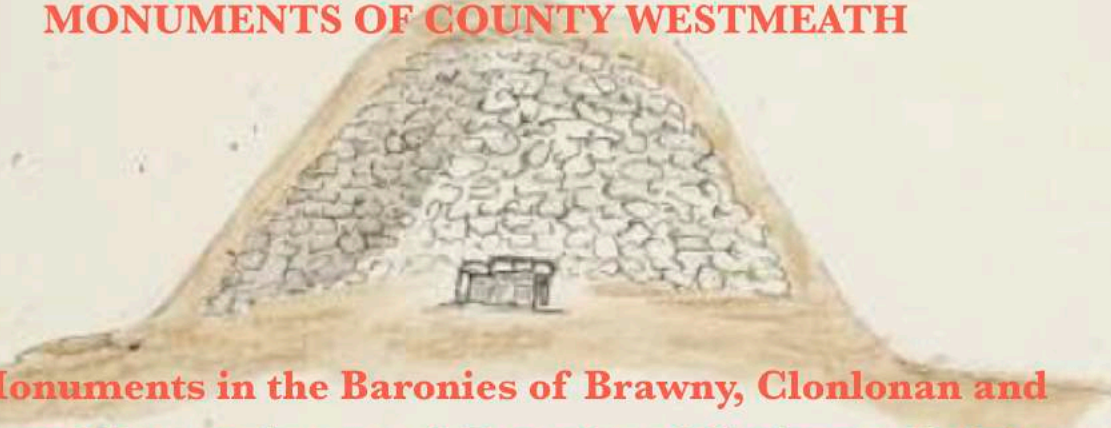


**THE PREHISTORIC BURIAL MOUNDS AND RELATED
MONUMENTS OF COUNTY WESTMEATH**



**IV. Monuments in the Baronies of Brawny, Clonlonan and
Kilkenny West, and parts of Baronies of Corkaree, Delvin,
Farbill, Fartullagh, Fore, Moyashel & Magheradernon,
Moycashel, Moygoish and Rathconrath**



David McGuinness

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HERITAGE FORUM OF WESTMEATH COUNTY COUNCIL
and undertaken in association with
WESTMEATH ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

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The writer wishes to express the gratitude of the project-team to the late Dr Michael Herity (1929-2016) and the late Tommy Cassidy of Slane More (1933-2015), original co-founders of the project, both of whom sadly passed away during the fourth season, and to the late Ita Herity (†2016), Michael's sister, who was a well-known member and officer of Westmeath Archaeological & Historical Society and an enthusiastic supporter of the project. We also wish to pay tribute to the late Peter Keegan of Sarsfieldstown near Killucan (1941-2016), who, while terminally ill, cheerfully helped us locate the important barrows of Rathwire Upper for the third season.

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Without exception it has been a pleasure to engage with the many landowners encountered this season, who were highly supportive of the project and provided important information on the location and context of many of the sites surveyed. In particular, the survey-team wishes to express the warmest of thanks to Heather Dean-Wright, owner of Ard Cherrymount Stud at Killua near Clonmellon, whose prize-horses now roam over a truly remarkable archaeological landscape which she has done her best to preserve—once part of the heavily landscaped demesne of the Gothic Revival Killua Castle. Heather welcomed us and enthusiastically showed us around on multiple occasions as we endeavoured to record no fewer than eight barrows and two unusual ringforts, of which only two monuments had previously been documented by archaeologists.

D.McG.

‘There are still a number of smaller Castle Mounds [i.e. mottes] to be discovered. Owing to its size the Mound is generally marked on the map, but it is sometimes incorrectly called a “tumulus”. In fact it is by no means easy to distinguish large tumuli from small Castle Mounds. The presence of a bailey, or of some remains of it, is of course conclusive, and this should be the first thing to be looked for. On the other hand some Castle Mounds, especially in Wales, never had baileys, so that the absence of a bailey proves nothing...’

Anon., *Field Archæology: Some Notes for Beginners issued by the Ordnance Survey* (London 1932, p. 23)

‘There are many high and mote-like mounds in almost every part of Ireland but not all of them are Norman. Some, perhaps most, are tumuli covering prehistoric burials but this class of monument is seldom flat-topped. The absence of any sign of an attached bailey is not always proof of an Irish origin; the bailey may have been removed by cultivation.... The presence of *concentric* banks and ditches, on the other hand, is almost conclusive proof of a non-Norman origin for the earthwork; this seems to be a definitely Irish form.’

H.G. Leask, *Irish Castles and Castellated Houses* (2nd ed., Dundalk 1944, p. 10)

‘The favourite siting for a motte and bailey was on a natural gravel ridge or mound—usually on an esker, but in several instances there are indications either from early historical references or from finds that the mottes were built on ancient burial mounds or on other existing earthworks. Knockgraffon is one of the sites mentioned in early historical contexts; at Rathmore, Co. Kildare, burials were found under the motte....’

S.P. Ó Ríordáin, *Antiquities of the Irish Countryside* (5th ed., London 1979, p. 56)

INTRODUCTION

This is intended as the final interim report for the Prehistoric Burial Mounds of County Westmeath Project, covering the 2015-16 season, in which those monuments not yet visited were examined and surveyed. While it was intended that work should be concentrated solely in those western and southern parts of the county not covered by the previous reports, some sites not accessible in previous seasons were also visited, along with a substantial number of sites not previously known. In particular, two remarkable sites, Killua and Portnashangan, in the north-east and central parts of the county respectively, were found to have no fewer than 20 barrows or related monuments between them and took over a week's labour to record. As such, the catalogue accompanying this report runs to a much greater length than in earlier reports, with 60 sites including those in the Addenda¹. Even so, there still remain a few sites to survey, or re-examine in the light of subsequent work, before the full-length final report can be prepared for publication.

As with last season the welter of unusual forms of monument encountered in the field, many falling outside conventional understanding, has meant that the main emphasis was again on morphology and classification. It is envisaged that this theme will be the primary focus of the final published report, and that a future study will investigate the themes of archaeological and topographical context in greater detail than has been possible in the current project. Apart from limitations of time and resources, the principal reason for this is that before looking at these and other aspects of the county's barrows and related monuments, it is essential to have a clear notion of the *types* of monument represented in the county and their place in Ireland as a whole.

MORPHOLOGY AND CLASSIFICATION

As in each of the first three seasons of this project, the fourth season again brought forth a remarkably diverse array of earthen burial mounds and related monuments, some easily classifiable and a significant number of others falling outside any existing classificatory schemes. In the same vein as the third interim report, it has been decided to take a fairly hard line in assigning this season's monuments to the classification used by the ASI, which itself draws on earlier schemes such as that clearly outlined by Ashbee in his influential 1960 study, *The Bronze Age Round Barrow in Britain*. That is, if any particular monument in the catalogue cannot neatly, or with reasonable probability, be assigned to one or other of the ASI types, it has been identified simply as an unclassified-barrow rather than being forced into the

¹ Also included are sites Nos 21A and 23A.

nearest available defined class. The intention here is to show the limitations of this scheme in accounting for a surprisingly large number of burial mounds and related earthworks to be found in a small but relatively barrow-rich region at the heart of Ireland. This season alone, no fewer than 20 monuments fall into this currently unclassifiable group. If this situation can be extrapolated to Ireland as a whole, the clear but uncomfortable implication is that our knowledge of the basic morphology of Ireland's later prehistoric mortuary and ceremonial earthworks is at best inadequate and in need of expansion, at worst in need of drastic revision or even a complete re-think. Yet this basic typology is of fundamental importance if we are to begin to understand these monuments, and must it seems take intellectual priority over more focused work such as excavation and detailed geophysical analysis of individual sites if the results of these particulate studies are to have a more general significance.

This should not be taken to imply that those monuments which can be assigned to the known classes are all homogeneous, for there is often great and undocumented variety *within* these groups, the generality of some current definitions, e.g. ring-barrows and mound-barrows, allowing for the isolation of many sub-groups if not indeed separate classes. While some classes, e.g. stepped-barrows, have recently been isolated by ASI fieldworkers on the basis of induction from field observations (Farrelly and Keane 2002), others such as bowl-barrows are derived from fieldwork in Britain, particularly the Wessex region, and have then been applied to Irish monuments which they fit *to a greater or lesser degree*. Only a proportion of Ireland's bowl-barrows, for example, have the classic domed appearance normal in Wessex, many having instead flat-topped or even conical shapes; if we forego the convenience of a ready-made class—no doubt initially useful in the rough ordering of Ireland's much more recently studied burial mounds—and instead attempt to look for patterns in data recovered from observation and survey-work, we ought to gain a much more realistic sense of the range of barrow-shapes actually found in Ireland. Some of these home-grown types will, to be sure, find good analogues in Britain; but this, which is clearly an important observation in itself, perhaps with significant implications, is something we need to reach through an objective study of what is out there, rather than fitting monuments into a schema initially tailored to another, very distinct region.

In light of this, the writer proposes to briefly discuss this season's monuments under the headings of ASI types where these are appropriate, and where monuments fall outside of this schema, to treat them separately under the heading of unclassified-barrows.

MOUND-BARROWS

Ten monuments this season could be described as genuine (Nos 1, 11, 15, 32, 56) or possible mound-barrows (Nos 4, 12, 16, 50, 58), the ASI term for ‘earthen or earth-and-stone mound[s] with no external features’, formerly termed tumuli (O’Sullivan and Downey 2012, 36). It is clear from some of the more recent published *Archaeological Inventory* volumes that ASI fieldworkers dealing with different areas of Ireland are well aware that not all mound-barrows are the same in ground-plan or profile. For example, the authors of the North Tipperary volume describe them as ‘circular or oval-shaped burial mounds with a very gradual sloping profile’ (Farrelly and O’Brien 2002, 25), and the authors of the Sligo volume defines them as ‘circular or oval mounds with rounded, or flat tops and without fosses or banks’ (Egan *et al.* 2005, 34).

In the earlier ASI accounts these were sometimes identified as bowl-barrows, in that they loosely fitted the ditchless bowl-barrow category used in Britain (Ashbee 1960, 24, Fig. 1), but more recently ASI fieldworkers have separated them from bowl-barrows with ditches, or with ditches and external banks. They are essentially ditchless tumuli, but, in spite of the simplistic definition quoted above, and in line with what is being encountered by ASI fieldworkers in a few counties at least, they are actually quite varied in appearance in Westmeath, with conical, domed and flat-topped mounds evident, the flat summits of the latter sometimes level, at other times deliberately sloped; some have clear circumferential ledges or steps; most are circular but some are markedly oval-shaped; some are fully constructed while others appear to represent reshaped hillocks of natural origin; and the range of sizes (diameter, height, volume) is staggering, from minuscule mounds that are hardly noticeable from a distance to massive tumuli on a scale comparable to Anglo-Norman mottes. The obvious inference is that we are actually dealing with a range of monument types, some of which may not even be burial mounds.

As with earlier seasons, the monuments encountered this season paint a varied picture, but the majority represent variations on the classic domed profile. The Balgarrett mound-barrow (No. 1), one of three in a loose-knit cemetery of six barrows in this townland (McGuinness 2014, 29-33), has this classic profile; however, its position on sloping ground means that its highest point rises almost a metre higher than ground-level on the south side than on the north, such that its internally symmetrical shape meets the ground at different heights for different points on its circumference. Although not seen by the present survey-team, the barrow at Ballynacrogghy or Gallowstown (No. 4) seems to have been a smoothly

domed mound from ASI accounts, but among these there is some uncertainty over its status as a wholly artificial mound. The heavily altered barrow at Drumraney (No. 11) appears also to have been a dome-shaped mound-barrow until the construction of a now-removed field-boundary across it saw it being reshaped along the line of this fence, giving it a stepped appearance with a stone-faced revetment added to its south side. Probably also originally domed, the Mullenmeehan mound-barrow (No. 32) has been dug into and heavily eroded so that its surface is now rough and disturbed.

The Ballyhast mound-barrow (No. 3) has a partly domed profile but with fairly steep sides and a flattened upper surface; there are possible traces of a boulder kerb around part of its perimeter, and underneath its partly eroded gravel-and-earth mantle there appears to be a boulder core. The simple mound at Fore (No. 12) has a partly domed profile, again with a flattened summit, but, as with the possible pond-barrow close by, there is no certainty that this mound in a landscape heavily used for monastic purposes throughout the medieval centuries is actually a burial mound. Like Balgarrett it is positioned on sloping ground so that its highest point is almost a metre higher on its south side than on its north. The enormous mound-barrow at Garrynafela (No. 15) just north of Athlone has a broad, low, dome-shaped profile with flattened summit, although its relatively steep sides give it almost the appearance of a truncated cone. Its size and the lack of evidence for a surrounding ditch might indicate that it is moulded from a kame or other glacial landform, in support of which it lies almost midway between two kettle holes.

