney townland. The land is c. 10–20m OD.

In Phase 1, 28 test-trenches, 2m wide, giving a total of 1942 linear metres, were excavated by mechanical digger in the two fields west of the R150.

Twenty-two test-trenches were excavated in Field 1, a total of 1381 linear metres. No archaeological material was observed in Trenches 1, 4–8 and 10–13. Trenches 2, 3, 9, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 26, 27 and 28 contained archaeological material. These trenches were located towards the east edge of Field 1, about halfway along its eastern boundary. There is a gentle rise in the ground in this area. The archaeological material consisted of mostly linear areas of fill with moderately occurring inclusions of animal bone and shell, and very occasional charcoal. In the area of these trenches, animal bone occurred occasionally on top of the gravel when it was exposed. This bone appeared to be at the interface of the topsoil and gravel, and was in general an indicator of the proximity of features with archaeological potential. Except for a metal fragment, no artefacts were recovered.

Six trenches were excavated in Field 2, a total of 561 linear metres. No material of an archaeological nature was observed in any of the test-trenches in Field 2.

In the north-west corner of Field 1 an area measuring c. 25m east–west by 56m was stripped of topsoil for a compound. The depth of the topsoil-strip was generally 0.26m and a maximum depth of 0.45m, and the natural subsoil was not reached. The sod was removed and the topsoil was mid-brown clayey silt with occasional stones.

No material of an archaeological nature was observed during the monitoring.

The road was widened by the developer. It was therefore necessary to remove the ditch along the road and strip topsoil in preparation for this. The topsoil-stripping was monitored. The area stripped was 8–10m wide on both sides of the road, and no material of an archaeological nature was observed. A topsoil-strip to reveal the full extent of the archaeology, followed by archaeological resolution and preservation by record, in advance of development, was recommended.

In Phase 2, 51 test-trenches, 2m wide, giving a total of 2741.85 linear metres, were excavated by mechanical digger in the three fields east of the R150.

Twenty test-trenches were excavated in Field 3, a total of 1031.15 linear metres. No archaeological material was observed in Trenches 30–39, 48–54, and 29 south.

The north end of Trench 29 started at 0.3m deep, but the topsoil became deeper with the rise of the hill and the depth of the trench was 0.7m at the first break for power lines. The soil profile was 0.4m of sod and grey/brown silt topsoil over 0.2m of red/brown silt over grey gravel natural subsoil on the trench floor. Six anomalies were observed in the north part of T29. F33 occurred 0.36m below ground level. It ran east–west across the trench and measured 3.8m wide. The fill was black sandy and clayey silt with moderate stone inclusions and occasional animal bone and shell. F34 occurred 0.35m below ground level. It ran east–west across the trench floor and measured 1.5m wide. The fill was dark-brown stony sandy silt with occasional animal-bone inclusions. F35 occurred 0.4m below ground level. It ran east–west across the trench floor and measured 1m wide. The fill was dark-brown sandy silt with frequent stones and occasional animal-bone inclusions. F36 occurred 0.4m below ground level. It ran north-west/south-east across the trench and measured 0.3m wide. The fill was dark-brown clayey silt with 45–60% stones. F37 occurred 0.42m below ground level. It was a poorly defined feature running across the trench c. 1.3m wide. The fill was dark-brown/black sandy silt with moderate stone and occasional animal-bone inclusions. F38 occurred 0.5m below ground level. It ran north-east/south-west across the trench and measured 3.2m wide. The fill was brown sandy silt. A section was inserted in F38 as it was unclear whether it was a natural or archaeological feature. It was 0.38m deep and archaeologically sterile, with 30–40% small stones and occasional larger angular stones.

Trench 40 was oriented east–west and measured 46m by 2m. The general depth was 0.4m. The soil profile was 0.35m of sod and grey/brown silty topsoil over 0.1m of red/brown silt subsoil. At 4.6m from the north end of the trench, 0.4m below ground level, there was an area of dark-grey silt with inclusions of animal bone and occasional charcoal, F39a. It was irregularly shaped, 3m long on the west side of the trench and c. 1m long on the east. South of this on the east side of the trench, at 0.35m below ground level, was F39, a semicircular area of black silty clay with inclusions of animal bone and occasional sandstone. It measured c. 2m long, and ran eastwards out of the trench. These features were apparently cut into sterile natural red/brown sand. Three bands of archaeological material occurred further south. F40 was a band of grey silt and charcoal c. 0.7m wide which crossed the trench obliquely. F41 was a band of grey silt c. 0.5m wide, parallel to F40, and 0.5m south of it. A band of sterile natural red/brown sand 0.5m wide separated F40 from F41. F42 was a band of grey silt with occasional animal-bone, charcoal and red sandstone inclusions c. 3m wide, and immediately south of F41. The rest of Trench 40 had a floor of grey stony natural gravel which was archaeologically sterile.

Thirteen trenches were excavated in Field 4, a total of 840.9 linear metres. No archaeological material was observed in Trenches 42, 43, 44 and 57.

Trench 41 was oriented north–south and measured 210m by 2m. The trench was 0.35–0.5m deep. Several anomalies were observed in the trench. F43 occurred 0.38m below ground level. It was a layer of grey/brown silty clay with animal-bone inclusions, measuring 0.8m by 0.3m. In the trench profile it measured 0.8m in both trench walls, and 0.3m deep. The bottom of the trench was mid-

brown sandy silt with moderate small stone inclusions. F44 occurred 0.4m below ground level. It measured 0.9m in overall depth and was 4.7m wide. The fill of F44 was grey sandy clay with occasional animal bone. The trench floor below it was red/brown clay subsoil with small rounded stones. F44 was possibly a ditch. F45 occurred 0.5m below ground level. It was a circular feature 0.3m in diameter. The fill was grey/brown silt with moderate small stone and occasional charcoal inclusions. F46, 47 and 48 were linear marks running north–south in the trench floor. The features occurred 0.3m below ground level and measured 2m long. F47 was 0.35m east of F46; F48 was 0.7m east of F47. F49 occurred 0.3m below ground level. It was a linear feature 12m long by 0.4m wide oriented north–south.

Trench 45 was oriented north–south and measured 76m by 2m. The soil profile was 0.2–0.3m of sod and mid-brown silty topsoil over grey gravel on the trench floor.

Several anomalies were observed in the trench. F50 occurred 0.45m below ground level. It was a linear feature running obliquely across the trench, 1.5m wide. The fill was grey silt with charcoal and animal-bone inclusions. F51 occurred 0.5m below ground level. It was a large area of fill running obliquely across the trench floor measuring 12.3m wide. A stone drain ran across the trench in F51 at the south end of it. The fill of the feature was dark-grey silt with animal-bone inclusions. F52 occurred 0.6m below ground level. It was a linear feature running obliquely across the trench, 0.45m wide. The fill was loose grey sandy silt with stone inclusions. F53 occurred 0.5m below ground level. It was a line of stones 0.4m wide, possibly a stone-filled drain. F54 occurred 0.4m below ground level. It was a stone-filled linear feature running along the west wall of the trench for 15.5m. There was animal bone visible in the top of it. F55 occurred 0.4m below ground level. It was a linear stony feature that ran along the west edge of the trench for 15.5m. F57 occurred 0.4m below ground level. It was a land drain that ran obliquely across the trench floor. F58 occurred 0.4m below ground level. It was a 2m-wide area of grey sandy silt running obliquely across the trench floor.

Trench 46 was oriented north–south and measured 76m by 2m. The general depth was 0.5m. The soil profile was 0.2–0.3m of sod and mid-brown silty topsoil over 0.1m of red/brown clayey silt subsoil over grey gravel subsoil on the trench floor.

Several anomalies were observed in Trench 46. F59 was a linear feature running east–west across the trench floor, measuring 0.38m wide. The fill was grey/brown clayey silt with animal-bone and shell inclusions. F60 was an area of fill 10.7m wide. The fill was grey/brown clayey silt with occasional animal bone. A section inserted in F60 proved the feature to be 1.4m deep from ground level, with natural gravel beneath it. F61 was a circular feature 0.9m in diameter. The fill was grey/brown clayey silt with occasional animal bone. F62 was an area of fill 11.2m wide. The fill was grey/brown clayey silt. F63 occurred 0.5m below ground level. It was a circular feature 1m in diameter. The fill was grey silt with moderate stone and occasional shell and charcoal inclusions. F64 occurred 0.5m below ground level. It was an area of fill 5.8m wide. The fill was grey/brown silt with bone inclusions. F65 occurred 0.5m below ground level. It was a linear feature which ran obliquely across the trench, 0.45m wide. The fill was grey/brown clayey silt with moderate small stone and occasional charcoal and shell inclusions. F67 occurred 0.45m below ground level. It was a band of grey/brown silt with no inclusions, possibly not archaeological. F68 occurred 0.5m below ground level. It was a band of fill oriented north–south in the centre of the trench, 0.4m wide by 1.9m long. The fill was grey silt with shell inclusions. A piece of flint was recovered from the fill. F69 occurred 0.5m below ground level. It was a band of grey silt 0.8m wide.

Trench 47 was oriented north–south and measured 74.4m by 2m. The general depth was 0.5m. The soil profile was 0.2–0.3m of sod and mid-brown silty topsoil over 0.1m of red/brown clayey silt over grey gravel on the trench floor. Several anomalies were observed in Trench 47. F70 occurred 0.4m below ground level. It was a linear feature crossing the floor of the trench, 0.4m wide. The fill was dark-brown sandy silt. F71 occurred 0.5m below ground level. It was a deposit of fill 5m wide. The fill was grey clayey silt. There was a bone visible in the fill, possibly an animal bone. F72 was a circular

area of black silt 0.35m in diameter. F73 was a linear area of dark-grey clayey silt with bone inclusions 0.5m below ground level. F74 was a band of grey clayey silt with bone inclusions. It occurred 0.4m below ground level. There were human long bones and metatarsals visible in the fill, Burial 1.

Trench 55 was oriented north–south and measured 80m by 2m. The general depth was 0.5m. The soil profile was 0.2–0.35m of sod and mid-brown silty topsoil over 0.1.5m of grey/brown clayey silt subsoil over grey gravel on the trench floor. Several anomalies were observed in Trench 55. F75 occurred 0.5m below ground level. It was a linear feature running across the trench, 0.8m wide. The fill was grey clayey silt with animal-bone inclusions. F76 occurred 0.55m below ground level. It was an irregular-shaped feature measuring 0.55m by 0.2m. The fill was grey silty clay with charcoal inclusions. F77 occurred 0.6m below ground level. It was roughly subrectangular, measuring 0.4m by 0.15m. The fill was grey silty clay with charcoal inclusions. F78 occurred 0.52m below ground level. It was a band of grey silty clay with occasional bone, shell and charcoal inclusions, 0.7m wide. F79 occurred 0.55m below ground level. It was a band of grey clayey silt, 3m wide. It was possibly a non-archaeological feature. F80 occurred 0.45m below ground level. There was bone in this feature, which appeared to be a human skull, Burial 2. F81 occurred 0.45m below ground level. There was bone in this feature, which appeared to be a human skull, Burial 3. F82 occurred 0.4m below ground level. There was bone in this feature, which appeared to be a human skull, Burial 4. F83 occurred 0.42m below ground level. It was a linear feature running obliquely across the trench floor, 0.3m wide. The fill was grey silt. F84 occurred 0.4m below ground level. It was a band of loose stony dark-brown clayey silt. A fragment of a quernstone was uncovered in the fill. F85 occurred 0.38m below ground level. It was a linear feature 1.1m wide running across the trench floor. The fill was grey clayey silt with occasional bone inclusions. F86 occurred 0.4m below ground level. It was an 8m band of grey clayey silt with occasional animal-bone inclusions. Feature 87 occurred 0.38m below ground level. It ran obliquely across the trench floor and measured 2m wide. The fill was grey clayey silt. F88 occurred 0.35m below ground level. It ran obliquely across the trench floor and measured 1.8m wide. The fill was grey clayey silt with shell inclusions. F89 was a semicircular feature in the south-west end of F88. The fill was grey clayey silt with frequent shell inclusions. F90 occurred 0.47m below ground level. It was a 6.1m-wide band of grey clayey silt fill with animal-bone inclusions.

Trench 56 was oriented north–south and measured 67m by 2m. The general depth was 0.55m. The soil profile was 0.25–0.4m of sod and mid-brown silty topsoil over grey sandy silt and gravel on the trench floor. Two anomalies were observed in the trench. F91 was an area of fill running from the north end of the trench for 6m. The fill was grey clayey silt with no inclusions. F92 was an area of stony grey fill with bone inclusions, 3.8m wide.

Trench 58 was oriented east–west and measured 24.5m. The general depth was 0.55m. The soil profile was 0.25m of sod and topsoil over 0.3m of red/brown clayey silt. Two anomalies were observed in the trench. F93 occurred 0.45m below ground level. It was an area of grey fill with a maximum width of 8.8m. In the north-east corner of F93 there was a small area of dark charcoal-rich silt. F94 occurred 0.6m below the ground level. It ran obliquely across the trench floor and was a maximum width of 3m. The fill was stony grey clayey silt.

Trench 59 was oriented east–west and measured 41m. The general depth was 0.35–0.45m. The soil profile was 0.3–0.4m of sod and mid-brown silty topsoil over 0.05–0.1m of red/brown clayey silt. Six anomalies were observed in the trench. F95 occurred 0.25m below ground level. It was a subrectangular area of dark-grey clayey silt with occasional animal-bone and charcoal inclusions. It measured 1.2m by 1m and continued underneath the north trench wall. F96 occurred 0.45m below ground level. It was an irregularly shaped area of stony dark-grey sandy silt with occasional bone inclusions. It was a maximum of 10m wide. It contained a fragment of decorated bone, possibly part of a comb. F97 occurred 0.4m below ground level. It was a linear feature 1.6m long by 0.6m wide. The fill was stony, dark-grey sandy silt with no inclusions. F98 occurred 0.4m below ground level. It

was a band of dark-grey, clayey silt 0.8m wide. F99 occurred 0.28m below ground level. It was an irregularly shaped area of stony, dark-grey sandy silt measuring a maximum of 5m. F100 was at the west end of the trench, 0.25m below ground level. It was an indefinite area of stony dark-grey sandy silt with occasional animal-bone inclusions.

Trench 60 was oriented east–west and measured 39m by 2m. The general depth was 0.35–0.48m. The soil profile was 0.3–0.4m of sod and grey/brown silty topsoil over 0.1m of grey/brown clayey silt subsoil. Five anomalies were observed in the trench. F101 occurred 0.45m below ground level. It was a band of stony grey/brown clayey silt with occasional animal-bone inclusions. The maximum width was 3.7m. F102 occurred 0.4m below ground level. The feature was an 8m-wide area of stony dark-grey sandy silt. F103 occurred 0.48m below ground level. It was a roughly circular feature 0.4m in diameter. The fill was dark-grey clayey silt with occasional animal-bone and shell inclusions. F104 was immediately west of F103 and was also a roughly circular feature. The fill was dark-grey silt with occasional shell inclusions. F105 occurred 0.45m below ground level. It was a band of stony dark-grey sandy silt, 4m wide.

Twenty trenches were excavated in Field 5, a total of 869.8m linear metres.

Field 5, in Betaghstown townland, was generally at least 2m lower than Fields 3 and 4. It was marshy, and had a gentle low-lying waterlogged bowl in the centre, terrain typically used to site a fulacht fiadh. However, despite intensive test-trenching, no archaeological material was disclosed in the trenches, which were numbers 61 to 81. The two anomalies observed, in Trench 61 and Trench 65, were investigated, and were not archaeological in nature.

2007:1302 - Donacarney Great, Meath

Stuart Rathbone, Licence No. 06E0413ext

Early medieval settlement site

ITM: E714070 N774407

This excavation took place in advance of the construction of 365 homes by Mycete Homes Ltd. The area was identified as being of archaeological potential by Carmel Duffy in April 2007 under licence 06E0413 (see No. 1301 above), which was extended to cover excavation of the site which took place in June 2007. An area of c. 65m by 45m was stripped of topsoil and a total of sixteen archaeological features were identified.

The features consisted of six large pits, six small pits, three corn-drying kilns and two spreads of burnt material. A small iron knife was recovered from one of the pits, which was identified as being of early medieval type. A large quantity of animal bone and carbonised plant remains were recovered from the fills of the pits and analysis of this material indicates that it is consistent with an early medieval date. The material is dominated by cattle, followed by sheep and pig. A few specimens belonging to horse, goat and duck were identified as well as dog and cat bones. Bone material from Donacarney Great is likely to represent cleaning of the site by backfilling the pits; in some cases backfilling is likely to represent a single episode or short-term activity. The evidence suggests that animals were slaughtered, processed and (as there was evidence of roasting) consumed at the site. A radiocarbon date of ad 320–540 (2 sigma) was obtained from one of the animal bones.

It is thought that this site represents a series of rubbish pits and kilns that may have been associated with a nearby settlement. Traces of this settlement may be located elsewhere in the vicinity. It is

thought that an early medieval burial-ground lies a short distance to the north-east of this site, which was investigated under licence 07E0622 (see No. 1303 below).

2007:1303 - Donacarney Great, Meath

County: Meath Site name: Donacarney Great

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A Licence number: **07E0622**

Author: Stuart Rathbone, ACS Ltd, Unit 21, Boyne Business Park, Drogheda, Co. Louth.

Site type: Early medieval burial-ground

ITM: E 714070m, N 774407m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.706872, -6.272216

This excavation took place in advance of the second phase of a housing development by Mycete Homes Ltd. A possible burial-ground was located in this area by Carmel Duffy in April 2007 (see No. 1301 above, 06E0413), and work was due to start on excavation of the site in June 2007 under licence 07E0622. During the monitoring of initial groundworks on the site human remains were located in an area well away from the material discovered by Duffy, which led to the conclusion that the burial-ground is far larger than had originally been anticipated. The decision was made by Mycete Homes to temporarily halt work on this site until all other building work in the area has been completed. The burial that had been discovered during monitoring was excavated and found to be an adult male, estimated to be 25–35 years at death, interred within a shallow grave in a supine extended position. His living stature was estimated to be 169.4cm, and approximately 50% of the expected remains were present. A radiocarbon date of ad 575–670 (2 sigma) was obtained from a sample from one of the ribs.