The mound documented by the ASI at Rochfort Demesne (No. 50), with a mature beech growing on its upper surface, might possibly be an ornamental landscape feature; but its flattened upper surface has been kept approximately level in spite of its siting on sloping ground, a feature we have encountered repeatedly among barrows of various types in the county.

The now-destroyed stone and earthen mound-barrow at Barrettstown (No. 56), which when opened in the 1850s was shown to cover a double cist containing human bones, a large boar's tusk and a Bowl Food Vessel, initially 'presented a small oval nipple upon the rise of some sloping ground in [a] place called Carawn' (Wilde 1862, 89). The oval-shape of this monument brings to mind the markedly oblong mound-barrow at Rathbennett near Bunbrosna, which when dug by Macalister and Murray in 1931 produced a large cist containing two Bowl Food Vessels (McGuinness 2012, 32-3). The place name 'Carawn',

apparently derived from *carn*, presumably relates to the large amount of stone in the composition of this barrow.

If it is a mound-barrow at all, the Glenidan monument (No. 16) appears to have been so altered in appearance—apparently its centre was dug out, leaving a ring of earth on the summit of the mound—that its original profile is now irretrievable. The same must be said for the monument at Rathcreevagh (No. 58), which was recorded on the 1914 OS 6” map as a simple mound but has since been completely removed.

Although the Gortmore monuments (Nos 17-19) could at a push be placed in this group as the nearest available defined class, their minuscule size and oval shape give them a very different appearance from the great majority of mound-barrows; and one of the three sites in this tight cemetery has possible traces of a surrounding ditch. As such they have been relegated to the unclassified group and are discussed below.

The Ballynamuddagh monument (No. 5) has been identified as a mound-barrow on the NMS website, but its unusual angular shape has here necessitated its inclusion within the unclassified group (discussed below).

RING-BARROWS

Ring-barrows are by far the most numerous type of barrow on the island of Ireland, in stark contrast to Britain where bowl-barrows and what we would term mound-barrows are the principal types, and where saucer-barrows—the British term for monuments similar to ring-barrows—represent only a tiny proportion of the overall barrow population. These circular monuments comprise a low central mound surrounded by a ditch and external bank, the mound commonly being similar in height to the outer bank, but occasionally markedly higher or lower. The central mound may be flat or slight domed, the flat ones sometimes being at ground level, so that there need not be a ‘mound’ at all; these latter ones have the appearance of embanked ring-ditches, which is the provisional term Newman gives to them (1997, 155, 157). Some ten of this season’s monuments can be classified as genuine (Nos 2, 7, 14, 45, 47, ?48, 52) or possible ring-barrows (No. 28), or embanked ring-ditches (Nos 25, 27, ?48).

The monuments at Rathnarrow (Nos 47-49) are of historical interest in discussing the Irish ring-barrow. First published in 1906 by William Falkiner, Honorary Secretary of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland for South Westmeath, this site comprises three closely spaced barrows, part of a broader grouping of varied barrow types in the hilly area west and north west of Killucan. Unfamiliar in appearance to archaeologists over a century ago, the two

best-preserved of these monuments (Nos 47-48) were described and roughly sketched by Falkiner, who noted only their circular ditches, ‘the top of the round mound in the centre being level with the flat surface of the field’ (Falkiner 1906). As such, he saw the ‘mounds’ as nothing more than a false-relief impression created by digging a circular ditch. Joseph McCabe examined the best preserved site (No. 47) twice for the ASI in the early 1970s, when he noted the slight remains of an earthen bank outside the ditch on the largest monument; but, between his two accounts, there is disagreement as to whether the mound was in any way built up over ground level. This was finally resolved in 1973 when McCabe’s excavation of the largest barrow (No. 47) showed there to be an actual built mound, albeit only 0.20m in maximum height.

The other two sites were simply inspected by McCabe rather than excavated. The larger and better preserved one (No. 48) comprised a wide ditch with slight traces of an external bank, but the central ‘mound’ did not appear to be at all artificially raised, so that this monument seems better classified as an embanked ring-ditch; but, by comparison with the excavated site whose mound was also initially in doubt, it is at least possible that this site might also have a very low constructed mound. The third site (No. 49), the smallest and in McCabe’s words ‘almost invisible on the surface now’, had been missed by Falkiner but was described by McCabe as ‘a very vague approximately circular ‘mound’ surrounded by a narrow shallow fosse’ with ‘no visible trace of a bank’. As such, based on its current appearance, this monument with low mound and surrounding ditch is neither ring-barrow nor embanked ring-ditch and does not appear to fit into any currently recognized type. At least four of these ‘bankless’ ring-barrows can be seen at Killua (Nos 21, 23, 24, 26) in the north-east of the county, in association with embanked ring-ditches, and these too have been left unclassified in the present work. All four are positioned on sloping ground in a fluvoglacial landscape, one of them on the sharply sloped end of an esker (See Fig. i)

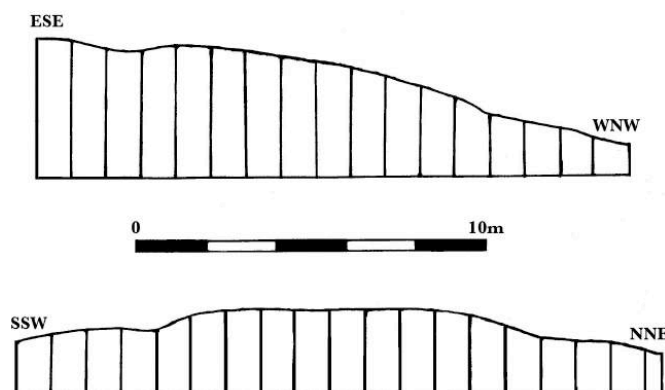


Fig. i: Profiles (ESE-WNW and SSW-NNE) across Unclassified-Barrow (No. 23) at Killua.

Two of these Killua barrows have neat, smoothly-profiled circular hollows at or near the centre (See Fig. ii), possibly the result of treasure-hunting or where trees were formerly planted in this ornamental demesne landscape.

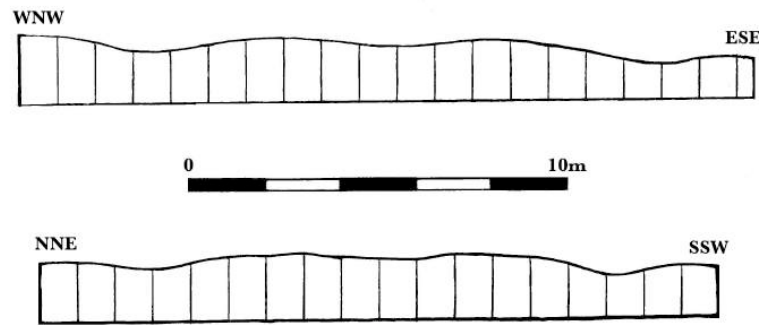


Fig. ii: Profiles (WNW-ESE and NNE-SSW) across Unclassified-Barrow (No. 24) at Killua.

Unlike Rathnarrow, where the monument lacking a bank is now ‘almost invisible’ and may be heavily eroded, these Killua monuments appear to be in good condition and, as such, can be presumed never to have had banks outside their ditches.

Soon after Falkiner described the Rathnarrow sites, similar monuments at Knockainy in Co. Limerick were identified by the pioneering archaeological fieldworker T.J. Westropp as ‘three fosses, with rounded mounds of the Rathnarrow type’ (Westropp 1917-19, 62). By the mid-1930s, as part of a programme of survey-work and excavation of barrows in Co. Limerick, Seán P. Ó Ríordáin brought these monuments together under the heading ring-barrow—similar to the British saucer-barrow, but termed a *ring*-barrow in Ireland ‘since the ditch is the most distinctive feature’ (Ó Ríordáin 1936, 177). His initial description of a group of these ‘peculiar monuments’ is of interest:

These are very low earthen mounds surrounded by a slight ditch and sometimes showing also the remains of an outer bank. The rise to the centre was in all cases very slight and the monuments were such that one might easily walk over them without noticing them (Ó Ríordáin 1936, 173).

This would be an almost perfect description of the two smaller Rathnarrow monuments, especially the very faint third one. In particular it is noteworthy that the bank was only sometimes present and, as such, need not be a definitive criterion for the type. Again, in the

first edition of his famous *Antiquities of the Irish Countryside*, Ó Ríordáin described ring-barrows as ‘consist[ing] of a very low mound, about twenty feet in diameter, surrounded by a shallow fosse and a slight bank’, although after giving some examples he notes that at Carrowjames in Co. Mayo there were ‘Similar low mounds but without the outer bank’ (Ó Ríordáin 1942, 41). It seems that while we have come to accept ring-barrows as having a ditch and outer bank surrounding a low mound, from the start they were conceived of as including monuments with ditch but no bank. As such, while the third Rathnarrow monument and four of those at Killua are unclassifiable in terms of current understanding, from a historical perspective they should really be included alongside Carrowjames as a subtype of ring-barrow with no outer bank.

As with the Rathnarrow group, the other ring-barrows or ring-barrow-related monuments this year are unusual in one respect or another. The ring-barrows at Coolvuck Upper (No. 7) and Rathbennett (No. 45) are notable for their enormous size, with overall diameters of 69.5m x 68.5m and 62m x 54.5m respectively; the Coolvuck earthwork is, however, also in spectacularly high relief, in contrast to the much more flattened Rathbennett site, although its central mound is in places markedly lower than the outer bank. With the exception of the unique earthwork at Ballynaclin documented in the first season (McGuinness 2012, 36-7), which closely resembles other ring-barrows in the county but is 11.5m across and exhibits internal features, Coolvuck Upper and Rathbennett are the largest ring-barrows so far encountered in the survey. The Rathbennett earthwork lies on sloping ground, following the slope, and abuts what appears to be a natural scarp on the downhill side, so that there is no outer bank on this side, the outer edge of its ditch instead dropping down by 1m to what is now marshy ground.

The heavily overgrown ring-barrow at Ballyglass (No. 2) is unusual in several respects. On the one hand its broad, very substantial bank and its disproportionately wide ditch are at odds with its diminutive, oval-shaped central mound, which is elongated in an E-W direction. Even more unusual than its earthen component, a linear arrangement of three orthostats lies in a field fence just 3m NE of the bank, such that a line drawn at right angles to these stones and through the central stone runs NE-SW through the centre of the barrow, dividing it into two equal halves. If not for this symmetrical arrangement, the three stones might be interpreted as nothing other than one side of the burial chamber of a megalithic tomb—possibly a jamb and two side stones. Like many other ring-barrows this one lies on and follows a gentle slope.

The site at Tullanisky (No. 52) is a bivallate barrow comprising a mound surrounded by two ditches with external banks; boulders were used in the construction of the outer bank at least. The stony mound, whose irregular upper surface slopes down noticeably to the south-west, rises some 0.50m above the inner bank and 0.70m above the outer bank, putting it somewhere between a ring-barrow, with its classic low mound and banks (e.g. on the Curragh, see fig. iii), and a bowl-barrow with its relatively tall mound rising well above any surrounding banks. If the ASI cut-off point of at least a 1m difference in height between central mound and surrounding bank (see O’Sullivan and Downey 2012, 36) be adhered to, then this monument is a ring-barrow; but it is hard to see how this cut-off point could be taken as anything more than an arbitrary division, albeit perhaps a necessary one for the basic ordering of a large body of poorly understood data. Probably on account of the double bank and ditch, the monument is taken as neither bowl- nor ring-barrow on the NMS website but left unclassified. Although on a much larger scale, with a maximum diameter of c. 100m, a good parallel for this site is the excavated burial mound at Ashleypark in Co. Tipperary, which comprised a cairn with clay mantle surrounded by two ditches with external banks, the banks being much lower than the central mound; within the cairn was a very large trapezoidal megalithic cist containing three burials, along with sherds of channelled and cord-ornamented Neolithic pottery vessels and a plain western Neolithic vessel (Manning 1985).



Fig. iii: Trivallate ring-barrow on the Curragh, Co. Kildare, after Ó Riordáin 1950. Note the low central mound, which, being of a similar height to the banks, gives it much more the appearance of a ring-barrow than a bowl-barrow, in which the mound classically stands well above any surrounding bank. Unfortunately Ireland’s barrows, multivallate or otherwise, are seldom so clear cut as this example, and, whether original or due to erosion, we find a broad spectrum of heights of central mound above any surrounding banks, ranging from the stereotypical ring-barrow to the stereotypical bowl-barrow. A 1m cut-off point is generally used by the ASI in their basic ordering of barrows, although it is not regarded as a rigid division.