It is not known at present if the buildings planned for this site will now be constructed.

2007:1345 - Laytown, Meath

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A Licence number: 07E0930

Author: John Purcell, 17 Balmoral Terrace, Dillon's Cross, Cork.

Site type: Ditches?

ITM: E 716437m, N 771543m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.680630, -6.237450

Test-trenching was carried out as part of further information for a school development at Laytown, Co. Meath, in an area where archaeological remains have been uncovered in adjacent development sites. A series of trenches were subsequently excavated by mechanical digger across the site. Two potential ditches were uncovered in Trench 7 at the north of the proposed development. This is partially within the construction area. The ditch may be associated with reclamation works evident across the site. Alternatively the ditches may be part of a large enclosure with an internal diameter of 61m. There was also no evidence of an associated bank. No other features were uncovered associated with these potential ditches.

2007:1346 - Inse Bay, Laytown, Meath

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A Licence number: **06E1216**

Author: Stephen J. Linnane, Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd, Unit 21, Boyne Business Park, Greenhills, Drogheda, Co. Louth.

Site type: Prehistoric

ITM: E 715626m, N 772068m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.685525, -6.249522

This large housing development has been reported upon extensively, previously named 'Ninch' (Excavations 1999, Nos 695 and 705; 2000, Nos 760 and 1007; 2002, Nos 1489–1492; 2003, Nos 1416–1418). Important features and finds dating from the Neolithic to the medieval periods have been identified and excavated. Further development has involved the partial infilling of previous green areas with additional housing. Four areas were tested by trenching and in three areas no features of archaeological significance were observed; in the fourth a complex of linear and curving ditches was noted and, although some of these may have been modern field drains, others certainly appeared to be of archaeological significance. A redesign of the house foundations in this area has allowed these features to be preserved in situ.

2007:1386 - Sevitsland, Meath

County: Meath Site name: Sevitsland

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A Licence number: **07E0029**

Author: Dominic Delany, Dominic Delany & Associates, Unit 3, Howley Court, Oranmore, Co. Galway.

Site type: No archaeological significance

ITM: E 714357m, N 772909m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.693356, -6.268409

Pre-development testing was carried out on the site of a proposed housing development at Sevitsland, Bettystown, Co. Meath, on 31 January 2007. There are no known monuments in the vicinity of the proposed development site, the nearest being a holy well located over 150m to the south-east. Eleven trenches were opened on the development footprint. The topsoil varied from 0.2m to 0.35m in thickness and overlay light to mid-brown silty clay subsoil. No archaeological material was uncovered.

2007:1387 - Sevitsland, Meath

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A Licence number: 07E0184

Author: Aidan O'Connell, Archaeological Consultancy Services, 21 Boyne Business Park, Greenhills, Drogheda, Co. Louth.

Site type: No archaeological significance

ITM: E 714844m, N 773131m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.695243, -6.260958

Monitoring was undertaken in advance of a proposed residential development and associated carpark and services in the townland of Sevitsland at Bettystown, Co. Meath. The site lies in close

proximity to ME021–013, Columbkille's holy well. A cemetery (ME021–010) and possible burial (ME021–014) are located further east.

Topsoil was removed from the site with the aid of a mechanical excavator under supervision. No archaeological material was encountered in the course of the works

2008:951 - Donacarney Great, Meath

County: Meath Site name: Donacarney Great

Sites and Monuments Record No.: ME021-025, ME021-026 Licence number: 08E0912

Author: Melanie McQuade, Margaret Gowen & Co. Ltd, 27 Merrion Square, Dublin 2.

Site type: Multi-period

ITM: E 715250m, N 774086m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.703730, -6.254460

A geophysical survey and archaeological testing were conducted on a proposed development site that covered 36 acres of agricultural land in Donacarney Great. The site was mostly in pasture and a north–south-orientated watercourse divided it in half. The western half of the site was situated upon a prominent north–south-orientated natural ridge and the low-lying eastern half of the site was level and poorly drained land.

A total of 28 1.7m-wide trenches were mechanically excavated across the site. The location of two possible enclosures listed on the RMP (ME021–025; ME021–026) within the western part of the proposed development was confirmed by the results of both the geophysical survey (08R0300) and test-trenching. An area (195m north–south by 130–150m) of archaeological significance was also identified around these enclosures where the geophysical survey indicated the presence of six potential subcircular enclosures (C–H), two subrectangular enclosures (J and K) and a series of associated features. The only features identified outside of this area were two shallow undated ditches, which may represent former field boundaries, uncovered to the north-east of the main archaeological complex.

Enclosure A (ME021–025) was c. 16.4m in diameter and was defined by a ditch that varied from 0.58m to 1m wide and was 0.35m deep. Enclosure B (ME021–026) was located c. 50m to the south-east. It had poor expression in the geophysical survey but appeared to be c. 10m in diameter. Its enclosing ditch was 0.8m wide and 0.2m deep with a U-shaped profile. Enclosure C was located c. 20m further south and had a diameter of 30m. The enclosing ditch was 1.7m wide and 0.55m deep and a series of internal pits and post-holes concentrated within the central 5m of the enclosure suggest that it may have been used for domestic occupation. The internal pits had charcoal-rich fills with inclusions of burnt stone and they ranged from 0.12m to 0.92m in diameter. Two struck pieces of flint were observed within the fill of a larger pit that extended beyond the edges of the test-trench.

Enclosures D and E were located c. 14m to the north of Enclosure A and measured 26m and 10m in diameter respectively. Enclosure D was defined by a 2.2m-wide ditch that was 0.6m deep, while the ditch of Enclosure E was between 0.9m and 1.4m wide and just 0.18m deep. Fragments of extremely burnt bone in the fills of these ditches and of a pit within Enclosure D suggest that these may be burial monuments. A small barrow (Enclosure F, c. 4m diameter) was uncovered just 12m to the west of Enclosure D. It was represented by a bank of stone and what appeared to be a flattened mound over an urned cremation burial. These three monuments together with ME021–025 (Enclosure A) are probably part of a Bronze Age burial-ground but there was not enough evidence

uncovered in the test-trench excavated across ME021–026 (Enclosure B) to determine whether it had a burial function.

Another subcircular enclosure (Enclosure G) on the northern end of the archaeological area had a diameter of 13m. Two enclosing ditches (0.47m wide by 0.15m deep and 1.1m wide) were uncovered in the test-trench excavated here. A sherd of pottery and a struck chert recovered from one of the ditches suggests that this was an area of prehistoric occupation and three pits uncovered between 1.5m and 26m to the south of the enclosure are a further indication of settlement activity. The two subrectangular ditched enclosures J and K indicated by the geophysical survey were uncovered on the eastern end of the archaeological area, to the west of and upslope from the river. The survey results give dimensions of c. 35m by 53m for Enclosure J and c. 41m by 53m for Enclosure K. The ditch of Enclosure J was 3m wide and a small section showed that it was 0.7m deep. The southern ditch of Enclosure K was 1.8m wide and it was filled by dark-brown silty clay. A series of internal cut features and deposits were recorded within the ditched enclosures and an inhumation burial within Enclosure K was partially exposed in one of the test-trenches. The upper part of the body extended beyond the northern edge of the trench, indicating that the burial was orientated east–west or north-east/south-west. No finds were recovered from this part of the site and the date of the activity represented here has not been determined. However, the sequence of cuts and deposits suggests at least three phases of activity, while the variation in burial rite on this part of the site indicates that it is probably not contemporary with the Bronze Age cremation burial identified to the west. The activity on this part of the site is probably later and may be Iron Age or early medieval in date.

2009:641 - DONACARNEY GREAT, Meath

Sites and Monuments Record No.: ME021-025-026; Licence number: **08E912** ext.

Author: Melanie McQuade, Margaret Gowen & Co. Ltd, 27 Merrion Square, Dublin 2.

Site type: Multi-period archaeological complex

ITM: E 715250m, N 774086m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.703730, -6.254460

Eleven trenches were excavated during a second phase of testing carried out on Site B of a proposed development site, in order to determine the full extent and character of the archaeological features identified during the first phase of assessment undertaken on the site (see Excavations 2008, No. 951, for previous work).

The earliest evidence was characterised by a series of six circular enclosures (Enclosures A–E and G), a flattened mound (Enclosure F) and a linear ditch (F151/F185) on the western part of the site. Enclosures A (ME021–025), C and D were settlement sites, although there is evidence that cremation burials may also have been interred within Enclosure

D. Further burial evidence came from a cremation burial contained within a Bronze Age urn in Enclosure F, as well as possible cremation burials within the ditch of Enclosure E and just outside the ditch of Enclosure G. Ceramics recovered during test excavations indicate that these enclosures are probably Bronze Age in date. No dating evidence was uncovered for Enclosure B (ME021–026) but,

given its morphological similarity and proximity to the other circular enclosures, it is probably also Bronze Age in date.

Enclosure A was 16.4m in diameter. It was defined by a ditch 0.8–1m wide and 0.48m deep with a U-shaped profile. A piece of struck flint was identified within the ditch fill during the first phase of testing. Several internal features including a structure, indicated by a row of three post-holes, were recorded and two pits were uncovered 6.4m to the west of the enclosure.

Enclosure B was located 55m to the south-east of Enclosure A and was c. 10m in diameter. The northern and eastern sides of the enclosure were defined by a 0.66m-wide ditch. This was 0.2m deep with a U-shaped profile and was filled with sterile yellow sand.

Enclosure C, which was located c. 35m to the south-west of enclosure B, was 30m in diameter. The enclosing ditch was 1.4m wide and 0.6m deep. A series of features within the enclosure included two probable kilns, a structure indicated by a slot-trench and a post-hole, and a spread of charcoal. The slot-trench measured 0.4m wide and 0.25m deep and a fragment of a broken quernstone was recovered from it. A thumbnail scraper and a flake, both made of flint, were recovered from the charcoal spread. Another kiln was located to the north of the enclosure and a sherd of pottery was recovered from its fill.

Enclosure D was 26m in diameter and was located

c. 15m to the north of Enclosure A. The remains of a structure within the northern end of Enclosure D were indicated by a series of post-holes. A possible burial function for the enclosure was indicated by fragments of highly burnt bone, identified during the first phase of testing. Enclosure E was located immediately south-east of Enclosure D and was much smaller (10m diameter). No finds were recovered from the ditches of Enclosures D or E or from any of the internal features; however, their proximity to Enclosures A and C suggests a broadly contemporary date.

Enclosure G was located c. 45m to the north of Enclosure D and was 13m in diameter. A sherd of coarseware and a chert flake were recovered from its ditch and a probable cremation burial-pit was identified in close proximity to the ditch. A series of features identified to the south of Enclosure G during the first phase of testing are suggestive of domestic activity in this area, but no dating evidence was recovered from these features and they could be contemporary either with the Bronze Age enclosure or with the medieval ditch, F141, to their east.

The ditch F151/F185 was located on the west of the site, to the north of Enclosure F, which contained a cremation burial. A sherd of coarseware pottery from this ditch indicates domestic activity dating to the later part of the Bronze Age.

A second period of settlement activity was indicated by two subrectangular enclosures (Enclosures J and K) on the eastern end of the site, where there was evidence for several phases of occupation and a single inhumation burial. The absence of ceramic finds from this part of the site suggests that it dates to the early medieval period.

Enclosures J and K measured 35m by 53m and 41m by 53m respectively. They were defined by a substantial northern ditch, F120, that was up to 1m deep, but the southern enclosure ditches F21/F173 were not as substantial. The sequence and waterlogged nature of the fills in the northern ditch F120 indicate that it had held water and that it filled in gradually over time. A sherd of Bronze Age coarseware recovered when cleaning back the surface of this ditch probably came from its fill

but no other chronologically diagnostic finds were recovered from the section excavated into the ditch. The internal features within Enclosures J and K comprise a series of pits and ditches, some of which may represent structural remains. Although the general lack of artefacts from the features on this part of the site does not facilitate dating, the absence of pottery suggests that occupation may date some time between the end of the Bronze Age and the beginning of the medieval period (c. 800 BC to 12th century AD), when ceramics were not in widespread use. An inhumation burial was uncovered on this part of the site during the first phase of testing. No further burials were uncovered within the test-trenches excavated during this second phase of testing.

Evidence for medieval settlement activity came from a curvilinear ditch (F141) on the northern end of the site that contained a sherd of medieval cooking ware. This ditch was located to the south of Enclosure G and some of the pits in that area could also prove to be medieval in date.

2009:642 - DONACARNEY GREAT, Meath

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A Licence number: 09E0142

Author: Ciara McCarthy, for ArchTech Ltd, 32 Fitzwilliam Place, Dublin 2.

Site type: Testing

ITM: E 714951m, N 774507m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.707577, -6.258829

Two phases of testing were carried out at the site of a proposed mixed residential development at Donacarney Great, Bettystown, Co. Meath. The testing was carried out following a geophysical survey (licence 09R077) by Earthsound Archaeological Geophysics. Fifty anomalies were identified during the survey and required further investigation; these anomalies included a ring-ditched feature with a diameter of 34m. Seventeen trenches representing 2060 linear metres were excavated across the development site to test the geophysical anomalies and to generally test the area. Nine areas of archaeological potential were identified.

Areas 1, 8 and 9 were located on the crest of a north-west/south-east ridge in the northern field. The geophysical survey identified five anomalies in this area. The testing programme identified ten archaeological features in this area, primarily interpreted as representing a prehistoric barrow or ring-ditch and associated features that include two large pits and two rows of small stones. Areas 2 and 4 were also located on the crest of the north-west/southeast ridge. Sporadic or scattered prehistoric remains were identified in these three areas. Areas 5 and 6 were located in the lower south-west corner of the southern field, and also represent probable prehistoric remains in the form of an occupation or working surface (Area 5) and a fulacht fiadh (Area 6).

The features were subsequently excavated during 2010 under licence 09E0451.

2010:522 - Julianstown West, Meath

County: Meath Site name: Julianstown West

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A Licence number: 10E0489

Author: Dave Bayley, Irish Archaeological Consultancy Ltd, 120b Greenpark Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow.

Site type: No archaeological significance

ITM: E 713427m, N 770518m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.672087, -6.283370

Testing was undertaken in advance of a proposed residential development at Julianstown West, Julianstown, Co. Meath. The work, undertaken on behalf of Cooney Architects, took place on 24 November 2010. The area of proposed development was located on the northern banks of the River Nanny off the Old Laytown Road. The topography of the site sloped sharply from the north to the River Nanny in the south.

Testing followed on from a geophysical survey (10R126) and a desktop assessment undertaken in September 2010. In total, thirteen trenches were excavated across the development area, several of which targeted a number of geophysical anomalies. Nothing of archaeological significance was identified during the programme of testing.

2012:457 - Claristown, Meath

County: Meath Site name: Claristown

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A Licence number: **11E0131**

Author: Billy Quinn

Site type: Monitoring

ITM: E 714546m, N 768495m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.653668, -6.267184

The works entailed Phase 2 of a Water Conservation Scheme within County Meath. Stage 1 of the project – Advanced Mains Rehabilitation Stage 1 – involves the replacement of c. 13.4km of existing watermains in various locations throughout the county. This report concerns works at Claristown. As part of the predevelopment phase the Claristown element of the scheme was the subject of an Archaeological Assessment undertaken by Byrne Mullins and Associates in 2009 (Excavations 2009, No. 629, 09E061). Following consultation with the National Monuments service it was recommended that the proposed works be regularly inspected by a suitably qualified archaeologist. The works were in the vicinity of ME028-014, classified as a wayside cross.

The project generally involved the replacement of existing cast iron and PVC watermains, and associated valves and fittings, and includes the decommissioning of the existing watermains using open-trench installation.

Regular inspections were carried out during the course of these works. No finds or features of archaeological significance were identified during the programme of monitoring.

Moore Group, Ballybrit Business Park, Galway

2014:595 - The Maples, Bettystown (Betaghstown), Meath

Sites and Monuments Record No.: None Licence number: **14E0185**

Author: Niall Roycroft

Site type: No archaeology found

ITM: E 715110m, N 773250m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.696255, -6.256894

The green field site lies approximately 250m to the west of the concentration of archaeological discoveries that occur on a slight knoll (1-3m higher than the surrounding landscape) forming the heart of old Bettystown. The Maples site also lies at the mouth of an ancient, shallow stream valley oriented north-west to south-east as it enters a previous broad, floodable 'water meadow' area that previously extended all the way from Bettystown to Laytown before the present coast road (R150) was built. Undated alluvial flood deposits containing both sea and land shells were noted on the eastern half of the Maples site. One burnt-out tree bole was recorded away from this flooding area underneath topsoil cutting glacial till. Topsoil contained a range of 19th-20th-century 'manuring' finds. Construction (topsoil removal, strip foundation trenches and services) in several phases was subsequently monitored from 2016 to 2019.

2018:229 - Eastham Rd, Bettystown, Meath

County: Meath Site name: Eastham Rd, Bettystown

Sites and Monuments Record No.: n/a Licence number: 17E0124

Author: Faith Bailey, IAC Ltd

Site type: No archaeology found

ITM: E 715471m, N 773468m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.698133, -6.251349

Monitoring was carried out of groundworks associated with a residential development at Eastham Road, Bettystown, Co. Meath. The monitoring was carried out in response to planning conditions attached to the development (Planning Ref.: PL17.245317)

Monitoring of ground disturbance was undertaken intermittently between May and November 2017 with one day required on site in September 2018. Nothing of archaeological significance was encountered during monitoring. The site had been subject to a large amount of disturbance in the past.

No further archaeological mitigation is deemed to be necessary as part of the development.

IAC Ltd, Unit G1, Network Enterprise Park, Kilcoole, Co. Wicklow

2018:409 - Laytown, Ninch, Meath

County: Meath Site name: Laytown, Ninch

Sites and Monuments Record No.: None Licence number: **18E0284**

Author: Kieran Campbell

Site type: Monitoring of coastal protection works

ITM: E 716461m, N 771496m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.680200, -6.237105

Monitoring took place in June and July 2018 during excavations associated with coastal protection works at Laytown (Td. Ninch), Co. Meath, carried out by Carty Contractors Ltd. on behalf of Meath County Council in compliance with archaeological requirements in the tender documents. The works involved excavation into the existing embankment, the construction of a retaining wall and the installation of rock armour, for a length of c. 80m of the seafront.

The site was formerly occupied by shops, holiday chalets and a ballroom/cinema (The Palladium) built in the second decade of the 20th century as the village extended northwards from the River Nanny estuary. The buildings were demolished in the late 1970s when the site was infilled with 4m

depth of rubble and soil and landscaped as a green area and car park. The excavations exposed beach sand, clay subsoil and concrete foundations directly under the infill material. Blown sand to a height of 2.5m above strand level indicated the former presence of a dune system at this location. The bowl of an early 19th-century red sandstone garden urn, with acanthus leaf decoration, was recovered from the introduced infill material

6 St. Ultans, Laytown, Drogheda

2019:104 - Ninch, Meath



County: Meath **Site name:** Ninch

Sites and Monuments Record No.: n/a Licence number:**19E0383**

Author: Liza Kavanagh

Site type: No archaeology found

ITM: E 716341m, N 771648m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.681592, -6.238863

Ten test trenches were excavated within the area of the proposed development in response to conditions of planning from An Bord Pleanála. No features of archaeological significance were uncovered during the assessment. A single find of a piece of flint debitage was recovered from site and retained.

Topsoil stripping from the site will be monitored.

c/o IAC Ltd, Unit G1 Network Enterprise Park, Kilcoole, Co. Wicklow

2019:606 - Donacarney Great, Meath

Sites and Monuments Record No.: ME021-029 Licence number: 19E0077

Author: Níall Garahy, Archaeology Plan

Site type: Bronze Age/Iron Age/early medieval

ITM: E 714516m, N 774043m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.703508, -6.265591

Phase 1 of excavations at Donacarney Great revealed a first millennium AD settlement cemetery that was part of a wider necropolis landscape that included Colp West, Ninch and Bettystown.

The earliest surviving features at the site were three Bronze Age vase urn pit burials. A nearby structure with associated prehistoric pottery as well as flint artefacts distributed across the site indicate prehistoric activity beyond solely funerary purposes.

The main phase of occupation was a first millennium AD settlement cemetery. Two separate burial areas were identified but not fully excavated during this phase. The first burial area (ME021-029) was bounded by a long, straight enclosure ditch. A previous excavation in this area yielded a radiocarbon date of 540AD (+/- 35) from one of the skeletons (Rathbone 2008).

The second burial area was within a sub-circular enclosure, with internal and external diameters of 19m and 22m respectively. One individual was found to be wearing a copper alloy neck piece. No other individuals on the site were buried with grave goods and all burials were fully extended and aligned on an approximate east-west axis.

Several large enclosures with associated annexes were excavated across the site. While evidence for structural habitation in gravelly natural subsoil was sparse, proof for significant activity survived in the form of artefacts, five corn-drying kilns and food refuse. Rathbone (2007) previously acquired a radiocarbon date of 300AD (+/- 35) from an animal bone excavated on an adjacent site. Several sherds of E-ware pottery dating to the mid-6th to early-8th centuries were distributed across the settlement cemetery. A 10th/11th-century Hiberno-Norse ringed pin was found over one of the burial grounds. All of this was evident of a long-lived landscape.

Specialist analysis and reporting on the archaeological material retrieved during the excavation was ongoing at the time of upload.

Bibliography

Rathbone, S. and O'Reilly, E. 2007. 06E0413 and extension. Report on Archaeological Excavation at Donaghcarney Great, Bettystown, Co. Meath (Phase 1).

Rathbone, S. and O'Reilly, E. 2008. 07E0622. Report on Archaeological Excavation at Donaghcarney Great, Bettystown, Co. Meath (Phase 2).

32 Fitzwilliam Place, Dublin 2

2019:611 - Sevitsland, Meath

Sites and Monuments Record No.: none Licence number: **19E0639; 19R0221**

Author: Frank Coyne, Aegis Archaeology Limited

Site type: Ring-ditch; prehistoric or early medieval

ITM: E 715010m, N 773154m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.695414, -6.258443

Six trenches were excavated across the subject site in advance of the construction. A geophysical survey preceded the trenching (19R0166, by JML Surveys). One of the anomalies was tested and was proved to be archaeological in nature. A penannular feature was identified in the geophysical survey and assessed by Test Trench 4. This revealed a ditch feature (Wth 0.5m; 0.12m deep), running north-south through the trench, with a dark fill containing charcoal and white flecks of cremated bone. This would suggest that the feature is a ring-ditch, approximately 7m in diameter, with an entrance to the east. The interior is slightly higher than the surrounding level of the natural parent material. The feature is located on high ground to the south of the centre of the proposed development area. Mitigation of excavation by hand (i.e. preservation by record) of the archaeological feature uncovered has been suggested.

19E0077 ext**Donacarney Great**

Antoine Giacometti

Status, current as of August 2021

Findings: multiperiod site, Neolithic to late medieval. Burials, industrial area, food-processing.

A. Giacometti pers comm.

Licence No.	Site Name	Y/N or Number
000----	Colp West	1988:51
99E0472	COLP WEST, CO. MEATH	1999:679
99E0472 ext	COLP WEST, CO. MEATH	2000:0748
99E0472 ext	COLP WEST, CO. MEATH	2001:952
99E0472 ext	COLP WEST, CO. MEATH	2001:953
01E0931	COLP WEST, CO. MEATH	2001:954
99E0472 ext	COLP WEST, CO. MEATH	2002:1441
02E1747	DONACARNEY LITTLE, COLP, CO. MEATH	2002:1446
99E0472 ext	COLP WEST, CO. MEATH	2003:1374
03E0641	COLP WEST, COLP, CO. MEATH	2003:1375
03E0660	COLP WEST, CO. MEATH	2003:1376
06E0197	Claristown, Co. Meath (BGE)	2006:1532
07E0891	Colpe Cross, Painstown, Drogheda, Co. Meath	2007:1288
14E0091	Co Meath; Colp West Td; Colp Road	2014:106
15E0029	Meath, Donacarney Little, Mornington	2015:085
17E0043	Meath, Donacarney Great	2017:605
16E0624	Meath, Colp West, St Columba's Church	2017:627
18E0089	Meath, COLP WEST - Excavation Licence	2018:657
18E0597	Meath, COLP WEST - Excavation Licence	2018:673
19E0414	Meath, DONACARNEY LITTLE - Excavation Licence	2019:103
17E0213ext	Meath, DONACARNEY LITTLE - Excavation Licence	2019:535
18E0615	Meath, COLP WEST - Excavation Licence	2019:599
09E0142	Donacarney Great, Eastham Rd, Bettystown, Co. Meath.	2009:642
09E0451	Phase 1 Donacarney Great, Bettystown, Co. Meath.	2010:517
17E0185	Meath, DONACARNEY GREAT - Excavation Licence	2017:484

Notes
Margaret Gowen, Gas Pipeline, cemetery and enclosures. E-ware.
Donald Murphy, testing
Donald Murphy, Linda Clarke; Prehistoric ritual site/Early Christian settlement site
Donald Murphy, Multi-period settlement site
Linda Clarke, monitoring, 3 fulachts
Linda Clarke, 3 fulacht fiadh
Eoin Corcoran, ACS. Monitoring, no archaeology
Rob O'Hara, no result. Near SMR ME21-021---
Rob O'Hara, prehistoric, fulacht and round house, monitoring, not excavated
R. O'Hara, Fulacht and other things
R. O'Hara, Bronze Age house
John O'Connor, barrow with two inhumations
Rob O'Hara, multi-phase site 6th - 10th century AD
Aidan O'Connell, Archer: no result
Jon Stirland, prehistoric/medieval
Aidan O'Connell, Archer: no result
Eoin Halpin, burials etc;
Liam Coen, Archer, field boundaries
Liam Coen; testing, one ditch feature, geophys anomaly
Liza Kavanagh. Ditch/boundary, possible potential
Eoin Halpin, garden features
Liam Coen, a field system associated with a large Early Medieval Enclosure, RMP no. ME021-011002
Ciara McCarthy, testing, prehistoric
Antoine Giacometti, excavation of above, prehistoric to medieval
Antoine Giacometti, monitoring, some postholes

1988:51 - Colp West, Meath

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A Licence number: —

Author: Margaret Gowen, 5 St Catherine

Site type: Early Christian enclosure, cemetery

ITM: E 712168m, N 774700m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.709919, -6.300898

The site is in a field adjacent to the 'Mill Road' some 500m to the north-west of the well-known medieval foundation of Colp with its nearby fort and castle. It is situated on a gentle north-facing slope at the summit of the long rise in ground from the southern bank of the River Boyne southwards, just below 100ft OD.

The site was discovered when removal of topsoil revealed a concentration of articulated and disarticulated human skeletal remains, some of which were placed in stone lined graves. All in situ remains had an east-west orientation. A spread of dark humus soil containing animal bone and charcoal was also noticed some 10m to the south of the skeletal remains. Excavation revealed that the pipeline had crossed through a cemetery which was found to lie in the north-east quadrant of a substantial enclosure ditch. Further enigmatic features revealed included an annular gully and some possible post-holes which appear to pre-date the burials here.

The pipeline corridor crosses the east-north-eastern quadrant of a large enclosure within which a Christian cemetery was found; aerial photography by Leo Swan reveals the faintest traces of a possible enclosure describing a diameter of up to 200m which was not revealed on the 1:10,000 or 1:5,000 vertical aerial photographs used for the purposes of preconstruction Survey.

Within the pipeline corridor two arms of an enclosure ditch, to the north and south of the cemetery concentration, were located at a maximum of 37m apart internally. These were partially excavated. However, during the trenching operation, two further ditches, lying 4m-5m apart up to 20m to the north and south of the portions excavated, came to light. Their presence was neither suspected nor traced in subsoil prior to the machine excavation of the pipe-trench and there was no evidence for their orientation or function, or for their relationship with those portions revealed and excavated. This may point to the existence of a multi-vallate enclosure or may indicate a series of overlapping enclosures of differing dates. There is some suggestion that the northern arm of the ditch excavated prior to trenching may not actually relate to the southern arm that was excavated. The fill in each case was very different, the northern ditch having a remarkably homogenous southern portion had a fill composed of numerous well defined layers of humic, dumped soils and silty clays which yielded sherds of both E-ware (predominantly), some sherds of B-ware and also contained numerous animal bone fragments.

This problem can only be addressed by further aerial photographic coverage at suitable times and perhaps by further excavation of the site.

The Cemetery

The remains of over one hundred individuals were exposed, excavated and retrieved for study. All burials were aligned east-west, many placed on top of earlier burials and fourteen were placed in stone-lined graves.

The stone-lined graves were not lintel-graves in the strict sense of the term, as none were actually covered with lintel-type stones. Rather, the graves were roughly stone lined, sometimes with flat slabs, but also with rounded boulders and only some were roughly covered with flattish slabs which didn't necessarily oversail the edges of the grave.

Burial was concentrated in a 20m stretch of the pipeline corridor towards the northern arm of the ditch revealed prior to trenching, and extended beyond the corridor to both the east and west. To the east the burial cannot have extended very far as the ditch ran very close to the fence-line of the corridor. However burials occurred in this area in a position that one would have expected to find, a bank of upcast associated with this particular ditch. To the west, the greatest spread of burials (north-south) occurred under the driving track of the pipeline indicating that further intensive burial exists to the west of the area exposed, lying under the area covered by topsoil and probably beyond the western limits of the pipeline corridor.

The burial activity appears to have been carried out over a long period of time and with no great consideration for pre-existing interments. There were several levels of burials, the deepest occurring at the west of the area excavated under the driving track. Many burials were either cut, disturbed, or completely displaced by later burials, especially at the east of the area excavated where burial was quite shallow and most skeletons were revealed immediately below topsoil. In places, some regard was taken of the remains already interred; the long bones and skulls disturbed by the interment of later burials were sometimes carefully gathered and placed to one side of the latter. There was also some evidence for the repeated use of at least two of the stone-lined graves.

All the bodies were laid out carefully, with the hands at either side. In some cases the hands, joined, were placed low in the pelvic area. Occasionally, one hand was placed across the midriff. Only one example displayed the medieval 'prayer-pose'. Almost all the skeletons retrieved appeared to be those of adults. There were a few obvious adolescents but no children.

All the skeletons, with the exception of one, were placed inside the line of the ditch, the one exception was revealed within the ditch fill but many were situated, as described above, in the area in which one would expect a bank of upcast from the northern arm of the excavated portion of the ditch.

Other Features

After removal of most of the skeletal remains, an earlier annular gully was traced lying 0.7m inside the inner edge of the northern arm of the excavated ditch. This forms roughly one half of a curvilinear feature with a diameter of c. 12m. The gully fill towards the south yielded several sherds of E-ware and B-ware. The gully was steep sided and flat bottomed 0.8m 0.9m wide and 0.5m 0.7m deep. Unfortunately there was nothing in the fill to suggest a structural function for this feature.

Several post hole like features were also revealed and there were some traces of burnt soil deposits in places but none formed any interpretable pattern. It is possible that further features may have been removed or disturbed due to the intensive burial in the area.

Towards the south of the cemetery area the old ground surface appeared to have been quite severely truncated by cultivation. A limited investigation of this area was carried out in selected cuttings but no archaeological features were revealed beneath a deposit of dark soil which had been spread from the fill of the ditch northwards.

Finds

Finds included E ware and B ware from the southern arm of the ditch burial fill and features into which the burial had been cut. One fragment of particular importance is a lid fragment of E ware, recovered from the ditch fill. One body sherd was recovered from the fill of one of the burials lying very close to the gully. Similarly, a small fragment of double sided, decorated bone comb and half a decorated blue glass bead were recovered from the fill of burials close to the position of the gully. A small tanged iron knife was recovered from the ditch fill.

It would appear that the E ware and B ware recovered represent the remains of pre burial occupation/activity on the site, possibly related to the use of the gully and the other enigmatic possible pre burial features.

A large quantity of animal bone was retrieved from both arms of the ditch, a significant proportion of which is obviously butchered.

Background

The name of Colp, or specifically 'Inber Coplá' or 'Inber Colpidi', appears in some of the country's earliest ecclesiastical documentary sources in which context it refers to the mouth of the River Boyne. The fact that it is mentioned in Muirchu's Life of Patrick, written c.AD 680, when Armagh was laying claim to all rights and possessions of the See of Patrick, seems to indicate that it was at least likely to have been in existence during the 5th-6th centuries. Whether the references mean this specific enclosure is not clear, but the combined evidence of both townland name and presence on this site of both E-ware and B-ware, along with stone lined Christian burials, certainly suggests that this site may be the one referred to in the texts. Also, the site appears to have been dedicated to the saint Athchain (genealogies based on the Book of Leinster (12th century) and not to St Columba, to whom the present church of Colp is dedicated. Aithechain of (Inber) Colpidi is commemorated

in The Martyrology of Tallht written AD c.900 which indicates that he died before this date. By association, the foundation to which he is dedicated must have been in existence before AD 900.

The present church of Colp 500m to the south-east of the site discovered on the pipeline is dedicated to St Columba, and while the dedication is likely to be pre-Norman it would probably not have dated from before the 9th century when contacts between Kells and Iona became very close. It is possible that at that time the Columbans may have established a house or hostel for their travelers which would have been built outside the boundaries of any pre-existing Patrician establishment.

Further documentary research is required before a more definite outline can be established. I am grateful to Betty O'Brien for all the above information.

Sweetman, PD. (1983) *Riocht Na Midhe*, 7, (1982-1983), 58-68.

1999:679 - COLP WEST, Meath

County: Meath Site name: COLP WEST

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A Licence number: **99E0472**

Author: Donald Murphy, Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd, 15 Trinity Street, Drogheda, Co. Louth.

Site type: Unknown

ITM: E 711468m, N 774166m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.705269, -6.311687

Outside 3km zone

An assessment of two possible archaeological features identified in an earlier environmental impact statement took place. The proposed development entails the construction of a new residential neighbourhood on a 130-acre site. Colp is first referred to in the Lives of St Patrick as 'Colpdai'. It contains a large number of registered monuments, including a cemetery, an enclosure, a fulacht fiadh and a probable medieval borough. Colp townland is within an area of archaeological potential identified in the Urban Archaeological Survey as an Anglo-Norman settlement. References are made in the Llanthony Cartularies (records of a religious foundation established in Colp in the 13th century) to a considerable number of houses, ditched field systems, roads, a millstream, a church cemetery and a causeway. Several known sites exist within the core area, including a church and enclosure, a mound, a grange and a castle.

Two features were tested: three low-visibility linear depressions 1m wide running north-south (Trenches 1-4) and a low, arcing bank up to 0.8m high (Trench 5).

Trench 1 was excavated east-west across the linear depression and measured 10m by 1m and 1m deep. Sod and topsoil extended to a depth of 0.2m and overlay the natural boulder clay. No features or finds were exposed.

Trench 2 was excavated south-west to north-east across the linear feature, measured 4m by 1m and was excavated to a depth of 0.7m. Sod and topsoil extended to 0.2m, below which orange boulder clay was exposed. No features or finds were exposed.

Trench 3 was excavated east-west across a second linear feature, measured 4m by 1m and was excavated to a depth of 1m. Sod and peaty topsoil extended to a depth of 0.3m and directly overlay the natural boulder clay. No features or finds were recovered.

Trench 4 was excavated north of Trench 3 across a linear feature in a marshy area bounded by an east-west, waterlogged ditch. It measured 5m by 1m and was excavated to a depth of 1.3m. The sod and topsoil directly overlay orange boulder clay. No features or finds were recovered.

Trench 5, 16m long, was excavated through the 0.8m-high arced bank to a depth of 1.3m. The northerly section of the trench revealed topsoil to a depth of 0.3m above boulder clay. Within the arced bank itself the topsoil extended to a depth of 0.55m and overlay boulder clay. No features or finds were recovered.

Neither feature proved to be significant. The linear features were possibly shallow field drains or ditches, whereas the arced bank probably represents a mound of dumped material created during ploughing. As the development is very extensive and as most of sites in Colp townland have no surface trace, monitoring of all topsoil-stripping has been recommended.

2000:0748 - COLP WEST, Meath

County: Meath Site name: COLP WEST

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A Licence number: **99E0472**

Author: Donald Murphy, Archaeology Consultancy Services Ltd, 15 Trinity Street, Drogheda, Co. Louth.