The monument at Garryduff (No. 14), known as ‘Knisheen Fort’, is not a typical ring-barrow in that it has been moulded from a rounded hilltop. As such the mound is higher than the outer bank by up to 0.54m (See Fig. 21). As the outer bank is very poorly preserved and missing in places, the profile of the monument in some places looks almost like a stepped

barrow. In addition, its flat-topped mound is not level but instead appears to slope down gently to ESE.

The possible ring-barrow at Kilpatrick (No. 28) has been so disfigured that little can be said about its original appearance.

Among a range of barrows at Killua are two embanked ring-ditches, i.e. monuments similar to ring-barrows but without any evidence for a constructed mound. As with the other Killua sites, both of these are unusual in some respect. Both are fairly large monuments. No. 25, an oval earthwork with a maximum diameter of 37.5m, is located on a clear slope in a hollow—a deliberately awkward location given that more level ground appears to have been available nearby, but similar to the other Killua barrows and ringforts, which are strung along the slopes and summits of eskers and related landforms in a striking fluvio-glacial landscape. No. 27 is even larger, with a maximum diameter of 46.8m, and is unusual in that there is a simple ring-ditch at its centre, gently oval in shape and surrounding either a ground-level platform or the slightest of constructed mounds. It is debatable to what extent this monument retains its original appearance, given that it was the site of an ornamental labyrinth in the later 18th and early 19th centuries (See Fig. 38), when it and all of the Killua earthworks were included within the famously landscaped pleasure-grounds of Killua Castle, an enormous Gothic Revival structure built by the Chapmans, relatives of Sir Walter Raleigh.

BOWL-BARROWS

In Ireland, bowl-barrows come in a wide variety of forms, some of which conform to the classic upturned pudding-bowl shape of the Wessex burial mounds after which the Irish ones are named. The ditchless bowl-barrows of Wessex, which are otherwise of the same appearance as the ditched variety, are in Ireland now included under the mound-barrow category. However, as with mound-barrows, not all monuments identified as bowl-barrows in Ireland compare favourably with their British counterparts, and we find a wide range of shapes and sizes: presumably we are looking at several different types of monument.

Three fairly conventional bowl-barrows (Nos 8, 29, 54) were encountered this season, all with outer banks, along with one or two less certain examples (Nos 20, ?52). The Corgarve barrow (No. 8) comprises a domed mound surrounded by a ditch and outer bank, the mound having the peculiarity of a break in slope near the top, its steep sides giving way to a much more gently domed summit rather than a flat surface. With the upper surface of its mound rising between only 0.80m and 0.93m above its outer bank, i.e. below the 1m cut-off point

used by the ASI to discriminate between the more high relief bowl-barrows and the low-mounded ring-barrows (see O’Sullivan and Downey 2012, 36), this monument has been classified as a ring-barrow on the NMS website. Nonetheless, it is fairly close to the cut-off point, which is in any case essentially arbitrary, and the monument is here treated as a bowl-barrow on account of its overall appearance.

The Knockdomny bowl-barrow (No. 29), now barely visible due to impenetrable gorse, has a classic domed mound surrounded by a ditch and low external bank, now removed in places. With the summit of the mound rising 1.72m above the bank on the E side, even though the bank is heavily eroded on this (the only measurable) side, there seems little doubt that this is a bowl-barrow according to the ASI understanding of the term. It is, however, currently listed as ‘Barrow-unclassified’ on the NMS website, and simply as a ‘Barrow’ in the 1997 RMP.

The Waterstown monument (No. 54) has a graceful domed mound, although its profile has been greatly disfigured on the north-east side where much mound material has been removed in the past. The shallow ditch and low external bank are now barely visible but appear to have been in better shape when the ASI examined the site 40 years ago.

Of different appearance is the partly quarried-away Killinure North barrow (No. 20), which appears from a 1978 ASI account to have had a shallow ditch surrounding a tall flat-topped mound, although a stretch of the ditch seemed modern to the fieldworker who inspected it; and the associated profile published on the NMS website (Fig. 28), with its perfectly flat top and sharp angle between top and sides, seems to be greatly simplified and does little justice to this severely damaged mound.

We have seen in the last section how the bivallate monument at Tullanisky (No. 52) could be either a ring-barrow or a bowl-barrow, depending on how high above the outer bank the central mound should be allowed to rise before identification as a ring-barrow gives way to that of a bowl-barrow.

POND-BARROWS AND EMBANKED-BARROWS

Several monuments this season are contenders for pond-barrows, a type first identified and defined in Britain but extremely rare in Ireland, comprising a circular bank surrounding a smoothly concave area, in other words almost the inversion of a domed burial mound with surrounding ditch; a ditch may be found outside the bank but this is not an essential feature (Fig. iv). According to ASI fieldworkers, the concave interior can be at or below external

ground level (Farrelly and O'Brien 2002, 25). In the second season we encountered one of these around the 'Catstone' on the Hill of Ushnagh, but this seemed unique given the enormous, fragmentary erratic centrally positioned within it (McGuinness 2014, 51).

Another related type of barrow only recently identified by ASI fieldworkers is the embanked-barrow, formerly the enclosure-barrow, which comprises an annular bank surrounding a flat or dished interior (i.e. with the inner face of the banks sloping right down to the centre of the monument) which does not reach below ground level but can be raised above it; these are normally under 20m in diameter, the relatively broad banks occupying much of the diameter (Farrelly and Keane 2002, 98-100). As with the pond-barrows, there is no break in the bank that could be taken for an entrance.

It appears that there is some overlap between these two types: they both comprise annular banks surrounding a concave interior that *can be* at ground level. If the interior drops below ground level, they are treated as pond-barrows; and if it is raised above it they are treated as embanked-barrows. If the interior is more or less at ground level it is difficult to see how the two types could be told apart, except perhaps that the embanked-barrows have much wider banks and relatively smaller interiors.

Among the monuments examined this season, that at Clonydonnin (No. 6) has been identified as a possible pond-barrow by the ASI. This has a broad, slightly subcircular, annular bank surrounding a sunken, dished centre, with an overall diameter of 25m NS by 29m EW. As the bank blends seamlessly into the external ground, it is impossible to say how high it is over external ground-level compared to the interior and, as such, it is difficult in the absence of excavation to be sure if the interior is at, or drops below, ground level.

Very similar in appearance to the Clonydonnin site, but much smaller, is a newly identified monument on the summit of Knockmonaster Hill beside the medieval monastic remains at Fore (No. 13). Here is a slightly subcircular, annular bank surrounding a sunken, dished interior, with an overall diameter of 11.5m NS x 11.5m EW. Again the difficulty of deciding where the bank ends and the natural ground begins means that, while the interior appears to be sunken below ground level, this is not certain. Near the centre of the Fore monument is a large, partly overgrown earthfast boulder, which, while a far cry from the Catstone at Uisneach, is nonetheless over 1m in length.

Different in form to these two is the recently identified site of Noughaval (No. 57), labeled a ring-barrow on the NMS website, which is located directly beside a graveyard marking the site of an early medieval monastery. Here we have an almost horseshoe-shaped

monument comprising a shallow dished central area (Diam. c. 14.3m NS x 12.0m EW) surrounded by a bank, outside which is a ditch. The gap in the bank and ditch, some 9m across, opens out towards the graveyard which lies only about 6.5m away. On the opposite side of the monument to this opening, it joins on to the open end of a U-shaped hollow. If one ignores both this feature and the open end of the barrow, we have what looks like a pond-barrow with external ditch, a recognized British type (see Fig. iv). Parts of the central dished area and the ditch are now waterlogged.



Fig. iv: Two types of Wessex Pond-Barrow, with and without an external ditch (after Fowler 1967, Fig. 15)

Perhaps similar in form to this is the much larger so-called ‘ritual pond’ at Monknewtown in the Boyne Valley, only a few hundred metres from a henge and passage tomb. This comprises a very wide circular bank enclosing an area 30m across which is now flooded, and outside the bank are traces of a broad shallow ditch. It is not stated how deep the interior is but it would appear to be fairly shallow given that the monument ‘bears some similarity to the earthen embanked henge monuments at Brú na Bóinne’ (Condit 2003, 23).

BELL-BARROWS OR BELL-DISC-BARROWS

At least two monuments this season, possibly three, seem to represent bell-barrows or, perhaps more likely, the related bell-disc type (Fig. v). The largest and most impressive of these is at Lisnabin (No. 30), lying close to a tight cluster of three barrows at Rathnarrow (Nos 47-49). Although the present survey-team could not gain access to this monument, ASI accounts and satellite imagery indicate that this earthwork comprises a small circular mound surrounded by a wide, shallow ditch, but with a broad berm between the two, the width of the berm being similar to the diameter of the central mound; this has the appearance of a bell-disc-barrow. The destroyed monument at Vilanstown (No. 53) again comprised a slight circular mound, berm and ditch, but here the berm was much narrower—less than one-third of the diameter of the mound—and there were slight indications of a bank on the outer edge of the ditch. Although the height of the mound was not documented, this would appear to have been a bell-barrow with outer bank.

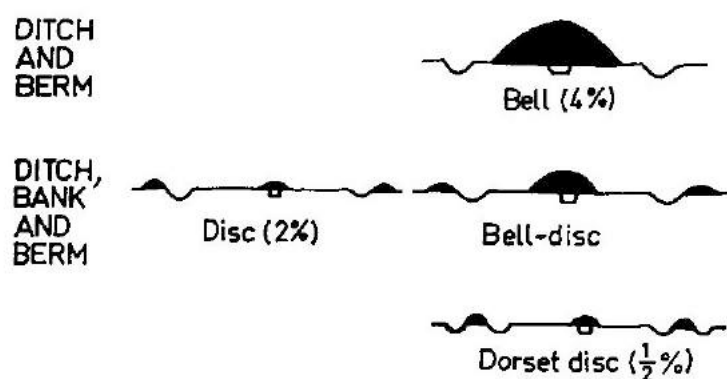


Fig. v: Bell-Barrow and related types of barrow in Wessex (after Fowler 1967, Fig. 15)

Apparently related to these is the now-destroyed Bronze Age monument at Dalystown (No. 10), which was the subject of a rescue-excavation in 2002. Labeled a ring-barrow by the excavator, this small monument comprised a subcircular ring-ditch (c. 11.25m EW x 9.2m NS) surrounding a narrow berm, which in turn surrounded a low, eroded mound. But for its minuscule size and the very slight nature of its central mound, this monument could be labeled a bell-barrow; certainly there is no other existing class into which it could be slotted. But it is far from being a classic example of the type, and pending further comparative evidence it seems best treated as an unclassified-barrow.

RING-DITCHES

With as many as eleven monuments, only two of which are documented by the ASI, the Portnashangan (Nos 34-44) complex proved to be as remarkable an addition to the county's corpus of barrows as that at Killua. Bar one enormous earthwork (the 'Bull-Ring'), which forms a focus for the cluster and is here listed as a possible unclassified-barrow (No. 34), all of these monuments appear to comprise simple ring-ditches, or at least those eight (Nos 35-42) that were examined in the field. With the exception of one very large and rather poorly preserved oval-shaped ring-ditch, these monuments are very similar in size and appearance, being approximately circular in shape with their maximum diameters all falling within the range 27.80m to 30.40m. The *embanked* ring-ditch type has been treated of under Ring-Barrows (See above).

UNCLASSIFIED-BARROWS

No fewer than 20 of the 60 monuments in this season's catalogue, one third of the total number, cannot be identified with currently recognized types and have been listed as

unclassified-barrows. Some of these have already been mentioned or discussed under other headings. We have seen that the rescue-excavated site at Dalystown (No. 10) had features linking it to bell-barrows and bell-disc-barrows, but that it was too diminutive in diameter and height to be accepted into either class. Several of the monuments at Rathnarrow (No. 49) and Killua (Nos 21, 23, 24, 26; also Nos 21A, 23A), which are like ring-barrows but with no outer bank, have been discussed under ring-barrows. Four other unclassified-barrows are discussed in the following section, which treats of the relationships between barrows, ringforts and mottes. The remaining unclassified sites present a tremendous variety, keeping in line with previous seasons.

Gortmore (Nos 17-19)

We have also seen that the three minuscule, low-relief, oval-shaped mounds at Gortmore, of which the two examined by the present survey-team were difficult to make out even in low grass, are simply too small to be treated as mound-barrows without stretching and distorting that class beyond any usefulness. Their maximum diameters are only 7.8m, 7m and 6m and their maximum heights only 0.42m, 0.25m and 0.30m respectively. One of them has possible indications of a ditch encircling the mound, but this is very doubtful. Such mounds—if in fact burial mounds—might well go unrecognized more frequently than other, more substantial barrows, or disappear entirely in the face of agricultural activity. Perhaps many apparently unmarked burials of the Bronze Age, which have been found accidentally, were once covered and marked by such slight mounds. Clearly the present sites would be suitable candidates for research excavation, in order to ascertain the nature and chronology of tiny oval mounds. On a similar scale to these, and also in very low relief, is an unclassified oblong earthwork located beside a mound-barrow at Clondalever, examined in Season II (McGuinness 2015, 46), although here the mound is narrow, almost rectangular in shape, and delimited by a shallow ditch.

Ballynamuddagh (No. 5)

One of the most remarkable outcomes of last season's fieldwork was the recognition that there appear to be angular monuments among Ireland's barrows, classically taken to be all founded on circular or occasionally subcircular templates. Two barrows last season, Annaskinnan and Pass of Kilbride, had straight, steeply-sloping sides and flat tops, and were essentially rectangular in ground plan; one of these, Pass of Kilbride, was also surrounded by a

trapezoidal ditch formed of four straight trenches, the corners sunk deeper than the sides. Both monuments were strikingly positioned on the summits of prominent glacial hillocks like many other barrows in the county, and one of them was found to have bones when investigated by farm labourers around the 1960s (McGuinness 2015, 19-20, 34-5, 60-63).

Both monuments were in the south east of the county; perhaps unexpectedly, another apparently related monument was encountered at Ballynamuddagh a few kilometres south of Moate. Identified simply as a 'Mound' in the RMP, and now densely overgrown and very difficult to examine in places, this appears to be a trapezoidal (or sub-trapezoidal) flat-topped mound with steeply-sloping sides. The trapezoid is irregular, however, giving an asymmetric ground-plan: the south side is 7.20m in length, from which two approximately parallel sides run off at right-angles, the mostly inaccessible wider one of these forming the west side of the mound, the narrower one, about 6.10m in length, forming the east side; these two sides, being of markedly differing lengths, are joined on the near-impenetrably overgrown north side of the mound by what appears to be another straight line, but one that runs at an oblique angle to the exposed south side. There is what appears to be a low step or berm around the base of the south and west sides of the mound, over 2m in width. In spite of its irregular shape and the possible berm, this flat-topped mound is of a similar size to Annaskinnan and Pass of Kilbride, and it too is prominently positioned atop a hillock. As such, it seems to be related to these enigmatic earthworks, which, as we have seen last season (McGuinness 2015, 20), seem to fly in the face of long-standing assumptions.

Culleen More (No. 9)

This spectacular earthwork has been moulded from the summit of Captain's Hill, a small but very prominent steep-sided eminence on the south-east shore of Lough Owel. In local folklore it is reputedly the site of the drowning of the Norse tyrant Thorgestr (Turgesius) by the Irish king Maelseachlainn, an execution that is referred to in the annals in the 9th century, associated with Lough Owel and Lough Ennell in different sources; in oral tradition he was rolled down Captain's Hill in a barrel into the waters of Lough Owel. The monument currently presents as a flat-topped, steep-sided oval or eye-shaped mound with sharply defined upper edge, which is surrounded by a ditch, outside which is a bank that has been much eroded due to slippage down the steep slopes of the hill, but which was originally much lower than the central mound on account of the hillslope. On the south-east side, where there is neither bank nor ditch, the flat summit of the mound slopes down as a ramped causeway to external ground level. Listed

simply as an ‘Earthwork’ in the RMP, this monument has since 2015 been classified as a ring-barrow on the NMS website. Leaving aside the ramped feature, the great height of the central mound above the outer bank (See Fig. 10), created in part by the steep natural hill, gives this monument more the appearance of a bowl-barrow, though it is far from being a textbook example of that type. The flat top of the mound with its sharply defined edges, and the ramp which connects it to ground level, appear not to be paralleled elsewhere and are plausibly modifications to an existing barrow, perhaps from the time of the Turgesius incident if its traditional association with this site is authentic. This monument is one of many barrows, quite varied in form, which can be found on or close to the shore of Lough Owel (See McGuinness 2012).

Portnashangan (No. 34, ‘The Bull Ring’) and Tristernagh (No. 51, ‘Crossharry Bull Ring’)

Given that the names of both of these monuments indicate a use in the sport of bull-baiting in recent centuries, neither of them can be accepted as definite barrows in their current form. But at least the Portnashangan monument is a likely contender for a reworked barrow or related monument, in view of its location in the midst of a cluster of ring-ditches, on the shore of Lough Owel, which is itself the focus of a substantial grouping of barrows of varied morphology.

The Bull-Ring at Portnashangan presents as an enormous circular earthwork with a maximum diameter of c. 104.5m, comprising a flat-based external ditch with accompanying internal bank, within which is a broad berm surrounding a broad, flooded, flat-based and sharply-defined ditch with steep sides, which in turn surrounds a level circular space. The writer knows of no other monument that could be compared with this one.

The Tristernagh monument, with a maximum diameter of 40.5m, again appears to be unique in form, comprising a deep, sharply-cut, flat-based circular ditch with near-vertical sides, surrounding a flat-topped platform raised above external ground level, at the centre of which is a circular mound (Diam. 17.10m NS x 17.50m EW) up to 2.71m in height. Around the edge of the platform is a low, denuded bank, the diameter of the platform including the bank being up to 35.3m. The mound initially appears to be stepped, but closer inspection shows it to have a ramp spiraling around it up to within 0.89m of its summit.

The flat-based, sharply-defined and steep-sided ditches at both Tristernagh and Portnashangan were plausibly cut or re-cut in modern times and probably relate to the use of both sites for bull-baiting, as also perhaps does the ramp which spirals around the Tristernagh

mound. But the association of the Portnashangan monument with a group of ring-ditches would suggest that it at least originated in ancient times. Intriguingly, the outer ditch of the Portnashangan Bull Ring appears to cut through the ditch of one of the ring-ditches, indicating that in its current form at least the Bull Ring is later than the ring-ditches.

The four remaining unclassified-barrows are best treated of in a separate section. These are Killua (No. 22), Mullanakill (No. 31), Pass of Kilbride (No. 33) and Rathgarrett (No. 46).

BARROWS, RINGFORTS AND MOTTES

In previous seasons we have drawn attention to the problematic, multi-faceted relationship between ringforts and barrows, especially ring-barrows. For one thing there appear to be difficulties in distinguishing between ringforts and ring-barrows, especially where a monument has been greatly damaged or is heavily overgrown. This has not been helped by the widespread use of the terms ‘Rath’ and ‘Fort’ to describe both types in common parlance, on the Ordnance Survey maps, and even in medieval Irish literature, where the ubiquitous term *Ráth* does not refer solely to the secular habitation sites we now call ringforts. Certainly to the untrained eye, a ring-barrow can seem indistinguishable from a ringfort; but this can apply to professional archaeologists as well, and we have seen ring-barrows classified as ringforts by ASI fieldworkers at Porterstown in last season’s report (McGuinness 2015, 65) and at Rathbennett this season (No. 45). One of the most impressive monuments seen in the first season, at Ballynaclin, was classified by the ASI as a ringfort, but proved to be an enormous internally-ditched enclosure, like a giant ring-barrow, with a circular mound eccentrically positioned within it (McGuinness 2012, 36-7). The matter is not helped by the fact that their size-ranges overlap considerably; or that common features of ringforts such as multivallation and causewayed entrances, can be found among Irish ring-barrows.

Where size is not an immediate giveaway, as with many of the smaller ring-barrows, the relative positioning of ditch and bank provides a useful rule-of-thumb for separating the two types: ring-barrows classically have internal ditches and external banks, whereas ringforts have external ditches and internal banks. But this is far from saying that all earthworks with internal ditches are ring-barrows, or that all earthworks with external ditches are ringforts. There are ceremonial and/or mortuary sites with external ditches such as Longstone Rath in Kildare, which boasts one of the tallest standing stones in the country, part of the Punchestown group, at the base of which is a substantial rectangular cist that produced a Beaker-style archer’s

wristguard. Also contrary to expectations is the quadrivallate Rathra near Castlerea in Roscommon, some 115m across, where the ditches are outside the banks as in a conventional ringfort but which contains two mounds that appear to be barrows or related monuments.

Some other types of barrow would also appear to have a problematic relationship with ringforts. On occasion, barrows could be converted into ringforts. Excavation of the bivallate ringfort at Letterkeen in Co. Mayo showed it to lie on top of a partly artificial stony mound containing a cist with two Food Vessels. Perhaps the conversion of the Freestone Hill multiple-cist-cairn in Kilkenny into a cashel at the heart of a Bronze Age hillfort is an earlier manifestation of the same principle. Within the Letterkeen fort but not covered by cairn material were two further cists and an unprotected grave associated with additional Food Vessels and a pygmy cup: the excavators suggested that cairn material originally covered these as well, giving a multiple-cist cairn, but that it was removed for the building of the fort and through later tillage (Ó Ríordáin and Mac Dermott 1952, 91-5, 106-111). As with Knockast (See McGuinness 2014, 35-7), the mixture of clay and stones in the 'cairn' suggests that it is better classified as an earth and stone mound-barrow.

We have also seen in the second season's report (2014, 13-14) that some circular enclosures with internal bank and external ditch in Westmeath and Sligo (Timoney 1984, 319, Fig. 223) are plausibly interpreted as barrows on the grounds of small size and the absence of an entrance. These could almost be styled miniature ringfort-shaped barrows, and can be found in the vicinity of other, more conventional types of barrow, indicating a similar function. We have seen several of these in earlier seasons, one of them close to a ring-barrow at Loughan (McGuinness 2014, 13; 2015, 23-4). Another of these currently unclassified monuments has been recorded this season at Killua (No. 22), close to a range of other barrow types (See Fig. 31). This monument, measuring 20.7m NS by 18.3m EW, comprises a well defined but shallow ditch from 0.05m to 0.19m in depth and a very low, faintly defined internal bank, and is positioned on the steeply sloping surface of an esker, such that the interior drops some 1.72m over 18.5m from north to south. If these factors indicate that this cannot by any reckoning be accepted as a ringfort, the picture is nonetheless complicated by another earthwork only a short distance to west-south-west. This unrecorded monument (see Appendix 1) presents as a markedly subcircular, almost eye-shaped earthwork (Diam. 26.5m NS x 20m EW) with a low, very insubstantial internal bank, beyond which are a deep, sharply cut ditch and a low, fairly insubstantial counterscarp bank. While on the surface this has the appearance of a conventional ringfort, albeit a small one with flimsy banks and unusual shape,

it is positioned on the same esker as the barrow just described and is markedly sloped from south-east to north-west, the height on opposing crests of the low inner bank falling no less than 2.05m over 23.5m. Although greatly overgrown in places, there is no obvious entrance to the fort.

So, here we have two monuments close to one another on the same esker, one appearing to be a ringfort, the other more likely to be an unclassified-barrow, but both showing some similarities to one another. It is worth stating that the overall impression is that the ringfort is much more sharply defined and therefore presumably of much more recent date than the barrow. Although the Killua area is dominated by barrows or related monuments, several of which are on the sloping surfaces of eskers, there is also a second, bivallate ringfort (WM009-010) among this group of earthworks. It is much larger than the first, falling well within the usual size-range for ringforts, but it too has been moulded from a fluvio-glacial landform, such that the outer defences are stepped down from the inner, and both snake up and down around the circumference; the interior is greatly undulating, with a mound-like high point near the north side, and one half of the interior is more or less horizontal and the other, WSW half slopes down very steeply—with a drop of 2.90m over a distance of 16m from NE to SW, one might say too steeply for habitation purposes. Looking at all eleven of the Killua monuments together, close-set within an area of some 400m by 350m, it is difficult not to posit some sort of connection between them, in spite of the textbook chronological and typological divisions that separate ringforts and barrows.

Two further unclassified barrows, Rathgarrett and Mullanakill, provide further food for thought in terms of the relationship between barrows and ringforts. The monument at Rathgarrett (No. 46) comprises a steep-sided circular mound 13.8m across with a flat, approximately level upper surface 8.7m across. Its height ranges from 1.5 to 1.8m and there is no trace of a ditch at its base. The relatively broad, flat top seems to exclude it from the mound-barrow class, which is the nearest available category. Instead it has more the appearance of a miniature platform ringfort. The first ASI fieldworker to visit the site (19/10/73) had doubts as to the nature of the site:

‘The mound does not appear to have any archaeological significance in its present form. However this may be a barrow, which was altered in more recent times’. [SMR file]

By the time of the second visit (16/9/76) it was more confidently ascribed to the barrow series. And a neighbouring landowner informed the present writer of other similar monuments which formerly lay in adjacent fields, suggesting the kind of cemetery arrangement that would be normal for barrows.