Site type: Prehistoric ritual site/Early Christian settlement site

ITM: E 712649m, N 774393m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.707060, -6.293720

Outside 3km zone

During monitoring of a housing development at Colp West, Co. Meath, in September 2000, a previously unknown prehistoric and Early Christian settlement, which covered an area of 2 acres, was unearthed. A full archaeological excavation was carried out on this site from October 2000 to February 2001.

The prehistoric phase of settlement at Colp West was defined by a linear ditch, which ran north–south across the site. All the prehistoric features lay to the west of this ditch. It was a probable ritual site, the majority of the features discovered comprising pits and post-holes. Four of these pits yielded numerous sherds of prehistoric pottery, which were, in all likelihood, votive offerings. The majority of other pits yielded cremated bone and a high density of charcoal. The above-mentioned linear ditch was also prehistoric in date, and finds retrieved from this feature include prehistoric pottery, a whetstone fragment and flint. This feature divided the prehistoric pits from the Early Christian ringfort and enclosures.

The principal features uncovered within the Early Christian area of the site consisted of a ringfort, the cut for a souterrain, four enclosures and a large rectangular enclosure. The ringfort had an internal diameter of 24.8m. Numerous features were exposed within the ringfort, including a hearth and some pits. The most impressive feature exposed within the ringfort was the cut for a souterrain. Unfortunately, the stone from the souterrain was removed at some stage during the post-medieval period. Finds retrieved from the souterrain included a highly decorated though fragmentary bone comb. Some of the more impressive finds retrieved from the ringfort include a flint blade, a bronze pin and two corroded blades (from knives).

Four subrectangular/D-shaped enclosures were annexed to the ringfort. These were probably some type of animal enclosures. A palisade trench was visible at the base of two of the enclosure ditches, which would suggest that they were fenced. Finds retrieved from the enclosure ditches include a flint knife and pottery. Two smaller and narrower semicircular enclosures were also exposed within this area. One of these appeared to precede the construction of the larger enclosures, while the other, from which a highly decorated glass bead was retrieved, was constructed at a later date.

Other features exposed within this site include numerous pits, post-holes and linear cuts (which probably functioned as slot-trenches for structures or as drainage). These features all lay in close proximity to the above-mentioned enclosures. Corn-drying kilns also feature predominantly throughout the site. A total of seventeen corn-drying kilns were exposed. These features, although Early Christian in date, were also found in the western section of the site, away from the ringfort and enclosures. These corn-drying kilns generally yielded a high density of charcoal and a small amount of animal and cremated bone. Impressive finds from the kilns include a flint scraper, part of a macehead and pottery. The most impressive find within a kiln was that of a headless

burial. The skeleton, of a male, was very badly decayed and was buried in the western base of a kiln. It lay directly on burnt timber and was covered by some very large stones.

A small circular structure was also found in close proximity to another kiln and may have functioned as a small hut.

2001:952 - Colp West, Meath

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A Licence number: **99E0472 ext.**

Author: Linda Clarke and Donald Murphy, Archaeological Consultancy Services, 15 Trinity Street, Drogheda, Co. Louth.

Site type: Multi-period settlement site

ITM: E 711468m, N 774166m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.705269, -6.311687

Outside 3km zone

An archaeological excavation was carried out in advance of the construction of Phase I of the proposed housing development at Colp West, Drogheda. Following the discovery of archaeological deposits during the monitoring of topsoil-stripping, an excavation was carried out between 27 September 2000 and 5 February 2001. An extensive site was revealed at Colp West, which incorporated a small ringfort, six associated enclosures, a Bronze Age enclosure, an Iron Age enclosure, kilns, possible robber trenches, post-holes, spreads and pits. Four broad phases of activity were identified, and can be dated to the Bronze Age, Iron Age, Early Christian and post-medieval–modern periods respectively.

Phase A—Bronze Age

Three features on this site can be assigned to the Bronze Age. Some were securely fixed by radiocarbon dating; others were assigned to this period owing to their location in close proximity to and amongst features from which a radiocarbon date was obtained. The oldest feature exposed on this site was the D-shaped enclosure F47 (cal. 1520–1310 BC). A single post-hole (F48) was exposed within this feature. This post-hole was, in all likelihood, associated with the post-holes F49, F60 and F73–F78 which were exposed immediately north and north-west of the enclosure F47. The exact function of the post-holes remains unclear but it is clear that they were associated with the enclosure and are therefore middle Bronze Age in date. A cluster of pits (F57, F62–F67, F166 and F167) was exposed north-west of the enclosure and its associated post-holes. Cordoned urn pottery was recovered from one of these pits (F66; cal. 1600–1300 BC). Cordoned urns were made at the end of the early Bronze Age and the first part of the middle Bronze Age. The final feature exposed that can be securely dated to the middle Bronze Age was the circular hut structure F13 (cal. 1428–1046 BC). This feature was a significant distance west of F47 but was probably built by the same community that constructed the aforementioned enclosure.

Evidence of a late Bronze Age settlement was recovered east of the circular hut structure and north-west of the D-shaped enclosure and comprised a 'robber trench' (F22), seven post-holes (F23–F29; cal. 916–596 BC) and three pits (F20, F30, F57). Pit F20 (cal. 760–203 BC) was located near the aforementioned post-holes and the 'robber trench'. The exact function of the post-holes F23–F29 and the 'robber trench' is not known but they were probably once structurally related. Pit F57 was, however, located at a distance to the east and was north-west of the D-shaped enclosure. This feature was attributed to the late Bronze Age following the analysis of fourteen sherds of pottery recovered from the fill.

Following the analysis of two sherds of pottery recovered from its fill, the linear feature F46 was also assigned to the Bronze Age. Pottery was recovered from pit F64, which was assigned to the Bronze Age. The pits within Area N and Area P were assigned to the Bronze Age owing to their close proximity to the D-shaped enclosure, the linear feature, and the pits from which Bronze Age pottery was recovered.

In conclusion, Bronze Age activity (middle and late) was confined to two areas on this site. The first area included the D-shaped enclosure, the linear boundary feature, pits and associated post-holes, while the second included the 'robber trench' and associated pits and post-holes. The second, slightly later phase of Bronze Age activity was exposed west to north-west of the earlier phase. These two phases of activity were, however, linked, as a pit (F57) containing late Bronze Age pottery was located amidst the middle Bronze Age features.

Phase B—Iron Age

Various features on this site can be assigned to the Iron Age. Many of these were securely dated by the radiocarbon method while others were assigned to this period owing to their location near to and amongst features from which a radiocarbon date was obtained.

A single kiln (F11; cal. 409–203 BC) and an irregularly shaped pit feature (F3; cal. 378 BC–AD 4) were the only features exposed that were securely dated to the early Iron Age. Both were within the western area of the site but they were not close to each other.

Late Iron Age activity was represented by eight kilns (F10, F34, F35, F39, F85, F105, F176, F199), the pit cut by the souterrain (F149; cal. AD 244–438), the circular hut structure (F127/F140; cal. 50 BC–AD 210), two pits (F19 and F92; cal. AD 259–418 and AD 212–404 respectively) and the semicircular enclosure F171. The kilns varied in date range from cal. 108 BC–AD 220 (F34) to cal. AD 400–650 (F10). The kilns F10, F35, F85 and F199 could be interpreted as transitional as they may very well have been in use in the initial stages of the Early Christian period. As mentioned previously, the hut feature (F127/F140), the kiln (F105) and the semicircular enclosure (F171) almost certainly coexisted and were probably built by the one community.

Various features were subsequently attributed to the Iron Age owing to their similarity to other features which were securely dated to that period. All of the kilns were almost certainly Iron Age in date, as was the irregularly shaped feature with the mottled stone base (F104), almost identical to F3. The features contained within Areas B–G, I–L, S, C1a, C1b and Z were also attributed to the Iron Age owing to their location amidst features which were securely dated to the Iron Age through radiocarbon dating.

In conclusion, the Iron Age phase of activity was largely confined to the area west of the linear feature (F46). It was, however, spread over a vast area, and the settlement evidence (i.e. hut structure and enclosure) during this period defined the eastern extent of the site.

Phase C—Early Christian period

The Early Christian settlement evidence was represented by the ringfort (F113/F128), the oval annexed enclosure (F87), the subrectangular enclosures (F51 and F103), the partial remains of the circular enclosure (F129), the semicircular enclosure (F174), and their associated features. Radiocarbon dates returned from these features prove the continuous presence of an Early Christian community from the late 6th century to the latter part of the 8th century.

The first phase of settlement is indicated by the construction of the ringfort (cal. AD 598–684) and the annexed oval enclosure (F87; cal. AD 569–679). The enclosure F129 could also have been constructed at this stage, although this cannot be proven as it was not stratigraphically related to any of the Early Christian enclosures and a radiocarbon date could not be obtained from the small quantity of animal bone and charcoal recovered from the ditch fill. The second phase of activity saw the construction of the large subrectangular enclosure which was added on to the northern edge of the ringfort (cal. AD 625–771). It was also at this time that the oval enclosure (F87) was replaced by a second subrectangular enclosure (F51; cal. AD 610–761). This enclosure was used in conjunction with the ringfort and the large subrectangular enclosure to the north.

The final phase of Early Christian activity was indicated by the construction of a smaller, narrower enclosure (F174). Only the partial remains of this enclosure were evident. This feature cut the Iron Age enclosure (F171), the oval enclosure which was annexed on to the ringfort, and the smaller subrectangular enclosure that replaced the oval enclosure. This semicircular enclosure (F174) may have replaced the subrectangular enclosure (F51)

and may have been used in conjunction with the ringfort and the large subrectangular enclosure (F103) to the north.

Some of the drying kilns may also have been used by the Early Christian community at Colp West. Four of the drying kilns returned radiocarbon dates that could be interpreted as transitional (cal. AD 240–610 to cal. AD 400–650). Finds recovered from this site indicative of Early Christian settlement include a bronze pin, a bone comb and a glass bead fragment.

Phase D—Post-medieval—modern

The post-medieval to modern phase of activity was represented by field drains and occasional pits.

Conclusion

The full extent of the site at Colp West was not defined during the excavation of the features uncovered during monitoring of Phase I of this development and it is clear that it continued southwards beyond the Colp Road. Pit features were uncovered several years ago on the south side of the road (Kieran Campbell, pers. comm.). These are, in all likelihood, associated with the large-scale multi-period settlement site which was excavated at Colp West. It is also possible that the nearby Early Christian cemetery uncovered by Margaret Gowen in 1988 (Excavations 1988, No. 51; Downey 1999) represents the final resting place of some of this Early Christian community at Colp West.

The archaeology uncovered adds significantly to our knowledge of the Colp hinterland and may represent the precursor of the medieval borough. During recent monitoring of Phase III of the development three fulachta fiadh were exposed. These were subsequently excavated (see No. 954 below) and charcoal samples taken. Fulacht 1 returned a radiocarbon date of 3840 ± 70 BP (cal. 2470–2120 BC) and Fulacht 2 returned a radiocarbon date of 3920 ± 70 BP (cal. 2580–2200 BC). This testifies to the presence of a community at Colp prior to the settlement evidence discussed within this report. The radiocarbon date returned from Fulacht 3 (2440 ± 70 BP; cal. 780–390 BC), however, proved that this fulacht fiadh was contemporary with the earlier phases of settlement exposed during Phase I of this development.

Further topsoil-stripping over the course of the present housing development may expose further sites which may offer greater insights into this important archaeological and historical landscape.

Reference

Downey, M. 1999 From the Nanny to the Boyne. Bettystown, Co. Meath.

2001:953 - Colp West, Meath

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A Licence number: **99E0472 ext.**

Author: Linda Clarke, Archaeological Consultancy Services, 15 Trinity Street, Drogheda, Co. Louth.

Site type: Monitoring

ITM: E 711468m, N 774166m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.705269, -6.311687

Outside 3km zone

Monitoring of Phase 3 of a large residential/ commercial development at Colp West, Co. Meath, which covered an area of 61,000m², was carried out in September 2001. Phase 3 is located immediately east and north-east of a large multi-period settlement site which was exposed and subsequently excavated during Phase 1 of the same development (see No. 952 above), south-west of the medieval borough of Colp, south-west of an Early Christian cemetery and enclosure. Three fulachta fiadh were exposed during the monitoring of the topsoil-stripping and were subsequently excavated (see No. 954 below, 01E0931). No other features of archaeological significance or finds were recovered during the monitoring of Phase 3. All subsequent phases of this development will also be monitored.

2002:1441 - Colp West, Meath

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A Licence number: **99E0472 ext.**

Author: Eoin Corcoran, ACS Ltd, Unit 21, Boyne Business Park, Greenhills, Drogheda, Co. Louth.

Site type: No archaeological significance

ITM: E 711468m, N 774166m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.705269, -6.311687

Outside 3km zone

Monitoring of Phase 4 at Colp West, Co. Meath, was carried out in May 2002. The site lies south-west of the medieval borough of Colp, south-west of an Early Christian cemetery and enclosure (SMR 21:11) and east of a multi-period site excavated by Donald Murphy (Excavations 2000, No. 748, 99E0472).

No archaeological features were exposed during this phase of monitoring.

2003:1374 - Grange Rath, Colp West, Meath

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A Licence number: **99E0472**

Author: Robert O'Hara

Site type: Monitoring

ITM: E 711771m, N 774194m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.705459, -6.307097

Outside 3km zone

Monitoring of topsoil removal in advance of a large residential development in Colp West continued. The site incorporated two fields separated by a large north-south-oriented drainage ditch, with an east-west-oriented ditch along the southern limit of the stripped area. The fields had been heavily ploughed and topsoil deposits up to 0.5m deep in places were noted. Topsoil consisted of a mid-brown loam, with occasional large boulders but mostly containing small to medium pebbles. A single flint flake was recovered from the topsoil deposits and was located close to the area of the settlement remains. No other archaeological finds were recovered; modern delft ceramic and earthenware was occasionally noted, though not collected. The subsoil was gravelly yellow/grey marl, with large areas of decayed stone in places. The impression of the area from the underlying geology was that it was formerly quite marshy and this was borne out by the discovery of fulachta fiadh sites in the immediate vicinity and the presence of large drainage features noted above. As a result of monitoring, two previously unknown sites were uncovered. They were located in different areas of the same (eastern) field and did not have any surface indications prior to development.

Site 1 (No. 1375 below, 03E0641) was the ploughed-out remains of heat-fractured stone deposits, representing fulacht fiadh activity. Very little remained of the mound material and there was no indication of either charcoal or burnt stone in the overlying topsoil deposits. The implication, therefore, is that the rest of the mound had been extensively ploughed-out over a number of years. A number of cut features, pits and trough-like features were located next to thin spreads of charcoal and heat-fractured stone.

Site 2 (No. 1376 below, 03E0660) is to the north-east of Site 1. It consisted of a number of post-holes and pits, with areas of oxidised clay notable among the remains. A circular pattern to the post-holes was immediately discernible and the remains appeared to be prehistoric. The occurrence of a flint flake nearby was indicative of a Bronze Age date; however, no finds were associated with any of the features at this stage and only the most cursory of examinations was undertaken of the remains.

Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd, Unit 21, Boyne Business Park, Greenhills, Drogheda, Co. Louth.

2015:085 - Donacarney, Mornington, MeathSites and Monuments Record No.: none Licence number: **15E0029**

Author: Jon Stirland

Site type: Prehistoric/medieval

ITM: E 713211m, N 775147m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.713709, -6.284943

Outside 3km zone

An assessment (test trenching) took place of a proposed housing development at Donacarney and Mornington, Co. Meath. The testing was carried out in fulfilment of planning conditions associated with the grant of permission for the construction of 255 houses (Planning Ref: An Bord Pleanála PL17.243610). The site is beside a protected structure (14318001), Donacarney House, built in 1860 and which is listed within the County Meath Development plan. Although the site of the proposed development contains no Recorded Monuments the surrounding townlands have in recent years proven themselves to be rich in previously unrecorded features and deposits of an archaeological nature.

Between 23 and 26 February 2015 a total of 31 test trenches were excavated. For the purposes of the test trenching the site was divided into 6 areas: the wooded Area and Fields 1 to 5. Both Fields 1 and 2 were found to contain archaeological features and deposits but the test trenching within the wooded area and Fields 3-5 failed to identify any further features.

Two archaeological features were identified in Field 1, Trench 5. The first comprised a linear feature (F15) measuring 2.24m in length and containing a deposit of burnt stone and charcoal with a circular pit-type feature located at its north-west end. Located approximately 57m to the north of F15, a circular pit (F16) was recorded. This was rich in charcoal and contained two fills within a bowl-shaped cut. Trench 5 was extended within the area of F15 and no further associated features were identified.

Despite no further features being identified within the trenches located within Field 1, it cannot be assumed that these features are isolated. Therefore it is recommended that Field 1 be subject to monitoring during topsoil stripping.

Within Field 2 a total of fourteen features of an archaeological nature were identified. The core of these features appears to be located along a low glacial ridge running south-west, north-east across the centre of Field 2 just above the 20m contour. The general appearance of the features and deposits suggests prehistoric activity, probably dating to the Bronze Age.

Within Trench 10 two pits were recorded (F10 and F11) with their surfaces rich with flecks of charcoal. Located directly to the east of pit F11 a linear ditch type feature was recorded (F12). With a width of 0.75m this ran north-south across Trench 10 with a slight suggestion that it may slightly curve to the east.

In Trench 11 two circular pits were recorded, F4 & F7, the surface of which were rich in flecks of charcoal. Trench 11 also contains a linear-type feature (F5) that may be in alignment with a similar linear feature recorded within Trench 10. Also within Trench 11 a third pit was identified (F6). This pit, rich in flecks of charcoal contains the broken base of a large pottery vessel. The vessel appears inverted within the pit and may be a Bronze Age Urn or large food vessel. Also recorded within Trench 11 towards its eastern limit was F13, a small sub-circular area of oxidised fire-reddened material that may represent a pit within situ burning measuring 0.3m in diameter.

In Trench 12, towards the trenches northern limit, a curving ditch-type feature (F14) was recorded. This curving ditch had a width of 0.96m and its surface was rich with flecks of charcoal. Within the confines of Trench 12 this curving ditch appears to suggest the appearance of a possible ring ditch with an internal diameter of 10m.

In Trench 13, three post-holes were recorded (F1, F2, F3). They each had diameters of 0.16m and appeared to form a possible curve, suggesting a possible circular structure. F2 contained a post pipe surrounded by packing material that contained three small sherds of prehistoric pottery of possible Bronze Age date.