Very similar in appearance but considerably larger is the monument at Mullanakill (No. 31) just north of Castlepollard, which is again a steep-sided flat-topped mound, but here it is about 30m across at the base and 15-18m across on top, with a height of 2.4m. When first seen by the ASI (15/5/74) this was labeled a ‘Mound—Ringfort?’ and when seen a second time (18/5/78), was more confidently identified as a ‘Ringfort’, presumably of the raised or platform variety [SMR file]. By the time of a third visit (30/1/85), the picture had changed dramatically:

‘At first sight this could be taken to be a Ringfort but is not and appears to be a mound—burial mound? ... This appears to be the mound-‘tumulus’ referred to by Wm. Chapman in letter of 1793 to Austin Cooper, in which a stone built chamber had been found with some bones inside.’ [SMR file]

The Mullanakill site seems from its location and other factors to equate with the monument seen by Chapman (see cover image; also Figs 41-2), which, from investigations made in the late eighteenth century, undoubtedly contained a large, near-rectangular cist with burial remains. Perhaps related is the much smaller mound at Rathbennett, examined in the first season, which excavation in the 1930s showed to contain a rectangular cist containing two Bowl Food Vessels and fragments of an unburnt skeleton (McGuinness 2012, 32-3). The Rathbennett mound was oval or subrectangular in shape (11m by 8m), 1.65-1.9m in height, with steep sides and a flat top.

It seems from these monuments that, in the absence of excavation, it may be difficult to distinguish between some raised or platform ringforts and flat-topped barrows. It does not help that as great a fieldworker as S.P. Ó Ríordáin could identify *An Forradh* at Tara, with its flat-topped central mound, as a platform ringfort conjoined to a more conventional ringfort (1979, 57). If there are subtle morphological differences between platform ringforts and certain kinds of barrow, or differences in average dimensions, this is something that needs to be ascertained from observations in the field and not based on untested assumptions. A site such as Mullanakill shows that there is likely to be some formal overlap between these two very different types of monument, at least as they appear to the naked eye.

The picture is further complicated by mottes, which can themselves be confused with raised or platform ringforts, and in some instances were actually formed by the modification of

an existing ringfort (Barry 1987, 40). Among the many instances of unexcavated ‘mottes’ without diagnostic baileys, sometimes the only way of distinguishing between these types in the field is to look to the size and overall proportions of the mound, mottes generally being relatively higher and narrower, the mounds of platform ringforts being relatively lower and broader. It also seems clear that the native Irish were constructing motte-like mounds in the pre-Norman period—even on occasion with bailey-like features, as with *Ráith Airthir* at *Taillteann*, Co. Meath, and *Ráthceltchair* at Downpatrick, Co. Down—at least some of which were regarded as burial places in medieval literature (Ó Ríordáin 1979, 53-4; Herity 1993). Some of these native ‘mottes’ may be distinguished from Norman fortifications by the presence of concentric multivallate defences at the base of the mound, as with the trivallate Mote of Kilfinnane in Co. Limerick (Leask 1944, 10; Ó Ríordáin 1979, 54). Another trivallate example, in a barrow rich part of Westmeath, is the mote of Rathconrath, which is briefly described in Appendix 2 of this report.

The identification of some of these tall flat-topped mounds as burial monuments in medieval literature, such as *Duma Sláine* on the Hill of Slane in Co. Meath or *Cnucha* at Castleknock in Co. Dublin (Herity 1993, 143-4, 145-6), raises the question whether we are currently underestimating the size-range of prehistoric burial mounds in Ireland. Burials have been recorded under the motte of Rathmore in Co. Kildare (Ó Ríordáin 1979, 56), and Lyons argued on morphological grounds that the motte of Kilfeakle in Co. Tipperary was shaped by the Normans from a Bronze Age tumulus (Lyons 1950, 263-6). If it be questioned whether a burial mound could actually be large enough to be confused with a motte, consider the dimensions of the one of the largest Bronze Age barrows in Denmark, Borum Eshøj. When recorded in 1850, before much of it was taken away, this mound was 125 ft (38.1m) across and a staggering 29.5 ft (9m) in height (Glob 1974, 31). The counter-argument that formal considerations would prevent one being confused with the other, mottes being flat-topped and burial mounds being round-topped, can hardly explain why a significant proportion of monuments classified as mound-barrows or bowl-barrows in Ireland actually have flat or flattish summits.

In view of the possible misclassification of mottes as barrows, it seems that we should at the very least question the nature of those mottes in the vicinity of known barrows. The ‘motte’ in Pass of Kilbride townland, for example, about 700m west of the rectilinear barrow examined last season (McGuinness 2015, 60-63), is here included as a possible unclassified-barrow (No. 33). Here is a roughly circular mound (Diam. 23m) with flat upper surface (Diam.

14.2 x 14.5m) rising to a height of some 1.90m above ground level, and formerly surrounded by a ditch. With the exception of the ditch, this monument resembles the unclassified-barrows at Mullanakill and Rathgarrett. Near the centre of its upper surface is a tiny mound or upper step (Diam. 4.5m) of uncertain significance. There is no trace of a bailey. Until we have a clear sense of the size range and proportions of historically attested Norman mottes, we should be open to the possibility that some of these might be prehistoric burial mounds, or at least have originated as such. As with many mottes, we have seen in previous seasons that barrows too can be moulded from eskers or other fluvioglacial landforms.

MORPHOLOGICAL VARIETY IN GROUPS OF BARROWS

There are seven instances of groupings of two or more barrows among this season's monuments, all but one containing monuments of varying form. The two largest of these are the mostly undocumented clusters of eleven monuments at Portnashangan on the shore of Lough Owel, and nine monuments spread over a striking fluvioglacial landscape at Killua near Clonmellon.

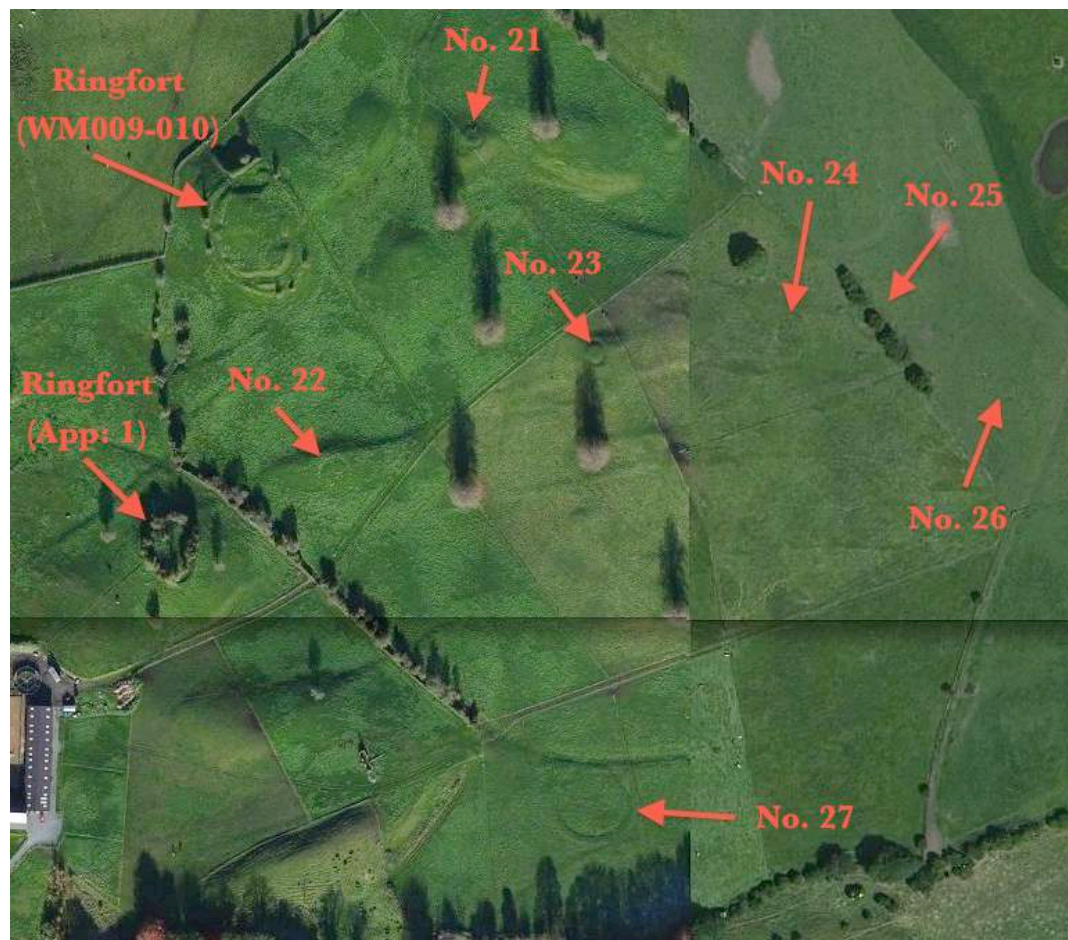


Fig. vi: Satellite image of fluvio-glacial landscape at Killua, formerly part of the heavily landscaped demesne of Killua Castle, with two unusual ringforts and nine barrows or related monuments (Nos 21-27; No. 21A, apparently close to No. 21, and No. 23A, just E of No. 23, are not marked here), from Bing (© Microsoft).

The Portnashangan group (See Fig. 47), spread over an area of c. 400m by c. 350m, comprises as many as ten circular ring-ditches, mostly closely similar in both form and dimensions, although one is much larger than the rest and oval in shape. The group seems to be focused on a very large circular earthwork known as the ‘Bull-Ring’, apparently unique in form and here presented as a possible unclassified-barrow (See Unclassified-Barrows above). This monument, which may have been either constructed or modified in recent centuries as a location for the sport of bull-baiting, comprises a flat-based external ditch with accompanying internal bank, within which is a broad berm surrounding a broad, flooded, flat-based and sharply-defined ditch, which in turn surrounds a level circular space. One of the ring-ditches abutting on the Bull-Ring appears to be cut through by the outer ditch of the latter.

The remarkable cluster of nine mostly undocumented monuments at Killua (Nos 21-7, 21A, 23A; See Fig. vi), though their siting is primarily dictated by the lie of this heavily glaciated townland, are like Portnashangan confined to an area of some 400m by 350m and clearly comprise a cemetery. All but two of these monuments are unclassified-barrows, the remaining two—the largest in the complex—being an embanked ring-ditch on gently sloping ground (No. 25) and a low-lying embanked ring-ditch on level ground, with a tiny ring-ditch close to its centre (No. 27) (See Ring-Barrows above). The remaining monuments are not all identical, however: One (No. 22) is like a miniature univallate ringfort but with no entrance, inexplicably sited on the steep-sloped end of an esker ridge, such that it drops 1.72m over 18.5m (See Unclassified-Barrows above). Another with a similar slope and in a similar location (No. 23) is like a ring-barrow with no outer bank, comprising a low flattened dome-shaped mound delimited by a slender, well-defined, shallow ditch (See Ring-Barrows above). Two others (Nos 24, 26), much less steeply sloping but again on fluvio-glacial landforms, are similar in form to this, but these have central or near-central pits or hollows which might be original, and not simply scars left by treasure-seekers or uprooted trees. One of these (No. 26) has another peculiarity, in that there is a narrow rectangular projection to the outer side of its ditch, such that for a stretch of 5.10m the ditch has an added width of 1.40m. Like the pits, this is not so easily dismissed as later interference, for the same feature can be found in another of the Killua sites (No. 21), where the projection is 7m long and 3m wide. This irregular, almost pear-shaped earthwork comprises a very roughly circular mound surrounded by a ditch; it too has a roughly circular hollow in the mound, but here it is much less central and may well be a later

feature, perhaps the site of one or more uprooted tree stumps documented by the ASI in 1976 [SMR file]. Indeed the mound itself is eccentrically positioned towards the north-east side of the overall monument, such that the ditch is overall much wider at the south west, not merely due to the rectangular projection. This barrow has been moulded from the summit of a glacial knoll, but it is not placed symmetrically on the summit: instead it spills down the sloping north-east side, and at its lowest point the bank and ditch are missing for a stretch of almost 10m. This partly level, partly sloped configuration brings to mind the famous ‘Sloping Trenches’ on the Hill of Tara. Of the remaining two sites, one (No. 21A) appears to be no longer visible but was described by the ASI in 1973 as an ‘approximately low circular platform with round upper edge surrounded by a narrow U-shaped fosse’ and in 1976 as ‘a low roughly circular artificial mound surrounded by a very shallow fosse on the SW, SSE’ which was sited on a low natural hillock [SMR file]. The other site (No. 23A), located on the flat summit of an esker, is now best seen from the air as a low circular mound surrounded by a narrow ditch. It is noteworthy that, with the exception of the two embanked ring-ditches, which are much larger in area, and of the miniature ringfort-shaped barrow, all of these monuments are like ring-barrows without external banks (See Ring-Barrows above). Although much smaller in size, two similar monuments were seen in the first season symmetrically positioned just west of the large tumulus on the summit of Frewin Hill, just where the flat summit of the hill begins to slope down sharply to the west (McGuinness 2012, 35).

In three instances, single monuments examined this season form part of groups examined in previous seasons. The unrecorded mound-barrow at Balgarrett (No. 1; See Fig. 1) forms part of a loose-knit cemetery of six barrows spread over the same townland, including two other mound-barrows, a ring-barrow and two stepped-barrows, the nearest being a ring-barrow on the top of an esker less than 100m to NE (McGuinness 2014, 29-33).

The giant low-lying ring-barrow on sloping ground at Rathbennett (No. 45) again forms part of a what may be a very loose-knit linear cemetery of six barrows, running north-south over three townlands for a distance of *c.* 2.25km. Some 500m south-south-east is a hilltop mound-barrow also in Rathbennett and *c.* 500m to the north is a second ring-barrow on a hillslope in Leny; some 250m farther north in Leny are two unusually shaped barrows, each unlike any other in the cemetery; and 1km farther north again is a mound-barrow in Fulmort (McGuinness 2012, 27, 28-30, 32-3). Directly south of this cluster at distances of *c.* 3km and *c.* 6km are two further diverse groupings of barrows centred on Frewin Hill and the hill of Slane More (McGuinness 2012, 30-31, 31-2, 33-6, 37-40).

The tightly-knit group of three barrows at Rathnarrow are probably all of the same type but of greatly varying size and, on account of this, differentially preserved; as such, they can only be identified as a ring-barrow (No. 47), a ring-barrow or embanked ring-ditch (No. 48) and an unclassified-barrow (No. 49). But only about 250m to north in Lisnabin townland is a bell-disc-barrow (No. 30), and, probably linked to this group of four in a loose-knit cemetery, at the greater distances of 1.2km to north-east and 1.25km to south-east respectively, are an enclosed ring-barrow in Rathnarrow townland and two unclassified-barrows in Rathwire Upper townland, one of these latter apparently the heavily damaged remains of two conjoined bowl-barrows with common ditch and outer bank (McGuinness 2015, 66-9). All but one of these barrows are on land over 100m OD just west of Killucan.

Three tiny oval-shaped or subcircular mounds fairly close to one another at Gortmore (Nos 17-19), identified here as possible unclassified barrows, may comprise a cemetery arrangement. All appear to be of the same type with the possible exception of No. 18 which has faint traces of a possible ditch around part of its circumference; but, given the size of these monuments, with heights ranging from only 25cm to 42cm, it is plausible that any ditches would be next to invisible around the other two.

Finally, a pair of earthworks on Knockmonaster Hill beside the early medieval monastery of Fore includes a possible mound-barrow (No. 12) and a possible pond-barrow (No. 13).

MEGALITHS AND BARROWS

Although very few megalithic tombs or freestanding megaliths appear to have been constructed in Westmeath, some of these are or were formerly in fairly close proximity to barrows. We have seen in Season II that the Hill of Ushnagh (*Uisneach*) was the site both of barrows and of a heavily ruined megalithic structure, probably a chambered tomb, associated in folklore with St Patrick (McGuinness 2014, 21). This season we have already seen that a ring-barrow in Ballyglass townland (See Fig. 3) is located directly beside an arrangement of three orthostats set together in a row, apparently two side-stones and a jamb-stone from the chamber of a megalithic tomb, now collectively known as the 'leegaun' (Shaw 1921, 137). Although it has not been documented since, Shaw also recorded a 'grave' in the same townland, 'said locally to be the burial place of a king'. He continues:

'It is marked by two large stones, separated from each other 6 feet 10 inches. The large stone is 5 feet 8 inches wide and 3 feet 4 inches above ground, and the smaller flag is 42 inches wide by 34 inches above ground' (Shaw 1921, 136-7).

Shaw's photograph of this structure (Fig. vii) appears to show cairn material around the base of these large upright flagstones, which are parallel to one another, and the overriding impression is of the fragmentary remains of a megalithic tomb.



Fig. vii: Megalithic structure at unknown location in Ballyglass townland, traditionally regarded as the grave of a king (after Shaw 1921, Pl. XXIII)

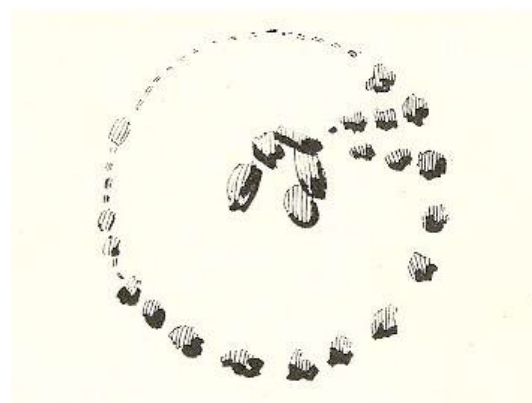


Fig. viii: Eighteenth-century view by J. Brownrigg and plan by Austin Cooper of destroyed megalithic tomb, apparently a simple passage-tomb, ‘on the brow of an eminence’ in Ballyhattan townland near Donore Cross, Co. Westmeath (after Harbison 2004, Fig. 30.2 and Price (ed.) 1942, Fig. p. 122).

The bowl-barrow on a hilltop at Corgarve lies only 0.7km west of the site of a destroyed megalithic tomb twice documented in the late 18th century. From Brownrigg’s and Cooper’s description and illustrations (Fig. viii), this monument would appear to have been a simple dolmenic passage-tomb like those at Carrowmore, and was located ‘on the brow of an eminence’ close to Donore Cross (Price (ed.) 1942, 122-3, Fig. p. 122; Harbison 2004, 248-9, Fig. 30.2).

The association of barrows with megalithic tombs, especially passage-tombs, is a recognized phenomenon, with examples at the Carrowmore and Loughcrew cemeteries and in the Dublin Mountains, but this has not yet been the subject of focused research. It would certainly be consistent with the widespread reuse of megalithic tombs for burial in the Early and Middle Bronze Age (e.g. Ó Ríordáin 1968; Grogan 2004, 68, Table 10.5), and in the Iron Age (Raftery 1994, 192-3, 195-6, 199).

EXCAVATED SITES

Several of this season’s barrows have been opened or scientifically excavated over the last few centuries, and to very different standards.

Although strictly speaking not excavated, treasure-hunting followed by the gathering of house-building materials from one side of what appears to be the unclassified-barrow at Mullanakill (No. 31) in the late 18th century led to the discovery and careful documentation of a long, almost megalithic cist containing as many as five human skeletons. Useful sketch-plans and sections were produced by William Chapman, who visited the site twice, very cautiously recorded local information on its opening, and sent his findings to the well-known antiquary Austin Cooper in 1793; these were eventually published along with other Cooper material in the 20th century (Price (ed.) 1942, 125-7). This important account has been used to suggest comparisons of the burial chamber with rare Neolithic tombs of the Linkardstown-cist type [SMR file].

A similar approach to Chapman was taken by the antiquary William Wilde when a small mound-barrow was removed at Barrettstown (No. 56) not far west of Lough Ennell. Paying a visit to the site himself, and drawing on accounts of its discovery sent to the local press by Dr Kelly of Mullingar, Wilde prepared a detailed written account for the Royal Irish Academy of

the discovery of two cists containing skeletons and grave furniture, one having a Bowl Food Vessel and the other a large boar's tusk (Wilde 1862). The landowner donated the finds to the Academy's museum, from which they later went to the National Museum of Ireland.

Two sites in this season's catalogue were excavated in modern times: the ring-barrow at Rathnarrow (No. 47) and the unclassified-barrow at Dalystown (No. 10). Confined to a preliminary cutting in the north-east quadrant, the 1973 research excavation of the Rathnarrow monument by Joseph McCabe, who had twice described the monument for the ASI, proved quite disappointing given the impressive appearance of this large ring-barrow with unusually deep ditch. Although a pit under the centre of the mound contained cremated human remains, not a single finished artefact was found in the excavated part of the monument, only a few waste flint flakes. The most important discoveries related to the form of the monument, with stratigraphic evidence for a very low (H. 40cm) but clearly constructed mound, conclusively disproving some earlier accounts suggesting that the appearance of a 'mound' was only the false-relief impression created by digging a deep ditch around the natural ground. More intriguingly, the cutting exposed two parallel arcs of irregular weathered limestone blocks, generally no more than 30cm across, resting on the old ground surface 1.20m and 3.80m from the centre of the barrow, and possibly representing concentric rings. Between these was a concentration of smaller stones, mostly resting on the old ground surface and intermixed with numerous fragments of charcoal. Although far from being of universal occurrence, such rings or arcs of stones hidden beneath the mound are a widespread, recurring feature in circular burial mounds and barrows from the Neolithic onwards (e.g. Ó Ríordáin 1933, 81-2; J. Raftery 1960, 92-3, Fig. 6; B. Raftery 1969, 7, Fig. 4; 1974, 285), and, as such, provide important comparative evidence in studying barrow morphology. Macalister and Praeger, having 'trenched through' the mound-barrow at Mweelra on the Hill of Ushnagh, similarly found 'stones [that] seemed to have been laid intentionally, in an arc 25' [c. 7.6m] in diameter, surrounding the centre', but although concealed beneath the mound, these stones were positioned high above the original ground surface, as at Corrower, Co. Mayo, where a semicircular setting of stones surrounded a cairn on top of the burial mound (Macalister and Praeger 1928, 83; Raftery 1960, 92-3). The Kilmore burial mound in last season's report contained a miniature U-shaped setting of stones around a cremation deposit, which Raftery compared with those at Corrower and two other sites (Prendergast 1960; Raftery 1960, 92). The work at Rathnarrow, though intentionally preliminary, appears not to have been resumed.

By contrast, the unclassified-barrow at Dalystown (No. 10) was subjected to a rescue excavation by Bernice Molloy in 2002, in advance of the construction of a gas pipeline (Grogan *et al.* 2007, 337-9). As such, two-thirds of the monument were fully examined and removed, the remainder lying outside the pipeline corridor. A series of pits containing cremated bone were found below ground level within the area demarcated by the ditch; these were sealed under the very paltry remains of a central mound that did not reach the edge of the ditch, such that a slight berm surrounded the mound. Some additional cremated bone was found in the uppermost layer of ditch-infill, a layer containing charcoal that produced a single radiocarbon date of 930-800 cal. BC. Also within the ditched area, but predating the barrow, were two pits containing cremation burials, along with a series of stake-holes and a possible pyre. A cluster of similar cremation pits arranged in arcs and other patterns lay just east and south east of the barrow, one with sherds of possible Beaker pottery, but these could not be dated. In a third phase, a single cremation pit was inserted into the mound. Other nearby excavated sites on the pipeline corridor included two burnt mounds or *fulachta fiadh*—one with a radiocarbon date of 1300-1000 cal. BC.

CATALOGUE OF MONUMENTS

The sixty-two monuments in the catalogue are arranged alphabetically by townland. The first line of each catalogue entry contains the site number, followed by the name of the townland and (in brackets) the barony in which it is located, its suggested classification in the opinion of the writer but using the ASI schema (see Fig. ii in main text), and references to any illustrations; on the far right of this line the presence of a V indicates that the monument was visited and examined by the 2013 survey-team. The second line contains the number of the monument, where this exists, in the Sites and Monuments Record for Westmeath as provided in the published *Record of Monuments and Places for County Westmeath* (1996) and on the National Monuments Service website, followed, in brackets, by the classification assigned to it in the latter source. This is in turn followed by a 10-figure map coordinate for locating the monument on the national grid and the height of the monument above Ordnance Datum (i.e. sea level) to within 10m. The bulk of the catalogue entry comprises a fresh description of the monument; information from earlier accounts where a monument has been damaged or destroyed, or is inaccessible; information on the monument's setting in the natural landscape and proximity to other archaeological remains; and, where available, information on associated site-names or traditions. A list of any known references to the monument in publications is given at the end. Unless otherwise stated, diameter measurements refer to the overall diameter of the monument, rather than to, say, the central mound of a ring- barrow; overall diameters are taken to the outside of any surrounding banks or ditches. Widths of banks and ditches are based on a visual estimation of where one ends and the other begins, or where the bank ends and the natural ground begins, boundaries that are not always obvious; diameters of central mounds or platforms are taken from the base of the mound, where this is judged by eye to intersect with the base of the ditch, rather than to its often flat upper surface; although the latter is also provided where there is a clear edge to the upper surface. Given the generally imprecise boundaries between different elements of earthworks, and the difficulties in distinguishing between peripheral features and the natural ground, it should be taken that the majority of measurements are only approximations. This seems preferable to cluttering the text with use of the abbreviation 'c.' (i.e. *circa*).