Two features were recorded within Trench 14, F8, an irregular shaped spread of decomposing mussel shell and charcoal and F9, a spread of charcoal.

Within Fields 3, 4 and 5 a total of 17 further test trenches were excavated but no features or deposits of an archaeological nature were recorded.

Archaeological Consultancy Services Unit, Unit 21 Boyne Business Park, Greenhills, Drogheda, Co Louth

2009:641 - DONACARNEY GREAT, Meath

Sites and Monuments Record No.: ME021-025-026; Licence number: **08E912** ext.

Author: Melanie McQuade, Margaret Gowen & Co. Ltd, 27 Merrion Square, Dublin 2.

Site type: Multi-period archaeological complex

ITM: E 715250m, N 774086m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.703730, -6.254460

Eleven trenches were excavated during a second phase of testing carried out on Site B of a proposed development site, in order to determine the full extent and character of the archaeological features identified during the first phase of assessment undertaken on the site (see Excavations 2008, No. 951, for previous work).

The earliest evidence was characterised by a series of six circular enclosures (Enclosures A–E and G), a flattened mound (Enclosure F) and a linear ditch (F151/F185) on the western part of the site. Enclosures A (ME021–025), C and D were settlement sites, although there is evidence that cremation burials may also have been interred within Enclosure

D. Further burial evidence came from a cremation burial contained within a Bronze Age urn in Enclosure F, as well as possible cremation burials within the ditch of Enclosure E and just outside the ditch of Enclosure G. Ceramics recovered during test excavations indicate that these enclosures are probably Bronze Age in date. No dating evidence was uncovered for Enclosure B (ME021–026) but, given its morphological similarity and proximity to the other circular enclosures, it is probably also Bronze Age in date.

Enclosure A was 16.4m in diameter. It was defined by a ditch 0.8–1m wide and 0.48m deep with a U-shaped profile. A piece of struck flint was identified within the ditch fill during the first phase of testing. Several internal features including a structure, indicated by a row of three post-holes, were recorded and two pits were uncovered 6.4m to the west of the enclosure.

Enclosure B was located 55m to the south-east of Enclosure A and was c. 10m in diameter. The northern and eastern sides of the enclosure were defined by a 0.66m-wide ditch. This was 0.2m deep with a U-shaped profile and was filled with sterile yellow sand.

Enclosure C, which was located c. 35m to the south-west of enclosure B, was 30m in diameter. The enclosing ditch was 1.4m wide and 0.6m deep. A series of features within the enclosure included two probable kilns, a structure indicated by a slot-trench and a post-hole, and a spread of charcoal. The slot-trench measured 0.4m wide and 0.25m deep and a fragment of a broken quernstone was recovered from it. A thumbnail scraper and a flake, both made of flint, were recovered from the charcoal spread. Another kiln was located to the north of the enclosure and a sherd of pottery was recovered from its fill.

Enclosure D was 26m in diameter and was located

c. 15m to the north of Enclosure A. The remains of a structure within the northern end of Enclosure D were indicated by a series of post-holes. A possible burial function for the enclosure was indicated by fragments of highly burnt bone, identified during the first phase of testing. Enclosure E was located immediately south-east of Enclosure D and was much smaller (10m diameter). No finds were recovered from the ditches of Enclosures D or E or from any of the internal features; however, their proximity to Enclosures A and C suggests a broadly contemporary date.

Enclosure G was located c. 45m to the north of Enclosure D and was 13m in diameter. A sherd of coarseware and a chert flake were recovered from its ditch and a probable cremation burial-pit was identified in close proximity to the ditch. A series of features identified to the south of Enclosure G during the first phase of testing are suggestive of domestic activity in this area, but no dating evidence was recovered from these features and they could be contemporary either with the Bronze Age enclosure or with the medieval ditch, F141, to their east.

The ditch F151/F185 was located on the west of the site, to the north of Enclosure F, which contained a cremation burial. A sherd of coarseware pottery from this ditch indicates domestic activity dating to the later part of the Bronze Age.

A second period of settlement activity was indicated by two subrectangular enclosures (Enclosures J and K) on the eastern end of the site, where there was evidence for several phases of occupation and a single inhumation burial. The absence of ceramic finds from this part of the site suggests that it dates to the early medieval period.

Enclosures J and K measured 35m by 53m and 41m by 53m respectively. They were defined by a substantial northern ditch, F120, that was up to 1m deep, but the southern enclosure ditches F21/F173 were not as substantial. The sequence and waterlogged nature of the fills in the northern ditch F120 indicate that it had held water and that it filled in gradually over time. A sherd of Bronze Age coarseware recovered when cleaning back the surface of this ditch probably came from its fill but no other chronologically diagnostic finds were recovered from the section excavated into the ditch. The internal features within Enclosures J and K comprise a series of pits and ditches, some of which may represent structural remains. Although the general lack of artefacts from the features on this part of the site does not facilitate dating, the absence of pottery suggests that occupation may date some time between the end of the Bronze Age and the beginning of the medieval period (c. 800 BC to 12th century AD), when ceramics were not in widespread use. An inhumation burial was uncovered on this part of the site during the first phase of testing. No further burials were uncovered within the test-trenches excavated during this second phase of testing.

Evidence for medieval settlement activity came from a curvilinear ditch (F141) on the northern end of the site that contained a sherd of medieval cooking ware. This ditch was located to the south of Enclosure G and some of the pits in that area could also prove to be medieval in date.

2009:642 - DONACARNEY GREAT, Meath

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A Licence number: 09E0142

Author: Ciara McCarthy, for ArchTech Ltd, 32 Fitzwilliam Place, Dublin 2.

Site type: Testing

ITM: E 714951m, N 774507m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.707577, -6.258829

Two phases of testing were carried out at the site of a proposed mixed residential development at Donacarne Great, Bettystown, Co. Meath. The testing was carried out following a geophysical survey (licence 09R077) by Earthsound Archaeological Geophysics. Fifty anomalies were identified during the survey and required further investigation; these anomalies included a ring-ditched feature with a diameter of 34m. Seventeen trenches representing 2060 linear metres were excavated across the development site to test the geophysical anomalies and to generally test the area. Nine areas of archaeological potential were identified.

Areas 1, 8 and 9 were located on the crest of a north-west/south-east ridge in the northern field. The geophysical survey identified five anomalies in this area. The testing programme identified ten archaeological features in this area, primarily interpreted as representing a prehistoric barrow or ring-ditch and associated features that include two large pits and two rows of small stones. Areas 2 and 4 were also located on the crest of the north-west/southeast ridge. Sporadic or scattered prehistoric remains were identified in these three areas. Areas 5

and 6 were located in the lower south-west corner of the southern field, and also represent probable prehistoric remains in the form of an occupation or working surface (Area 5) and a fulacht fiadh (Area 6).

The features were subsequently excavated during 2010 under licence 09E0451.

2010:517 Donacarney Great

Antoine Giacometti: Licence number 09E0451

Prehistoric landscape and early medieval kilns

ITM E714917 N774665

Outside 3km zone

An excavation took place over three fields to the north-west of Bettystown, Co. Meath, during September 2009 to January 2010. The dominant topographical feature on the site was a ridge of high land orientated north-west/south-east, on which all of the significant archaeological remains were located. The ridge was the focus of the excavations, and was almost completely stripped of topsoil, forming a contiguous archaeological site measuring 250m in length and 40–60m in width, and covering over 1ha in area.

Early prehistoric period: 4000–2300 bc

Mesolithic artifacts (including a Moynagh point and a but-trimmed flake) indicated early activity, but the earliest firm evidence for occupation on the site was in the Neolithic period. An early/mid-Neolithic structure appeared to take the form of a rectangular roofed building (5.5m by 3.5m) formed by post-holes and slot-trenches with a porch protruding centrally along the long side to the south-east. The porch had been constructed in such a way as to restrict views into the left-hand corner of the interior, as noted at other Neolithic structures, particularly court tombs. The two large entrance post-holes were filled with Neolithic pottery and one had a broken saddle quern upside-down over the top of it. Evidence for the intentional dismantling and destruction of the structure was interpreted as the transformation of the building into a monument during the middle Neolithic, and it was noted that this monument continued to have relevance into the Bronze Age phase of the site

Middle Neolithic activity was also identified elsewhere on the site, for example at the apex of the ridge where a single stone-lined post-hole (interpreted as holding a marker post) contained Carrowkeel ware and unidentified cremated bone.

The focus of late Neolithic activity was a cluster of post-holes forming a possible rectangular structure (5m by 4m) surrounded by further post-holes, pits and curving slot-trenches at the other end of the site. Fragments of grooved ware (as well as mid-Neolithic and Beaker pottery) and flint debitage of various dates appeared to have been intentionally deposited in some of the post-holes. The presence of four main post-holes forming a square and a defined double-set of post-holes forming an entrance is suggestive of the four central post-settings often seen in timber circles, such as the one identified at Bettystown nearby, but no firm evidence of a timber circle was noted here.

As well as the Beaker pottery in the grooved ware structure, other deposits of Beaker pottery were noted on the site. In one area a cluster of small pits and post-holes were stuffed with Beaker pottery following the abandonment of a structure.

A common feature of the early prehistoric (i.e. Neolithic) structures on the site was the presence of seemingly intentional artefact-rich deposits within structural post-holes. This does not appear to have occurred with later prehistoric structures on the site. These deposits were examined as a related group, and a number of interesting avenues of interpretation were explored during excavation and post-excavation. The preliminary report on the excavation discusses these with reference to the emergence of new ways of eating and cooking that emerged

during the Neolithic period, and in light of the persistence of foraging/nomadic (and pastoralist?) lifestyles during the later Neolithic.

Later prehistoric period: 2300 bc to ad 500

Later prehistoric activity involved a much greater emphasis on the enclosure of the landscape, in contrast to earlier prehistoric settlement evidence, and this was reflected on the site by a large ditched enclosure and linear land boundaries. Curving ditches containing no datable material identified in another part of the site may have represented a second very large circular enclosure of late prehistoric date.

The large ditched enclosure (c. 30m internal diam.) is likely to date to the later Bronze Age, and to form part of a wider tradition of enclosed ridge-top settlement. Two phases of construction were identified: an early partially bivallate phase and a later univallate phase with a centrally located round structure that was partially encircled by a series of large pits. Another interesting feature was an off-centre square structure defined by four very large stone-lined post-holes that may have supported a heavy platform for a raised granary, as interpreted on other contemporary sites. The similarity in the situations of the four-post structures at the recently excavated (but later and completely different in terms of scale) site at Lismullin 1 and at Donacarney in relation to both an inner circular feature and an outer enclosure is particularly striking. A number of other structures were also noted outside the circular enclosure.

Two fulachta fiadh were identified in the low-lying western part of the site, both sited on the edges of old watercourses. One of these comprised a large circular well connected by a narrow gap (which no doubt could be opened and closed by means of a wooden sluice or similar) to a circular trough, with a small kiln nearby. Somewhat unusually for fulacht fiadh sites, flint specialist Farina Sterke identified a large assemblage of middle Neolithic flint within the feature, including several scrapers used in hide processing. Fragments of a cordoned urn-type pottery vessel recovered from the upper fills of the well may have been a later insertion within the backfilled feature.

A set of regular co-axial ditches ran over the ridge. Based on stratigraphic evidence and the presence of flint arrowheads and fragments of coarse pottery in the fill, it has been dated to the late Bronze Age, suggesting comparisons with other well-known prehistoric field systems in western Ireland. Although the field system cut through earlier prehistoric features, it was clear that elements of these previous features were still visible, and impacted upon the overall form of the field system. One part of the field system ended suddenly near the highest point of the ridge, and it is hypothesised that in the Bronze Age some sort of aboveground feature, or natural feature, had stood here. Later, in the Iron Age, this location was selected for the construction of a ring-ditch, which cut through the earlier ditch system. The integration of pre-existing monuments into prehistoric field systems, and the incorporation of new monuments into the same field systems, as identified on this site, is a pattern that occurs across Britain and Ireland.

The Iron Age ring-ditch was of typical size and form and contained two bone deposits, of which the large (south-eastern) deposit definitely represented human bone, whereas the origin of the bone from the smaller deposit was unclear. It seems probable that the ring-ditch was constructed specifically for the south-eastern burial, and such monuments are often seen as primarily funerary in function. The south-eastern cremation deposit contained a variety of artefacts, including fragments of iron and copper representing a possible fibula or brooch, and a number of glass and bone beads. The beads (eight plain polished bone beads, twenty tiny pale blue-green beads and one larger glass bead decorated with concentric circles of blue, red and yellow glass) were examined by Judith Carroll, who suggested they formed part of a single object such as a necklace or bracelet. The beads showed signs of heat damage consistent with being laid upon a corpse in a pyre prior to burial of the ashes in the ring-ditch. These beads are closely comparable to 1st- or 2nd-century bc assemblages found in a number of Iron Age burial contexts throughout the country, but particularly in Galway.

Carroll also suggested that the beads may have been manufactured in Britain, and this British connection may be mirrored by the fragmented fibula, suggesting that the individual who wore them considered themselves

connected to the wider world, and may have been someone of higher than usual status or rank with access to a range of imported and fancy, perhaps expensive, items. The significance of this individual's cremation, and of the burial monument's interesting location in terms of earlier Neolithic ritual activity and the Bronze Age field system, is discussed at length in the preliminary excavation report. The construction of the ring-ditch might have crystallised existing (and perhaps competing) land or status claims into the historical landscape – and in this way perhaps intentionally subverted an earlier more fluid system of land organisation and ownership.

Early medieval and later periods: ad 500–1150

Early medieval activity on the site was represented by a larger field system that cut across and did not respect the earlier prehistoric features. Four unenclosed plank-built structures that may have been houses, kiln screens or sheltered ateliers/stores were also identified. Five cereal-processing kilns were found, generally cut into the banks of the early medieval field boundaries, and there was tentative stratigraphic evidence for the keyhole-shaped kiln being later than the figure-of-eight-shaped kilns, supporting a hypothesis put forward by Monk and Kelleher (1995) regarding the relative antiquities of the two kiln types. One kiln was enormous (7m long and almost 1m deep) and contained two sawn antler craft off-cuts and a large fragment of a human skull, which seems to have been intentionally placed centrally at the bottom of the deeper bowl.

Overall, the excavation exposed a long period of prehistoric settlement along the spine of a ridge. The ridge was clearly a focus of ceremonial activity, but not to the point where 'profane' activities were excluded. Rather, it appears that domestic or practical structures and features were selected for special commemoration and transformed into monuments that, over time, formed part of the landscape. When dealing with a period of time measured in millennia rather than years, landscapes undergo constant transformation as they are passed down from one generation to the next, and the meanings of old house sites, field boundaries and monuments are interpreted in new ways.

Reference

Monk, M. and Kelleher, R. 1995 An assessment of the archaeological evidence for Irish corn-drying kilns in the light of the results of archaeological experiments and archaeobotanical studies. *Journal of Irish Archaeology* xiv, 77–114.

2017:484 Donacarney Great

Antoine Giacometti: Licence number 17E0185

Prehistoric landscape

ITM E714977 N774633

Outside 3km zone

A programme of monitoring took place across a proposed development site at Donacarney Great. The site extended over 5.63 ha of fields in the north-west of Bettystown, which had previously been geophysically surveyed (Earthsound, 09R077), tested (McCarthy 09E0142) and excavated (Giacometti 09E0451; excavations ref 2010:517).

Three post-holes were identified during the monitoring, and fit into the overall prehistoric landscape excavated on this site in 2009-2010. In order to put the findings of the monitoring programme into context, it will be necessary to complete the outstanding post-excavation work associated with this development.



2003:1422 - Mornington, Meath

County: Meath Site name: Mornington

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A

Licence number: 03E0009

Author: Aidan O'Connell, Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd, Unit 21, Boyne Business Park, Greenhills, Drogheda, Co. Louth.

Site type: No archaeological significance

ITM: E 714588m, N 775878m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.719977, -6.263816

A second phase of testing was undertaken at the site of a proposed housing development at Mornington, Co. Meath. The initial phase was undertaken by Donald Murphy (Excavations 2002, No. 1494, 02E1162) and concentrated on the western portion of the site. A further six test-trenches were excavated as part of the second phase of assessment. Five of these were excavated in the eastern portion of the site, with the remaining trench located towards the south-west. Sod and topsoil were recorded at an average depth of 0.35m and directly overlay the natural mid-orange/brown sandy clay. No archaeological deposits or artefacts were exposed.

2007:1288 - Colp Cross, Meath

County: Meath Site name: Colp Cross

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A Licence number: **07E0891**

Author: Robert O'Hara, Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd, Unit 21, Boyne Business Park, Greenhills, Drogheda, Co. Louth.

Site type: Early medieval

ITM: E 711577m, N 773668m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.700774, -6.310216

This site at Colp Cross, Painestown, was excavated as part of the ongoing development of Colp West, Co. Meath. The excavation was necessitated by the construction of a temporary road to facilitate traffic during the realignment of the current N1 at Colp Cross. Only a small area was to be excavated. Monitoring (under licence 99E0472) had identified a human burial and a number of ditches. Excavation revealed successive early medieval enclosures, only a small portion of which were available for investigation; the remainder will be preserved in situ beneath a proposed roundabout and embankments.

Two multiphase curvilinear ditch sequences were recorded. The earliest phase was represented by a two-phase ditch c. 30m in diameter, hereafter Enclosure 1. The position of the entrance changed over the two phases of this enclosure, but both entrances were causewayed features. A series of ditches to the north of these features are considered to be the corresponding northern extent as they follow the two-phase model and match the projected limit of their presumed counterparts. Enclosure 1 was replaced by a larger structure (Enclosure 2), defined by a deep ditch, recut on a number of occasions.

Two drystone souterrains were also excavated. Souterrain A was a poorly preserved souterrain formed by two oval-shaped chambers connected by two short passages. Souterrain B was located a short distance south-west of Souterrain A. It consisted of a long curving passage and a subrectangular chamber. The entrance to this chamber had been disturbed. The degree of truncation to this souterrain suggested a significant amount of topsoil had been removed prior to excavation. It is unlikely that such an amount of natural subsoil was scarped away by ploughing and may indicate that the centre of the site was artificially raised during this period.

The recovered artefacts suggested wealthy and prosperous people inhabited the settlement between the 6th and 10th centuries. Two bone combs were recovered, as well as fragments of quernstones. An Early Mesolithic blade and an Early Neolithic unfinished arrowhead were also recovered. There was evidence for fine metalworking in the form of crucible and mould fragments, while the prosperity of the settlement was highlighted in the recovery of both A-ware and E-ware pottery.

2001:954 - Colp West, Meath

County: Meath Site name: Colp West

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A Licence number: **01E0931**

Author: Linda Clarke, Archaeological Consultancy Services, 15 Trinity Street, Drogheda, Co. Louth.

Site type: Fulachta fiadh

ITM: E 711468m, N 774166m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.705269, -6.311687

Monitoring of Phase 3 at Colp West, Co. Meath, which covered an area of 61,000m², was conducted in September 2001. Three fulachta fiadh were exposed during the monitoring of the topsoil-stripping and were subsequently excavated. The site lies to the south-west of the medieval borough of Colp, south-west of an Early Christian cemetery and enclosure (SMR 21:11) and north-east of a multi-period site (see No. 952 above, 99E0472). No surface trace of the fulachta fiadh was visible prior to the removal of the topsoil. All three were heavily ploughed out, which resulted in the reduction and dispersion of the burnt stone.

Fulacht 1 was exposed north-west of Fulacht 2. This fulacht spread was removed down to the natural boulder clay/marl, and two underlying troughs (F14 A and B) and associated water channels were exposed, all of which were cut into the natural boulder clay. The trough F14 A was suboval in shape. A possible associated water channel extended in a north-west to south-east direction from the western extent of F14 A towards the north-

eastern extent of F14 B. F14 B was south-west of F14 A and was subrectangular in shape. A second possible water channel was exposed south of F14 B. No finds were recovered from this site and a charcoal sample recovered from F14 returned a radiocarbon date of 3830 ± 70 BP (cal. BP 4420–4060).

Fulacht 2 was south-east of Fulacht 1 and north of Fulacht 3. This fulacht spread consisted of two separate spreads, F16/F17. Spread F16 was located at the western edge of the site. It was removed down to the natural boulder clay/marl and a single post-hole was exposed. Spread F17 was located within two areas of the site, to the south-east and to the north-east. Two features were exposed beneath F17 — a trough and an oval depression. A second trough, F18, was exposed west of F16 and east of F17. Five stake-holes, which varied in diameter from 0.07m to 0.09m and in depth from 0.07m to 0.08m, were cut into the base of this feature.

A subcircular slot-trench with an internal diameter north–south of 2.15m and an external diameter north–south of 2.95m cut the western and southern extent of F18. The small size of this feature coupled with the absence of occupational evidence from its interior would suggest that it did not function as a hut but could have functioned as a temporary meat store. A semicircular slot-trench, which was visible in two sections, was exposed south of the slot-trench. The gap between the two sections could have functioned as an entrance. A single find was recovered from this site — a polished whetstone was recovered from the fill of the pit F19. A charcoal sample taken from this feature (F19) returned a radiocarbon date of 3910 ± 70 BP (cal. BC 2580–2200).

Fulacht 3 was located south of Fulacht 2 and east of a large multi-period settlement site (see No. 952 above). This fulacht spread was on low-lying ground that sloped slightly from south to north. A possible watercourse was identified north of the fulacht spread and was probably used in conjunction with the fulacht fiadh. This site consisted of the heavily ploughed-out fulacht spread to the south (F29) and an extremely large hole (F25), which once contained the remains of a large tree, to the north. F25 was badly disturbed by the tree roots from an existing site boundary to the west. The uppermost fill consisted of fulacht material. This was probably pushed into this feature when the fulacht spread, which lay to its south, was levelled. A rectangular slot-trench, F30, was cut into the fulacht spread. This had an internal diameter north–south of 2.9m and an external diameter north–south of 3.55m, and probably had a similar function to F20/F21. No finds were recovered from this site. Animal bone recovered from the fill of this feature returned a radiocarbon date of 2740 ± 70 BP (cal. BC 1030–800). This would reinforce the idea that F25 was opened prior to the construction of the fulacht fiadh as charcoal from the fulacht material returned a radiocarbon date of 2420 ± 60 BP (cal. BC 780–390).

2002:1446 - Donacarney Little, Donacarney, Meath

No Image Available

County: Meath Site name: Donacarney Little, Donacarney

Sites and Monuments Record No.: SMR 21:21 Licence number: **02E1747**

Author: Robert O'Hara, ACS Ltd, Unit 21, Boyne Business Park, Greenhills, Drogheda, Co. Louth.

Site type: No archaeological significance

ITM: E 714232m, N 774766m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.710061, -6.269632

An assessment was carried out at the site of a proposed dwelling, associated stables and stable yard. The site was near a cropmark, recently identified through aerial photography. The cropmark indicated a circular enclosure and associated field systems. The proposed development was c. 200m north of the cropmark.

Seven test-trenches were mechanically excavated to subsoil. No archaeological features or finds were revealed in any of them. An anomaly noted in this area on the aerial photograph was investigated by one of the trenches. It was of no archaeological significance and was probably the result of waterlogging or other geomorphological processes.

2003:1375 - Grange Rath, Colp West, Meath

County: Meath Site name: Grange Rath, Colp West

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A Licence number: **03E0641**

Author: Robert O'Hara, Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd, Unit 21, Boyne Business Park, Greenhills, Drogheda, Co. Louth.

Site type: Fulachta fiadh

ITM: E 711165m, N 773902m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.702963, -6.316368

The site was discovered during mechanical removal of topsoil under supervision. It is the most recent of a number of excavations within the development, including significant prehistoric and medieval settlements investigated by Donald Murphy (Excavations 2000, No. 748, 99E0472) and fulachta fiadh excavated by Linda Clarke (Excavations 2001, No. 954, 01E0931). A house site was located to the north-east of this site and was excavated under a separate licence (No. 1376 below).

The site consisted of two large pit/trough features, one roughly circular (1m by 1.4m in diameter by 0.45m deep), with sloping sides, and the other rectangular (1.4m by 2m by 0.21m deep), with straight sides and a stake-hole in each of its four corners. Two small bowl-shaped pits and one slightly triangular cut were probably ancillary to the main activity being carried out at the pits/troughs outlined above. All the features were filled with the usual heat-fractured stone deposits in a charcoal and clay matrix. Four thin spreads of blackened material including fractured stone were interspersed among the cut features and are believed to be the remnants of small mounds removed in antiquity. The largest measured 3m by 2m and was 0.1m thick. All the features were contained within an area measuring 15m by 15m and, although not stratigraphically related, may indeed be contemporary. A date of BC 2585-2205 was recorded for one of the trough features and is within the range of dates for other fulachta excavated within the townland (BC 2580-2200 and 2470-2120; Linda Clarke, op. cit.).

2003:1376 - Grange Rath, Colp West, Meath

County: Meath Site name: Grange Rath, Colp West

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A Licence number: **03E0660**

Author: Robert O'Hara, Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd, Unit 21, Boyne Business Park, Greenhills, Drogheda, Co. Louth.

Site type: Bronze Age house

ITM: E 711398m, N 773905m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.702940, -6.312840

The site was discovered during mechanical removal of topsoil under supervision. The site is the latest in a number of excavations within the development, including significant prehistoric and medieval settlements excavated by Donald Murphy (Excavations 2000, No. 748, 99E0472) and fulachta fiadh excavated by Linda Clarke (Excavations 2001, No. 954, 01E0931). A small fulacht fiadh site was located to the south-west of this site and was excavated under a separate licence (No. 1375 above).

The site consisted of a circular arrangement of posts c. 7m in diameter built without a footing trench, with a number of internal posts forming wall or roof supports. The posts had average diameters of 0.4m and reached depths of 0.6m. The internal supports were four large posts set out in a T-shaped pattern at the centre of the structure. This pattern, while reducing the living space at ground level, could easily have facilitated an upper-

floor level in the roof space. The internal floor space of c. 38.5m² was significantly reduced by the number of pits cut into the subsoil. It is feasible that only some of these pits (primarily all storage pits) were in use at any one time and that some pits were periodically filled in and relocated in order to provide more space. There were two possible entrances, one in the western wall directly through the superstructure and a second more likely point via a possible corridor-type feature in the north-eastern wall.

A number of pits were found both internally and externally. The external pits were rather larger than those within the structure and, it can be reasonably assumed, were used primarily as refuse dumps. The internal pits were generally straight-sided cuts with flat bases and could possibly be interpreted primarily as storage pits. An interesting feature of the internal pit distribution was that nearly all these types of pits are within a very localised area of the house between an arc-shaped setting of posts. This was taken as possible evidence of internal compartmentalisation. There was only one possibility of a hearth on the site, which was roughly centrally placed within the structure and consisted of a spread of mottled oxidised clay, stained grey/black in places by charcoal and ash. It was flanked by a small number of stake-holes, probably the remains of a roasting spit.

Not unusually in sites of this nature, the artefactual assemblage was quite poor and limited to a small number of coarse undecorated sherds representing at least two vessels, a single flint flake and a perforated mudstone object, possibly a line sinker or loom weight. A greater amount of environmental material was available for analysis, including around 50 charred seed fragments and a small number of nutshell fragments (the seeds were mostly barley and wheat, with various weeds also represented). Over 100 fragments of cremated bone were recovered from a number of contexts. Many of the bone fragments could not be identified to species, however, and only burnt faunal remains survived at the site. A charcoal sample provided a date of BC 1020-790 for the structure.

2005:1163 - COLP WEST, Meath

County: Meath Site name: COLP WEST

Sites and Monuments Record No.: SMR 21:12 Licence number: 05E0019

Author: Deirdre Murphy, Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd, Unit 21, Boyne Business Park, Greenhills, Drogheda, Co. Louth.

Site type: No archaeological significance

ITM: E 711468m, N 774166m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.705269, -6.311687

Archaeological assessment at St Columba's Church, Colp West, Co. Meath, was undertaken in advance of the installation of a septic tank and percolation area. The proposed development was within the curtilage of a recorded monument and in an existing graveyard. The area tested was in the eastern corner of the graveyard where there were no marked graves. This part of the site was overgrown with weeds/ivy and grass cuttings, and decayed plants had been dumped in this area. Two trenches were excavated in excess of the depth of the proposed services and even at these depths (1.6m) the subsoil was not exposed. It is possible that continual dumping in this part of the site has contributed to the present depth of topsoil. The area is greatly disturbed by root systems of adjacent trees. The assessment failed to identify any archaeological deposits or human remains in this part of the site.

2016:458 - St Columba's Church, Colp, Meath

County: Meath Site name: St Columba's Church, Colp
 Sites and Monuments Record No.: ME021:012 Licence number: 05E0019 ext.
 Author: Deirdre Murphy and Jon Stirland
 Site type: Non Archaeological
 ITM: E 712619m, N 774461m
 Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.707675, -6.294156

No archaeological features or deposits were identified during monitoring and no finds were recovered.

Archaeological Consultancy Services Unit, Unit 21 Boyne Business Park, Greenhills, Drogheda, Co Louth

2005:1217 - MORNINGTON, Meath

County: Meath Site name: MORNINGTON
 Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A Licence number: 05E0209
 Author: Linda Clarke, Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd, Unit 21, Boyne Business Park, Greenhills, Drogheda, Co. Louth.
 Site type: No archaeological significance
 ITM: E 714426m, N 776517m
 Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.725751, -6.266033

Monitoring was undertaken at a site in Mornington, close to Mornington village, south of the River Boyne, Co. Meath. The site comprised a number of fields and largely consisted of made-up ground which was reclaimed, by the River Boyne. It is proposed to construct a golf driving range, including a carpark and access road on the site. Topsoil was removed by an excavator equipped with a grading bucket. The sod and topsoil measured an average depth of 0.3m and lay directly above the subsoil, which consisted of a mid-brown sandy clay. No archaeological features were exposed and a number of 19th–20th-century pottery sherds were recovered from the sod and topsoil.

2006:1532 - Claristown, Meath

County: Meath Site name: Claristown
 Sites and Monuments Record No.: - Licence number: 06E0197
 Author: John O'Connor, ADS Ltd, Windsor House, 11 Fairview Strand, Dublin 3.
 Site type: Barrow
 ITM: E 714314m, N 767654m
 Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.646165, -6.270994

Topsoil-stripping in advance of the south–north gas pipeline connecting Ballyalbanagh, Co. Antrim, to Gormanstown, Co. Meath, revealed a circular enclosure adjacent to the M1 motorway at Claristown. Just over half of the enclosure was revealed in the stripped area. The site appears to have been a roughly circular enclosure, c. 12.4m in internal diameter, bounded by a ditch varying from 1.8m to 3.1m wide by 1.02m deep. The main fill of the ditch consisted of compact grey clayey silt. Some animal-bone fragments, including a broken antler, were recovered from the ditch fill. The uppermost fill of the ditch was a layer of angular stones 1.6m wide by 0.2m deep.

Two burials were discovered in the interior of the barrow. Both skeletons were in a poor state of preservation. The first consisted of an extended burial, probably adult, with the right arm extended along its side, within a shallow stone-lined grave-cut. Movement of the stones and disturbance of the skeleton suggest that the grave has been damaged by ploughing. The grave was found to the north-east of the centre of the enclosure and was

aligned north-west/south-east. The central area of the enclosure was largely absent of stones other than those in and around the grave-cut.

The second skeleton, which was located 1.5m to the south, consisted of the poorly preserved fragmentary remains of a crouched inhumation of a probable child on its left side. An iron pin lay across the body at the base of its ribs. Similar iron fragments were found in both graves.

2014:106 - Colp West, Meath

County: Meath Site name: Colp West

Sites and Monuments Record No.: ME021-018, ME021-023, ME021-024 Licence number: **14E0091**

Author: Aidan O'Connell

Site type: No archaeology found

ITM: E 712044m, N 774042m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.704035, -6.303013

An archaeological assessment of a proposed housing development at Colpe Road, Colp West, Drogheda, Co. Meath was carried out for NewKey Homes. There has been extensive development of the area in the last 25 years and a number of archaeological sites have been discovered as a result, including 3 fulachta fiadh recorded beyond the north-eastern boundary of the site. Three trenches with a total length of 150m were excavated across the site. Subsoil consisted of a mid to light orange brown stony clay. There were no archaeological features or artefacts recorded at the site.

Archer Heritage Planning, 8 Beat Centre, Stephenstown, Balbriggan, Co. Dublin

2017:627 - St Columba's Church, Colp West, Meath

County: Meath Site name: St Columba's Church, Colp West

Sites and Monuments Record No.: ME021-012004- Licence number: 16E0624

Author: Eoin Halpin

Site type: Church site

ITM: E 712612m, N 774450m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.707578, -6.294266

The testing of the proposed exterior ground works took place in September 2017 and consisted of three test trenches, with a fourth area opened to cover the percolation area to the north of the church.

Trench 1 ran from the entrance gates, up the lane to the front door of the church with a spur running around the west side of the church tower and the north side of the church as well as extending to the north-east to cover the line of the service line running to the percolation area. The trench was 0.75m wide and an average of 0.5m in depth. The upper fills consisted of a dark brown soft clay loam. Along the line from the entrance gates to the church door, excavation ceased at the level where in situ burials were encountered, which took the form of the top of exposed crania. It was clear that these remains were in situ, supine and aligned east-west, parallel to the gravestones visible on either side of the lane. In situ skeletal remains were noted extending from roughly 2m inside the entrance gate at a depth of 27.48m OD as far as the door of the church at a depth of 27.6m OD.

The test trench extended around to the west of the church tower, despite the fact that no in situ human remains were uncovered, the test trench remained at a depth of 0.5m below present ground level or 27.76m OD. It

extended to the east, along the north side of the church, and to the north-east, covering the line of the service trench.

Apart from a number of ex-situ fragments of human bone, and the upper levels of in situ human burials, nothing else of archaeological significance was uncovered.

Prior to backfilling, the trenches were lined with plastic sheeting to ensure that when services are laid, no damage can occur to in situ archaeological remains.

Trench 2 was located in the green field to the north of the graveyard and was positioned on the service line. It ran for a distance of 10m and was 0.75m wide and on average 0.4m deep. Excavation ceased with the uncovering of undisturbed subsoil. Nothing of archaeological interest was noted in this trench.

Trench 3 was also located in the green field to the north of the graveyard and was positioned on the service line. It ran for a distance of 15m and was 0.75m wide and on average 0.4m deep. Excavation ceased with the uncovering of undisturbed subsoil. Nothing of archaeological interest was noted in this trench.

Two small test trenches were excavated across the location of the proposed percolation area. Each trench was some 6m in length and was 0.75m wide and on average 0.4m deep. Excavation ceased with the uncovering of undisturbed subsoil. Nothing of archaeological interest was noted in either of these trenches.

Within the interior of the church the removal of the modern carpet revealed two wooden plinths running along the north and south walls from the west end to about half way up the main church building. The aisle space between had been filled in with a chipboard floor, which was level with the adjacent plinth and also level with the tiled outer sanctuary area. Removal of the chipboard revealed that the aisle area had once been paved with red sandstone flags, set some 0.2m below the level of the wooden plinths on either side and also below the level of the outer sanctuary. The flags ran under the outer sanctuary, indicating that the outer sanctuary was a later addition.

Hand removal of this later addition to the sanctuary area confirmed that the flags continued to the east, towards the altar; it was not clear whether the flags continued beyond this point.

Following the removal of the remainder of the wooden plinths, testing of the interior took place. This consisted of the hand excavation of six 1m square test trenches at the locations of proposed concrete foundation pads. The fills of the three along the northern wall of the church, which were located under the area of the wooden plinth, had an upper 0.1m consisting of a relatively compact stony dark brown clay loam. This overlay a softer dark yellow-brown stone-free clay loam in which were fragments of red brick, sea shell and, rarely, ex situ disarticulated fragments of human bone. This fill continued below the 0.8m depth of the foundation pad-holes. Nothing of archaeological interest was noted in any of the northern pad holes excavated.