1. **BALGARRETT** (*Moyashel & Magheradernon B^y*), **MOUND-BARROW** (Figs 1-2)

V

SMR: – ; NGR: 23340/25360; Altitude: 120-130m OD

Fairly well-preserved earthwork, comprising a broad, substantial mound, roughly circular (Diam. 18.5m NS x c. 17m EW) with domed profile, now much overgrown with gorse; although surrounding grass was high when visited, there appears to be no surface evidence for a perimeter ditch. As barrow is situated on ground that slopes down from N to S, it rises only 0.90m above ground level on N side but 1.86m on S side. Portion of W side of mound has been removed, up to 5.5m from edge towards the centre, such that the EW diameter given here is only an approximation.

Although apparently not previously recorded, monument is clearly visible from the air on Microsoft Bing and is located in a deliberately unplanted area of commercial forestry, in and around which five other barrows of varying form lie in this townland (see McGuinness 2014, 29-33), the nearest on an esker ridge less than 100m to NE; the S end of the esker lies just 10.50m to N of barrow and looks down on it.

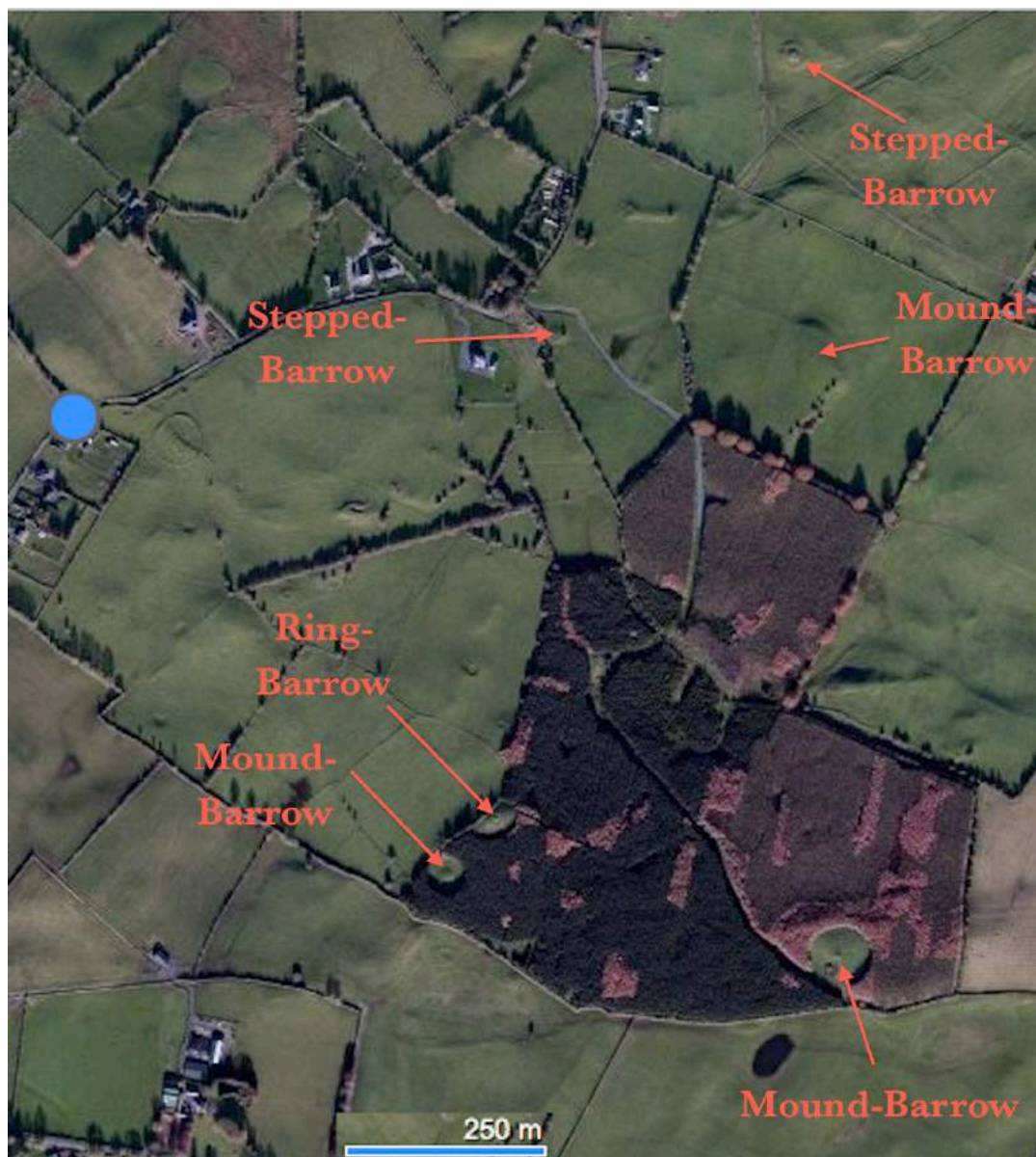


Fig. 1: Satellite image of barrow cemetery in fluvioglacial landscape at Balgarrett, showing the Mound-Barrow described here (No. 1, near lower left corner of forestry) and five other Mound-, Ring- and Stepped-Barrows examined in the 2013 season (McGuinness 2014, 29-33), from Bing (© Microsoft).



Fig. 2: Elegantly dome-shaped Mound-Barrow (No. 1) on sloping ground at Balgarrett (1m scale).

2. BALLYGLASS (*Rathconrath B^y*), RING-BARROW (Fig. 3) V

SMR: WM018-090 (RMP: 'Barrow'); **NGR:** 23160/25375; **Altitude:** 130-140m OD

This monument and its immediate environs are now densely overgrown and barely accessible, such that the interior, the ditch, at least the N half of the bank's circuit, and some associated megaliths (see below), were not visible on the single occasion that the survey-team visited the site. Not even its diameter could be ascertained, although, where perimeter is exposed on S side, outer bank has a width of 5.00m and rises 0.75m above base of ditch and 1.35m above external ground level. The bank appears very substantial, even disproportionately large for a barrow of this size, and has a rounded profile where best preserved. Visible part of bank has been poached in various places in the past.

The site was visited twice by ASI fieldworkers in the 1970s, who identified it as a saucer-barrow (a British term synonymous with the Irish ring-barrow) and noted the occurrence of a megalithic structure which is clearly related to the barrow. The 1970 account:

A small oval mound surrounded by a substantial earthen bank with a very wide shallow fosse between them. The bank is denuded almost to the bottom of the fosse on the WNW. It has a slight modern gap on the ESE. The bank supports some furze. No formal entrance way. Situated on the WSW side of the top of a prominent NE-SW ridge on gently undulating and hilly ground of good pasture. A modern NW-SE fence of earth and stone extends outside the bank on the NE. In this, to NE of the barrow are three stones of megalithic proportions, two set longitudinally in a line as if forming the side of a chamber grave and the third standing upright at the NW end as if a jamb. L of barrow NE-SW = 7m (overall); B of barrow NW-SE = 5.70m (overall); Height of barrow = c. 1.10m. [SMR file]

The 1977 account of the barrow and megaliths contains other useful observations:

The small artificial earthen mound is delimited by a fairly wide but shallow fosse-like feature. This is surrounded in turn by a high sharp earthen bank best preserved from E-S and again from W-NW. The bank, where highest on the E is above the top of the mound. The mound itself has a slightly elongated EW shape and so the fosse is widest on the S. The bank is covered in places with furze and has a number of small modern gaps. Located on top of a high steep knoll with excellent view on all sides. Note the different vegetation in the fosse which may have been scooped out.

Possible megalithic structure: About 3 metres directly E of the barrow is a stone field fence which crosses the top of a ridge from N to S. Incorporated into this field fence are three megalithic type orthostatic stones. The N stone is set as a jamb or pillarstone crosswise in the fence and the other two stones are set at \perp to this in the line of the fence as if they were originally in sidestone positions. Otherwise the stone fence is composed of small stones. There is a small rise with some stone around this feature on the E. No other large stones appear to be incorporated in the fence. [SMR file]

A short account of the monument published on the NMS website gives its overall diameter as 19.5m x 18.6m.

Although inaccessible to the survey-team, profile of dense vegetation growing across interior of site suggests a disproportionately small central mound, surrounded by a very broad ditch—consistent with the 1970 ASI account, in which the diameter measurements of 7m x 5.70m and the height of *c.* 1.10m relate to the central ‘oval’ mound, its subcircularity confirmed by the 1977 account, which refers to its ‘slightly elongated EW shape’. Associated with the 1977 account is a plan with single SW-NE profile (now published on the NMS website), reproduced here (Fig. 3), which shows how the barrow slopes down gradually to SW and is positioned off the summit of a NE-SW ridge, and which also clearly depicts the minuscule central mound and the three ‘megalithic type orthostatic stones’ in fence to NE of barrow. In 1921, when Shaw made note of this latter feature, the three stones were collectively known as the ‘leegaun’, although he mistakenly placed them ‘on the west, facing the barrow’.

Monument, which is marked as a roughly circular mound on OS 6" map, is sited on the summit of what is a low hill, but with excellent visibility clockwise from SW-N; the stepped-barrow at Ballinlug (McGuinness 2014, 33) is visible *c.* 500m to SSW, and *c.* 300m to SSE can be seen the summit of the ‘motte’ of Rathconrath (WM018-093), after which the village is named, which is a large flat-topped mound surrounded at its base by the remains of three ditches with external banks—in some places with what appears to be medieval stone facing (See Appendix 2). According to local knowledge, when Fianna Fail came to power in the 1950s, a quarry below and immediately SW of the barrow was the scene of a feast organized by Frank Gavigan, for which five bullocks were reputedly slaughtered. Given the megalithic remains beside this barrow, it is interesting that almost a century ago Shaw recorded two large megalithic slabs placed on edge parallel to one another elsewhere in the same townland (no exact location given), which were reputedly the burial place of a king; his photograph appears to show cairn material around the base of the slabs (Shaw 1921, 136-7, Pl. XXIII).

References: Shaw 1921, 137; McGuinness 2013, 33-4

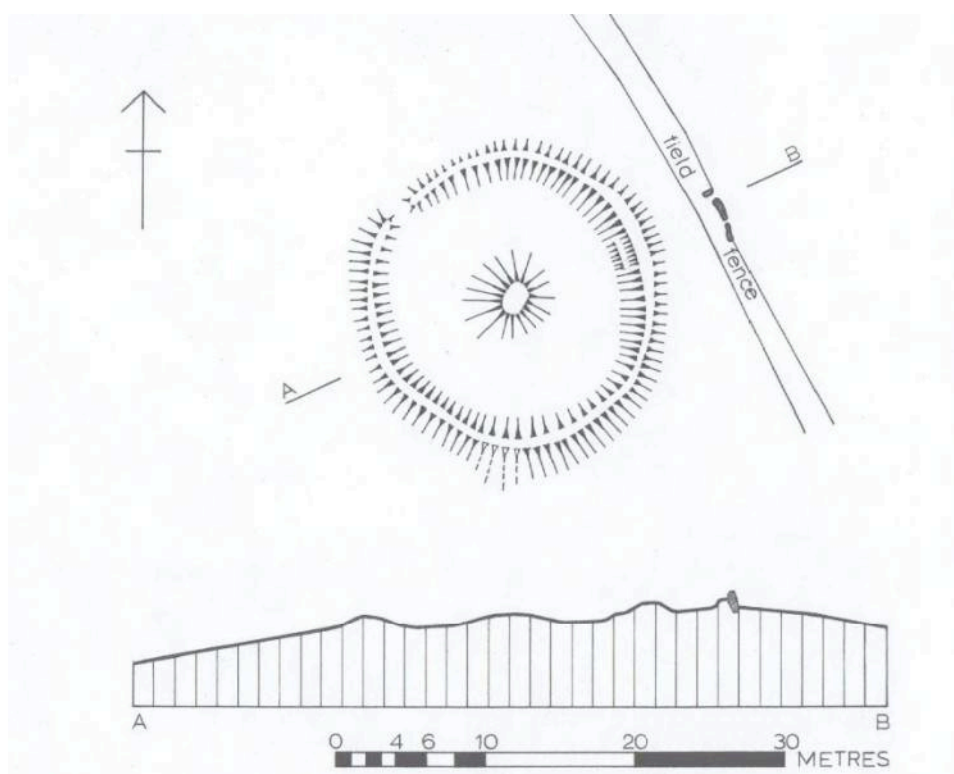


Fig. 3: Plan and SW-NE profile of the Ring-Barrow and associated megaliths at Ballyglass (No. 2), now densely overgrown, as prepared by ASI fieldworkers and published on the NMS website (WM018-090).