The three foundation pad-holes excavated in the southern portion of the church were different to those excavated to the north. Removal of the modern chipboard flooring and wooden plinth had revealed the extent of the flagstone floor of the centre aisle. Sections of the flagstone floor were removed in order to hand excavate the three test pits. This testing revealed a low wall some 0.2m wide with a fair face only on the north-facing side, running from east to west across the pad holes. This wall appeared to respect a hard compact light grey plaster surface which was covered in some 0.3m of a relatively hard and compacted yellow brown clay loam, on top of which and also respecting the line of this wall, lay the flagstones. Below the plaster layer lay a softer dark yellow-brown stone-free clay loam, in which were some fragments of red brick and disarticulated fragments of human bone. This fill continued below the 0.8m depth of the foundation pad-holes.

It was decided to expose the full extent of the low wall and associated plaster surface. It quickly became apparent that the wall on the south side of the aisle had a corresponding low wall on the aisle's north side, which was also some 0.3m high. The plaster surface ran the full width between the two walls creating a surface some 2m wide, mirroring precisely the width of the flagstone aisle above.

The total excavation of this 'sunken' feature revealed that it increased in depth from west to east. At the door into the nave, the plaster was close to present ground level, and increased to over 0.3m at the step to the inner sanctuary. However at this point, it was clear that the two aisle walls and the plaster surface continued to the east. This strongly suggested that originally the aisle ran further east and that the inner sanctuary platform was also a later addition.

Excavation of the top of the low aisle walls both to the north and south revealed the presence of lengths of wooden battens which, although poorly preserved, appeared to run along the top of the walls. It is possible that this is evidence that the aisle may once have had wooden flooring which spanned from wall-top to wall-top, possibly with a void for air circulation below.

The testing outside the church revealed the presence of in situ human burials at an average depth of 27.5m OD. What is most significant is that the remains were found under the main modern access to the church, indicating that this access is not original. However, there was no indication elsewhere within the graveyard of another point of access. The testing also suggested that the numbers of burials on the north side of the church were few if any. Although the testing was by no means conclusive on the matter, no in situ remains were found on the north side despite the fact that in places the test trench in this area was over 0.75m deep.

Testing within the church was equally interesting. Evidence was uncovered for the phased development of the internal layout. The earliest phase appeared to consist of two raised wooden plinths, running along the north and south walls, with a wooden floored aisle between. The foundation for this wooden floor was on two low walls which ran the length of the church. These walls created a sunken area which got gradually deeper from west to east, and is interpreted as a void providing an air flow under and around the wooden floor above.

It would appear that this wooden floor did not perform well and was replaced by a flagstone floor. The sunken area under the original wooden floor to the aisle was infilled with soil, on top of which the flagstones were laid. The wooden plinths on either side remained in use unchanged, with the flagstone floor being laid at the same level as the original wooden floor.

The next phase consisted of the construction of the split level concrete, stone and tiled sanctuary area at the east end of the church. The construction of this element clearly overlay the flagstone floor and the two low aisle walls. It was not clear how far the original aisle would have extended as no excavation took place at the extreme east end of the church.

The final phase saw the sunken flagstone aisle covered over and chipboard laid on top, level with the two adjoining plinths, to create a level surface, which was finally carpeted over.

The church itself was constructed in around the turn of the 19th century, and was funded by the Board of First Fruits. The Board was established in 1711, when the revenue from annates was transferred from the Crown to the Established Church. Annates consisted of a proportion of the stipends of all clergy presented to a living during the first year of their holding the benefice. Until the Reformation these had been payable to the Pope. The Board of First Fruits was initially charged with using the income from annates to buy back inappropriate tithes from lay owners, any surplus being devoted to the building and repair of churches and glebe houses. The latter function eventually became the primary one. From 1777 the fund was supplemented with a number of grants from the Irish parliament and from 1801, more substantially, from the Union government. In 1808 Parliament consolidated the Board's various sources of revenue into one account, doubled the size of its annual Government grant and gave it greater freedom of operation. The grant was further increased in 1810, and a system of interest-free loans from the Treasury established. These moneys supported a major programme of building, repairing and enlarging the churches and glebe houses of the Established Church throughout Ireland. With the passing of the Church Temporalities Act in 1833, the Board was dissolved. It was replaced by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in 1834.

It is not certain who designed Colp, but its overall layout is not unique, and would appear to conform to a simple pattern, of a three-bay main body to the church with a square, two-story entrance tower attached to the west gable. The fact that this design, or minor variations to it, is replicated across many of the Board of Fruits funded country churches dating to this period, would suggest that it was not formally 'designed' by an architect, but came from a more general catalogue of designs available at the time.

The fact that the church was not aligned on a true east-west axis is noteworthy. An examination of many of the old gravestones in the surrounding graveyard, which predate the construction of the church, do appear to be aligned properly east-west, while those of a later date, particularly those 'higher status' examples, are aligned with the present church. It was thought that this misalignment might be due to the possible re-use of an existing structure in the construction of the church. It was briefly thought that some element of the 'missing' castle,

known to be located in the vicinity, might have been incorporated into the church tower. However, the testing around the tower revealed an original string course running around the entire tower at foundation level, proving that the tower was constructed in a single phase, with no evidence for an earlier structural element.

Finally, an examination of the cartographic evidence, particularly the 4th edition OS map, dating to the early 20th century, revealed that, prior to the layout of the modern road, the road to the south-west of the present graveyard originally described a definite arc, which, if continued, would have enclosed a circular area some 160m in diameter. It is tempting to see this as evidence for the extent of the original medieval enclosure, which, if this was the case, means the present church and graveyard are located in the north-west quadrant of the earlier enclosure. It is possible, indeed probable, that the original church at Colp would have been located centrally within this enclosure, immediately to the south-east of the present graveyard.

AHC Ltd, 36 Ballywillwill Road, Castlewellan. Co Down BT31 9LF

2017:605 - Donacarney Great, Colp, Meath

County: Meath Site name: Donacarney Great, Colp

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A Licence number: **17E0043**

Author: Aidan O'Connell

Site type: No archaeology found

ITM: E 713748m, N 774638m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.709020, -6.276999

An assessment was carried out on a 0.61 hectare green-field site in Donacarney Great Td, Donacarney, Co. Meath. A total of 5 trenches (165 linear metres) were mechanically excavated across the site. No archaeological material was recorded in any of the trenches.

Archer Heritage Planning, 8 Beat Centre, Stephenstown, Balbriggan, Co. Dublin.

2017:626 - Donacarney Little, Meath

County: Meath Site name: Donacarney Little

Sites and Monuments Record No.: n/a Licence number: 17E0213

Author: Eoin Halpin

Site type: Testing

ITM: E 713313m, N 775210m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.714253, -6.283376

The testing consisted of the excavation, by machine, 12 test trenches in the area of Phase A; all ran roughly north-south, and were spaced some 10m apart; all were some 80m in length, apart from the easternmost which was 50m in length. In addition Phase D, located to the south of the Phase A area, was also tested. This took the form of a further 6 test trenches, again aligned roughly north-south and again spaced some 10m apart. In this case the trenches were some 50m in length. The testing took place in May 2017.

The plough soil in Phase A, a dark yellow brown, friable loose clay loam, was on average 0.45m deep and overlay the undisturbed relatively free-draining natural, generally a compact light yellow brown, stony glacial till. However, there was quite a variation noted across the trenches, ranging from a compact gravel to a loose silt sand. These variations, all of which were naturally occurring, appeared to conform to the layering which might be expected in a fluvio-glacial deposit. In a number of the trenches evidence for recent ploughing was noted running diagonally across the north-south line of the trench. No evidence for land drains was noted supporting the view that the land in the area is free-draining.

Nothing of archaeological interest was noted in any of the 12 trenches investigated.

The plough soil in the adjacent Phase D was on average 0.3m deep and consisted of a dark brown, firm, clay loam. It overlay a hard compact light yellow brown stony clay loam, a variation in the natural glacial till. The southern end of the field had been badly disturbed by the construction of a recent housing development. Nothing of archaeological interest was noted in any of the 6 trenches investigated.

Testing revealed that the area of Phase A was ploughed in the relatively recent past, with evidence of ploughing visible at the base of a number of the trenches. No such evidence was noted in the area of Phase D and it is probable that this area had been under pasture for a considerable time. In both areas the underlying natural was a variation in glacial till, with the subsoil in Phase A exhibiting a considerable variation, all naturally occurring.

AHC Ltd, 36 Ballywillwill Road, Castlewellan, Co Down BT31 9LF

2019:535 - Donacarney Little, Meath

County: Meath Site name: Donacarney Little

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A Licence number: 17E0213 and 17E0213ext

Author: Eoin Halpin

Site type: 19th-century garden

ITM: E 713202m, N 775137m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.713621, -6.285083

The site lies in a rural green field location, within the grounds of and adjacent to the architecturally important buildings associated with Donacarney House. In addition, a medieval tower-house lies some distance to the south-east, and previous archaeological investigations in the ground to the south of the site produced significant archaeological remains dating from prehistory through to the medieval period. Because of the historic and archaeological potential of the site, an archaeological condition was placed on the planning permission.

The testing strategy consisted of the machine excavation of 12 test trenches in the area of Phase A, all running roughly north-south, and spaced some 10m apart, each to be some 80m in length, apart from the easternmost which was some 50m in length.

In addition, Phase D, located to the south of Phase A area, was also tested. This took the form of a further 6 test trenches, again aligned roughly north-south and again spaced some 10m apart. In this case the trenches were some 50m in length.

The testing took place in May 2017. Plough soil, across Phase A, consisted of a dark yellow-brown, friable loose clay loam, and was noted on average 0.45m deep and overlay the undisturbed relatively free-draining natural, generally a compact light yellow-brown, stony glacial till. However, there was quite a variation noted across the trenches, ranging from a compact gravel to a loose silt sand. These variations, all of which were naturally occurring, appeared to conform to the layering which might be expected in a fluvio-glacial deposit.

In a number of the trenches evidence for recent ploughing was noted running diagonally across the north-south line of the trench. No evidence for land drains was noted supporting the view that the land in the area is free draining. Nothing of archaeological interest was noted in any of the 12 trenches investigated.

In Phase D, plough soil was on average 0.3m deep and consisted of a dark brown, firm, clay loam. It overlay a hard compact light yellow-brown stony clay loam, a variation in the natural glacial till. The southern end of the field had been badly disturbed by the construction of a recent housing development. Nothing of archaeological interest was noted in any of the 6 trenches investigated.

In June 2019 additional testing took place in Phases B and C, at the western end of the proposed development, under licence 17E0213 ext. The testing revealed that the southern half of Phase C was ploughed in the relatively recent past, with the boundary between the topsoil and undisturbed natural defined as 'sharp'. Examination of the cartographic evidence, particularly the 1st edition OS map of c. 1830, revealed the northern portion of the

Phase C area of the site contained the remains of a walled garden, the northern wall of which still survived, to be retained in the present development. The east-west running linear features noted would appear to be the remains of the foundations associated with the southern wall of the garden, with the archaeological trenches and the OS map showing very good concordance. The fact that the northern end of these trenches was inside the walled garden would readily explain the cultivation ridges noted and the number of tree boles noted are probably evidence for at least part of the wall garden given over to fruit trees of one sort or another. Nothing apart from archaeology associated with the use of the area as a 19th-century walled garden, was noted. Finally, monitoring of ground works in Phase B, did not uncover anything of archaeological interest.

AHC Ltd, 36 Ballywillwill Road, Castlewellan Co Down BT31 9LF

2018:657 - Colp West, Drogheda, Meath

County: Meath Site name: Colp West, Drogheda

Sites and Monuments Record No.: Proximity to ME021-011001-, ME021-011002-& ME021-016- Licence number: **18E0089**

Author: Liam Coen, c/o Archer Heritage Planning

Site type: Testing

ITM: E 712135m, N 774578m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.708830, -6.301442

A total of eighteen test trenches were excavated across the site, targeted to assess the general potential of the location of the proposed development as well as anomalies highlighted in two geophysical surveys undertaken by Target Geophysics, Detection licence nos 09R0057 and 18R0011. The remains of several earlier field boundaries or drains were identified throughout the site but only three were deemed worthy of further attention due to their identification on the geophysical surveys of the site and proximity to the enclosure, ME021-011002-.

Three areas of interest were identified. In Area 1, Trench #18, a shallow (0.12m deep x 0.85m wide) east-west running ditch contained mid-brown stoney silty clay. In Area 2, Trench #17, a deeper (0.35m deep x 0.9m wide) east-west running ditch containing a similar fill may be part of the same feature and they appear to correspond to feature #3 identified in the geophysical report. The geophysical report indicates a linear feature of over 100m in length in this area.

In Area 3, Trench #17C, a north-south running ditch (0.4m deep x 1.3m wide) contained a greyish-brown stoney silty clay and appears to be part of a series of features that may be a field system or an annex associated with the enclosure, ME021-011002-. This feature was highlighted in the geophysical report as feature #9. An excavation cutting of c. 75m x 15m encompassing Areas 1 and 2 and an excavation cutting of c. 22m x 12m for Area 3 are proposed.

8 Beat Centre, Stephenstown, Balbriggan, Co. Dublin.

2018:673 - Colp West, Drogheda, Meath

County: Meath Site name: Colp West, Drogheda

Sites and Monuments Record No.: n/a Licence number: 18E0597

Author: Liam Coen c/o Archer Heritage Planning

Site type: Testing

ITM: E 712135m, N 774578m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.708830, -6.301442

A total of twenty trenches (2980m) and two 5m x 5m areas centred on geophysical anomalies were mechanically excavated across the site. Another 5m x 5m originally proposed was abandoned during excavation due to site conditions. The trenches were targeted to assess the general potential of the location of the proposed development as well as anomalies highlighted in a geophysical survey undertaken in the site, Detection licence no. 18R0181. Excavation proceeded in level spits of 0.2m. Topsoil was quite uniform; 0.25-0.4m in depth across the area, subsoil was compact orangey-brown boulder clay. The main Dublin-Dundalk gas pipeline runs through the north-eastern corner of the subject area. A single area of interest was identified.

In Trench #10, a shallow (0.17m deep x 0.7m wide) east-west running ditch, F.1, contained mid-brown stoney silty clay with a single piece of struck flint recovered. The ditch, F.1, appears to correspond to Feature A in Geophysical Survey 18R0181 and is along the same alignment of anomaly #3, identified in an earlier geophysical survey by Target (Detection licence 18R0011).

Archer Heritage Planning, 8 Beat Centre, Stephenstown, Balbriggan, Co. Dublin.

2019:599 - Colp West, Drogheda, Meath

County: Meath Site name: Colp West, Drogheda

Sites and Monuments Record No.: within Zones of Notification for ME021-011002; ME021- 011001 Licence number: 18E0615 ext.

Author: Liam Coen c/o Archer Heritage

Site type: Early Medieval field system

ITM: E 712200m, N 774765m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.710496, -6.300390

The site comprised a series of ditches representing a field system associated with a large Early Medieval Enclosure, RMP no. ME021-011002, that contains a cemetery, RMP no. ME021- 011001. Two cuttings were opened within the development footprint and centred on features identified in test-excavations following geophysical surveys. Cutting 1, to the north of the Enclosure, revealed two ditches, C4 and C10, aligned north-south. Cutting 2, to the west of the Enclosure, also contained two ditches, C16 and C18, aligned east-west. Hazel/alder charcoal from a basal deposit of ditch C04, near its northern terminus, produced a date of AD 540-650 (UBA-423956; 1480 BP +/- 28) and places it in the Early Medieval period (AD 400-1200). No artefacts were retrieved from the excavation. The animal bone assemblage included sheep/goat, pig, and deer with cattle and indeterminate large mammal predominating.

County: Meath Site name: Donacarney Little

Sites and Monuments Record No.: n/a Licence number: **19E0414**

Author: Liza Kavanagh

Site type: Potential archaeological significance

ITM: E 713677m, N 774697m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.709566, -6.278052

Testing was carried out at the site of a proposed residential development at Donacarney Little, Co. Meath.

Four trenches were excavated within the footprint of the development. One feature of archaeological potential was identified. This comprised a broad and shallow (4.2m wide, 0.5m deep) north-south aligned linear feature

filled with dark grey silty clay with inclusions of seashell and animal bone. This feature possibly represents a former land boundary running parallel to the R150 and western boundary of the site. Given the nature of the fill it may have archaeological potential. Other features identified during the assessment include post-medieval/modern land divisions and drainage features.

All topsoil stripping on site will be monitored.

c/o IAC Ltd, Unit G1 Network Enterprise Park, Kilcoole, Co. Wicklow

2019:652 - Colp East, Meath

County: Meath Site name: Colp East

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A Licence number: **19E0556**

Author: Aidan O'Connell

Site type: Test excavation - no archaeology found

ITM: E 713512m, N 774817m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.710679, -6.280506

An archaeological assessment was carried out at the site of a proposed residential development, a 1.51ha green-field site in Colp East Td, Donacarney, Co. Meath. A geophysical survey of the site was carried out followed by targeted test trenching. A total of 4 trenches were mechanically excavated across the site under archaeological supervision. No archaeological material was recorded in any of the trenches.

Archer Heritage Planning, 8 Beat Centre, Stephenstown, Balbriggan, Co. Dublin.

2019:264 - Colp West, Drogheda, Meath

County: Meath Site name: Colp West, Drogheda

Sites and Monuments Record No.: Proximity to ME021-012 and ME021-011001/2 Licence number: 19E0627

Author: Liam Coen c/o Archer Heritage Planning

Site type: Testing, no archaeology found

ITM: E 712374m, N 774534m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.708384, -6.297839

The site comprises a single large open tillage area with mature hedgerows forming any of the remaining field boundaries. The land slopes gently from north to south with a slight rise in the central area. A total of five test-trenches were excavated across the site using a 16-tonne tracked excavator with a 1.8m grading bucket. Excavation proceeded in level spits of 0.2m. Topsoil was uniform across the site, 0.4-0.5m in depth with a compact yellow/brown stony clay subsoil. No archaeological features or material was identified in the course of testing.

Archer Heritage Planning, 8 Beat Centre, Stephenstown, Balbriggan, Co. Dublin.

2020:091 - 1 The Cottage, Donacarney, Mornington, Meath

County: Meath Site name: 1 The Cottage, Donacarney, Mornington

Sites and Monuments Record No.: ME021-009 Licence number: 20E0351

Author: Linda Clarke, Archaeological Consultancy Services Unit

Site type: No archaeological significance

ITM: E 713684m, N 774877m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.711181, -6.277880

A programme of archaeological test trenching was carried out at 1 The Cottage, Donacarney, Co. Meath. The sod and topsoil measured an average of 0.4m in thickness and lay above the natural orange clay and stone. Only one feature (C102) was identified within Trench 1. This feature was orientated north-south and had been filled with a mid-brown-grey clay containing stone and red brick and was interpreted as the remains of the 19th-century field boundary still extant on the first edition OS 6-inch map of 1835. The linear feature (C202) identified within Trench 2 appeared to have been associated with the adjacent septic tank and represented a service duct. No features were identified within Trench 3.

No archaeological features or deposits were exposed or identified, and no finds were recovered. The work is now complete.

Unit 21, Boyne Business Park, Greenhills, Drogheda, Co Louth.

2020:221 - Saint Mary's Convent, Ninch, Laytown, Meath

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A Licence number: **20E0588**

Author: Linda Clarke, Archaeological Consultancy Services Unit

Site type: No archaeological significance

ITM: E 716161m, N 772558m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.689806, -6.241246

An archaeological assessment (test trenching) was carried out on the site of a proposed development in the townland of Ninch, on a site of the former Saint Mary's Convent, in Laytown, Co. Meath. The assessment was carried out at the request of the client at a pre-planning stage. The site was tested in December 2020.

The sod and topsoil (C1) consisted of a light brown sandy clay. It measured between 0.36m – 0.42m in thickness and lay above the natural grey sandy clay (C2). One post-medieval spread (C3) was identified within Trench 1. It measured 2.52m in width and consisted of a spread of dark grey sandy clay containing occasional inclusions of ash and red brick. Two post-medieval finds, a clay pipe stem (20E0588:003:1) and a sherd of green glass (20E0588:003:2) were recovered.

No features or deposits of archaeological significance were exposed or identified at the site. No further mitigation is proposed.

Linda Clarke, Archaeological Consultancy Services Unit, Unit 21, Boyne Business Park, Greenhills, Drogheda, Co Louth.

Artefacts reported to the National Museum and listed on Heritage Maps		
1985:100	Flat bronze axehead	Ministown
1964:60-62	3 glazed potsherds	Irishtown
1977:2329-2334	Mollusc shells	Betaghstown
P.1952:18	Sandpit burial	Mosney
1978:127	Bone object	Sarsfieldstown
1979:650	Glass bracelet terminus?	Ninch

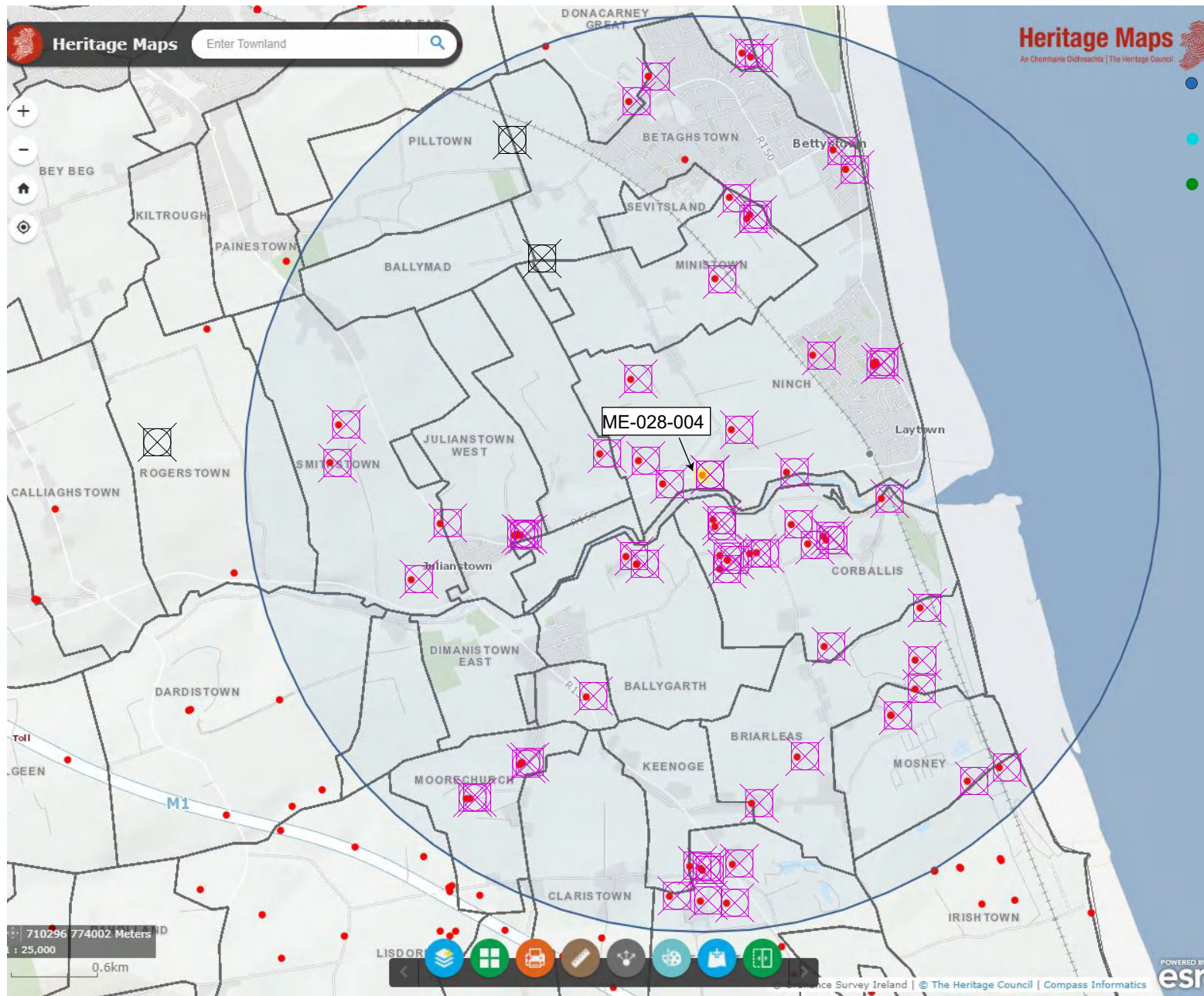


Figure 1: 3km radius zone of interest around ME028-004- (monument in Sonairte) showing all known recorded monuments



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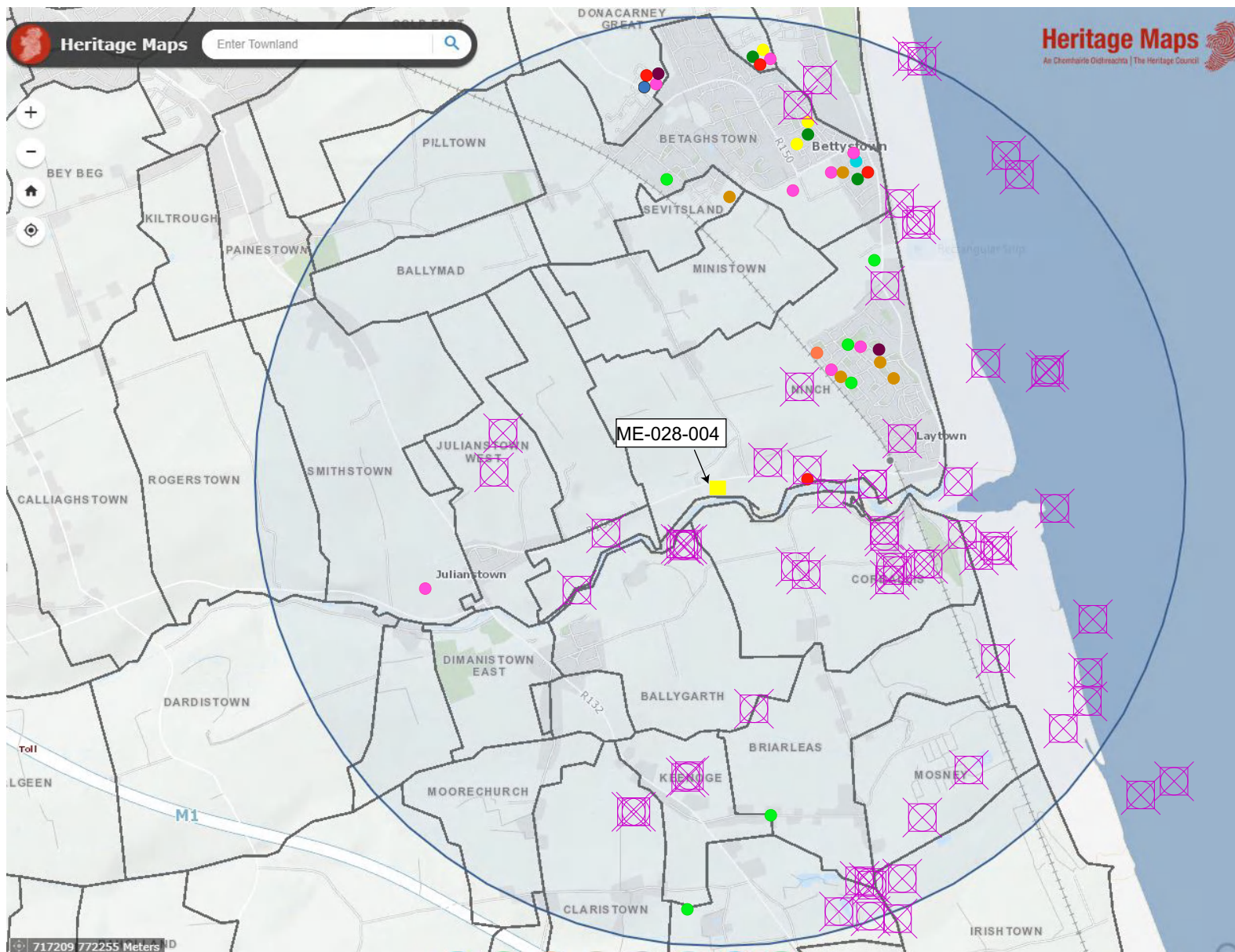


Figure 2: All known excavated sites within a 3km radius of ME028-004- indicated by period of activity in each excavated area



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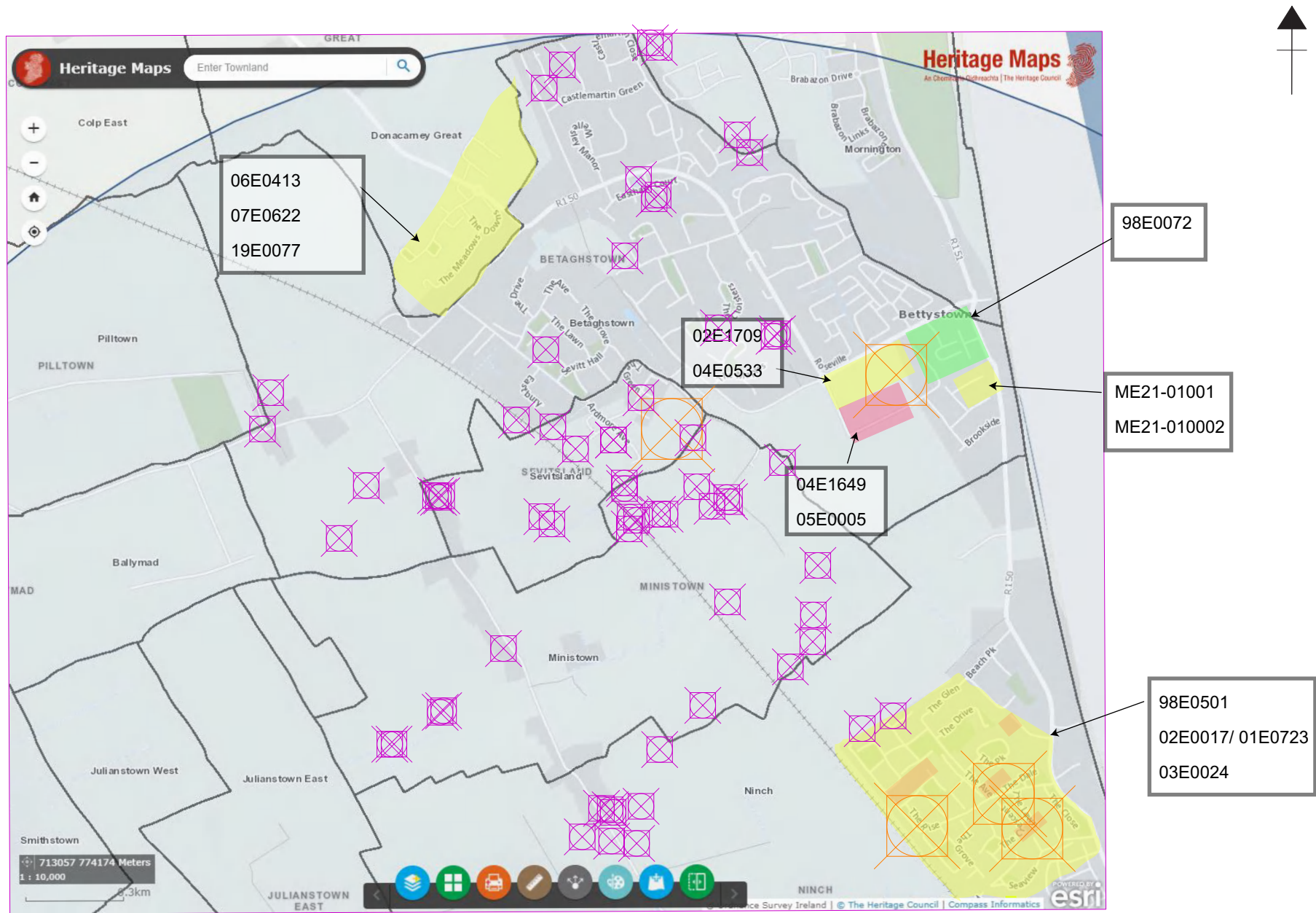
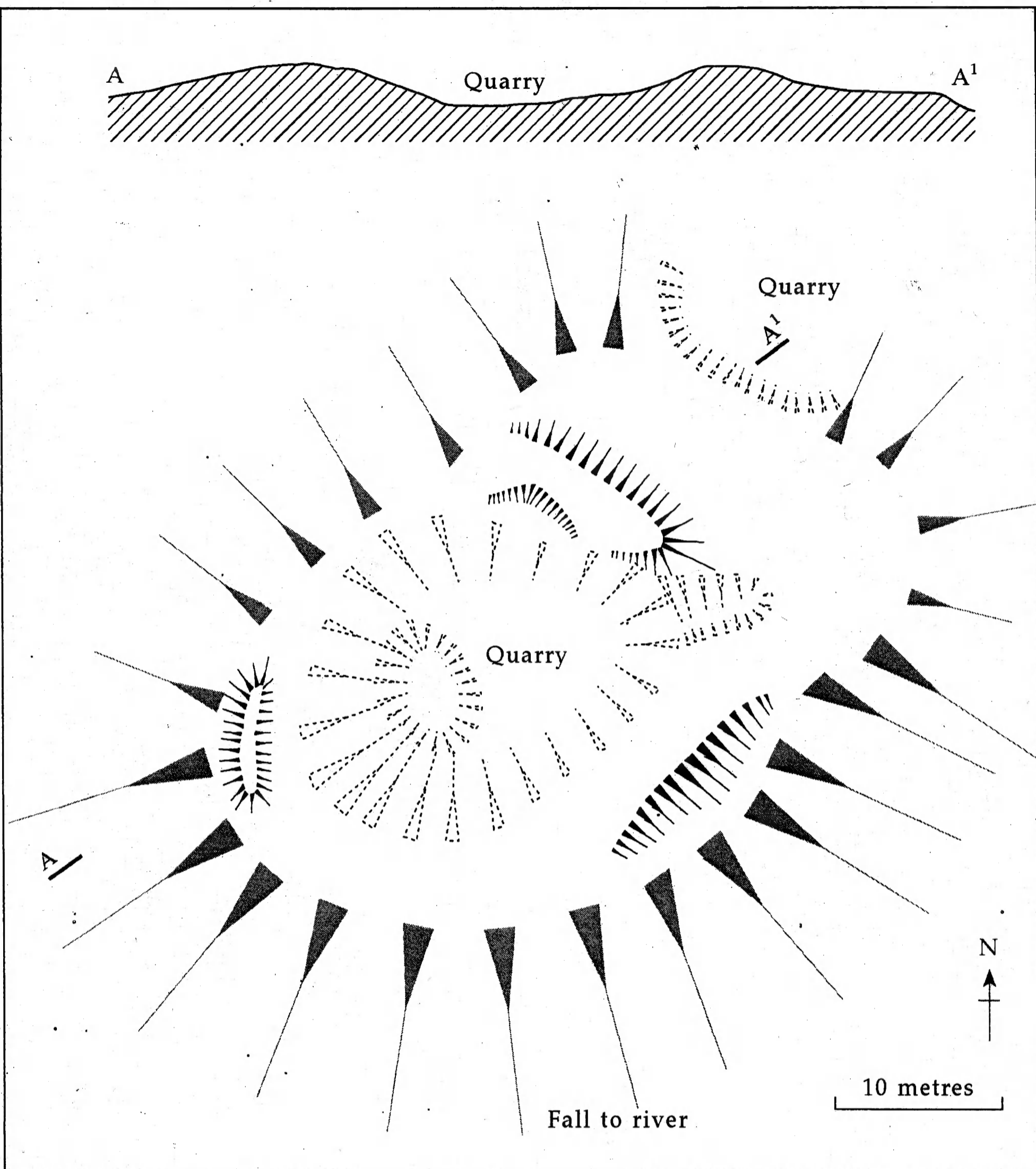


Figure 3: Detail of large-scale excavations carried out in the area, with licence numbers shown for each one.



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Ringfort at Sonairte

The earthwork is located on a natural prominence overlooking the River Nanny with panoramic views to the sea, Mourne Mountains and the inland plains of County Meath.

The interior has been quarried extensively. All that remains of the original monument are three sections of bank and part of the outer fosse (ditch) on the southeast side. The interior of the ringfort was circa 25m in diameter.

A blue glass bead of Early Christian date was found in here by local archaeologist Kieran Campbell.

Ringforts were farmsteads occupied in the Early Christian period, 600AD-900AD

*The Ringfort at Sonairte
was surveyed by Geraldine
and Mat Stout - Aug. 2006*