Fig. 4: Mound-Barrow at Ballyhast (No. 3) from the E (*Upper*); from the S (*Middle*); from the WSW (*Lower*), showing boulders exposed on poached WSW side of mound (2m scale).

3. BALLYHAST (*Moycashel By*), MOUND-BARROW (Fig. 4)

V

SMR: WM032-033 (RMP: 'Mound'); **NGR:** 23266/24270; **Altitude:** 110-120m OD

Substantial, gracefully shaped and mostly intact circular domed mound (Diam. 13.50m NS x 14.50m EW) with steep sides and fairly flattened upper surface (Diam. 4.5m NS x 4.8m EW); its height at the cardinal points is 1.97m (N), 1.67m (S), 1.85m (E) and 1.90m (W) respectively. Poaching by livestock has damaged parts of the site, particularly around edge and part of summit of W half of mound, and a scoop has been taken from side of mound at SSW; where poaching has taken place, mound can be seen to be composed of gravelly earth, although there is a cluster of medium-sized boulders protruding from the poached upper WSW side of mound, and some of these have slipped down to ground level. Just 2m to W of base of is a straight stretch of low bank with clear ends, oriented N-S, which is 18m in length, 3.10m in width and 0.38m in height over ground level to W; it appears to have a ditch on its E side, between it and the mound, and it rises 0.37m over the base of this much-silted ditch. This bank appears to be part of a relict field system—visible on aerial photographs—which happens to have remained only partly flattened on account of its proximity to the preserved mound. No more than this short stretch of bank was visible to ASI fieldworkers in 1978. The ASI account makes note of features not seen by the present survey-team:

A few fairly large stones can be seen in the base of the mound on the N and NW, [and] may be part of a kerb. A second line (?) of largish stones can be seen approx. halfway up the side of the mound, also on the W and on the E. Unfortunately the mound seems to have been used as a dump for a small number of field stones. [SMR file, as published on NMS website]

The line of stones halfway up the mound may be the line of boulders on WSW side of mound, visible above the ranging-rod in Fig. 4 (*Lower*).

Monument is very prominently positioned on a low rise in undulating pasture used by horses. Some 100m to SE is a small lake; according to neighbouring farmer Mr Kiernan, this is not a real lake as it is only seasonally flooded; it can hold water to a depth of 6m in the winter seasons on account of a quarry having been excavated in its base during the summer seasons. It appears to be a kettle-hole that has been altered by man in recent times. Visibility is excellent in all directions bar W and WSW, where a long ridge and a hill respectively form the horizon; the Slieve Blooms are visible to S. About 100m to ESE, and directly NE of the 'lake', is a subcircular earthwork named 'Rathnagalliagh' on OS 6" map and identified as a ringfort by the ASI (WM032-034); this has been much disturbed in the past and is overgrown at the perimeter, making it difficult to interpret at present. According to Mr Kiernan, a tunnel is locally believed to run from the fort to the mound, indicating that the two monuments were regarded as connected in Irish tradition.



Fig. 5: Profile across possible Mound-Barrow at Ballynacroghey or Gallowstown (No. 4), as prepared by ASI fieldworkers and published on the NMS website.

4. BALLYNACROGHY OR GALLOWSTOWN (*Moygoish By*), POSSIBLE MOUND-BARROW (Fig. 5)

SMR: WM011-046 (RMP: 'Mound'); **NGR:** 23245/26084; **Altitude:** 60-70m OD

Although monument was not examined by the survey-team, it was described by two different ASI fieldworkers in the early 1970s. The 1972 account:

Roughly egg-shaped at present, but it appears that a part of it was dug away some time ago on the ENE leaving a steep N-S scarp in which some large flag-stones are visible. It was prob circular or approx circular orig. The mound may perhaps be a glacial deposit but the lower half of its slope was almost certainly steepened artificially. Round-topped.

Sited about midway along the top of a natural NNE-SSW ridge which is higher at both ends than in the middle. The ridge is surrounded [by] lowlying land which was a swamp until recently. The mound supports some thorn trees. Perhaps a natural mound modified to form a tumulus. [SMR file]

The 1973 account is similarly uncertain as to its status as a barrow:

This is a roughly oval shaped mound. Some disturbance has been caused to the mound on the NE. The top of the mound is rounded. There is no trace of a fosse. The mound is set on the end of a low ridge or rise in low lying marshy pasture land. This may be a barrow. [SMR file]

Elsewhere in the file its diameter is given as 20m. Recently, it has been more confidently identified as a mound-barrow on the NMS website. From the ASI profile published on the NMS website (Fig. 5), mound appears to have a smooth dome-shape.

Monument lies just 30m to E of an earthwork identified by the ASI as a ringfort (WM011-045).



Fig. 6: Unclassified-Barrow at Ballynamuddagh (No. 5) from the S (*Upper*) and from the SW (*Lower*), showing straight edge and poached corner (1m scale).

5. BALLYNAMUDDAGH (Clonlonan B^y), UNCLASSIFIED-BARROW (Fig. 6)

V

SMR: WM036-034 (RMP: 'Mound'); **NGR:** 21801/23598; **Altitude:** 60-70m OD

Intriguing earthwork, comprising a trapezoidal, flattish-topped mound with steeply sloping sides, now densely overgrown except for SW corner; it may rise very slightly towards the wider W end, but this is far from being certain. Upper surface of mound is approximately level with minor undulations; the exposed SW corner of mound, though damaged by poaching, appears to have been an angle or rounded angle not far off 90°, where two straight lines meet. Although extremely difficult to examine due to vegetation, the plan of the monument appears to be an asymmetric trapezoid with a length of 7.20m for the exposed side oriented ENE-WSW (here taken as S side), from which two approximately parallel sides run off at right-angles, i.e. roughly in a NNW-SSE direction, the mostly inaccessible wider one of these forming the WSW side (here taken as W side) of the mound, the narrower one, about 6.10m in length, forming the ENE (or E) side; these two sides, being of markedly differing lengths, are joined on the near-impenetrably overgrown NNW (or N) side of mound by what appears to be another straight line, apparently oriented WNW-ESE and therefore running at an oblique angle to the exposed S side. Where measurements were available for upper surface of mound, lengths of E, W and S sides are 2.30m, 5m and 3.80m respectively. At base of S side of mound is a low step or berm 2.30m in width; it appears also to be on W side, where it measures about 2.20m in width, though it is much less clear on this side. Height of mound over berm ranges from 0.95m (S) to 1.24m (W), and its height over external ground level varies from 1.40m (W) to 1.50m (S). Where poached, mound can be seen to be composed almost entirely of earth with hardly any stones. If he had not seen two flat-topped, steep-sided, rectilinear hilltop barrows last season (McGuinness 2015, 19-20), the writer would almost certainly have immediately dismissed this earthwork as something entirely different—perhaps of medieval or post-medieval origin, but completely unrelated to prehistoric burial mounds; in view of these parallels, both of which have much more symmetrical shapes, it is included here as a possible barrow pending the availability of further *comparanda*, or a more detailed investigation of this particular site. Although simply listed as a 'Mound' in the RMP, this monument is more confidently identified as a 'Mound Barrow' on the NMS website.

Monument, which is marked as a simple mound on OS 6" map, is prominently positioned atop a low hill beside the junction of three minor roads and may well have been a factor in the alignment of these roads; a second junction lies a short distance to S. A mostly dried-up kettle-hole lies 69m to NNE.

6. CLONYDONNIN (Clonlonan B^y), POSSIBLE POND-BARROW

V

SMR: WM036-046 (NMS: 'Pond-Barrow'); **NGR:** 21345/23415; **Altitude:** 40-50m OD

Only recently identified as a possible pond-barrow on the NMS website, this earthwork comprises an annular, slightly subcircular bank with sunken, dished centre (Diam. (overall) *c.* 25m NS x *c.* 29m EW; Diam. (interior) 15m NS x 18m EW). Height of bank over interior at cardinal points varies from 0.13m (N) to 0.31m (W) to 0.39m (E) to 0.47m (S). Neither height of bank over external ground level nor width of bank could be accurately ascertained without excavation, and the overall diameter is only an estimate, on account of the seamless continuity between bank and ground level, although the ASI estimate of a width of 5m and a height of 20cm (NMS website) is probably not far from the truth. Hollowed interior is now partly filled with concrete blocks, wrappings from silage-bales and other detritus.

Although this earthwork occupies a low but distinct rise in pastureland, with fairly good visibility all round, the ground to N and NNE is higher while that to the S is appreciably lower. Monument lies only some 70m from where a bullaun stone (WM036-038) has been recorded, although this could not be located by the survey team; about 1km to E a second bullaun stone lies beside a pre-Norman cross-slab within a large, well-defined, early medieval monastic vallum at Clonaltra West (WM036-042).

7. COOLVUCK UPPER (Clonlonan B^y), RING-BARROW (Figs 7-8)

V

SMR: WM030-001 (RMP: 'Ring-Barrow'); **NGR:** 21145/24400; **Altitude:** 40-50m OD

Immense, well-preserved and hugely impressive ring-barrow, comprising a domed central mound or platform (Diam. 33m NS x 37m EW), surrounded by a broad, flat-bottomed ditch and a monumental, flat-topped external bank which in places rises high above the central mound (Overall

Diam. 68.5m NS x 69.5m EW). Following the lie of the land, the whole monument slopes down generally from NW-SE, but central mound appears also to slope down from WSW-ENE, giving a somewhat asymmetric appearance; at lower end of this slope, the much-thinned mound (part silted into ditch) joins onto what looks superficially like a causeway about 6m in width, but an overlapping gap in bank at this point, some 4m across, does not extend to base of bank and is very likely a secondary breach—as such, the ‘causeway’ may be nothing more than spoil from the bank pushed or thrown into the ditch (but see below re: natural escarpment), probably by a mechanical digger, in support of which a cluster of four boulders lie at outer base of bank just S of breach, as if moved aside when the breach was made. As is demonstrable from the profiles of the site made by the ASI (Fig. 7), the central mound is lower or deeper-set than the outer bank; but the overall slope of the site, and the idiosyncratic slope of the central mound, means that, while horizontal planes passing through upper surface of outer bank at N and W pass 1.89m and 2.30m respectively over the central mound, at SE a similar plane taken through edge of central mound actually passes 0.78m over outer bank. Measured at the cardinal points, width of ditch is 7.40m (N), 7.20m (S), 8.60m (E) and 7.10m (W), and at these points height of central mound above the ditch is 1.52m (N), 1.29m (S), 1.74m (E) and 0.86m (W). Bank is best preserved, and often high and imposing, clockwise from W-N-E, being thickest and most massive in the NW quadrant; at the cardinal points, its basal width is 13.70m (N), 7.80m (S), 9.70m (E) and 14.00m (W); the width of its flat upper surface, which is best preserved clockwise from S-NE, is 2.70m (N), 4.00m (S), 1.30m (E) and 1.80m (W); its height over the ditch is 3.41m (N), 1.73m (S), 1.42m (E) and 3.18m (W), and its height over external ground level is 2.18m (N), 2.54m (S), 1.54m (E), and 1.82m (W). A large portion of upper part of bank appears to have been removed on its most massive W side: this measures 6m in length along line of bank and 6m in thickness, and in depth reaches up to 2m below line of top of bank; this hollow opens out onto the inner slope of the bank/ditch 1.33m above base of ditch, far lower than on the outer, ground-level side where the breach is far less noticeable, and, as such, giving the damaged portion the superficial appearance of a large chair; this feature is depicted on the ASI ground-plan of the site (Fig. 7). Other features are worth noting in the bank: there is a narrow but clearly defined gap with sloping sides running through bank at NNW, its width decreasing from 4.60m at top to 1.60m at bottom; just N of outer face of this gap is a loose boulder; another similar gap, though less regular in appearance, is visible at SSE, its width decreasing from 3.00m at top to 0.80m at bottom; a third gap, similar to the last though smaller, is visible at SE, its width decreasing from 2.00m at top to 0.50m at bottom. Where bank is both narrowest and, at its lowest, actually lower than central mound on E side, and where its upper surface curves up and down along the circumference here and on S side, this upper surface is nonetheless flat like the better preserved and more massive stretches of bank elsewhere, suggesting that erosion has not been as great as might at first appear, and that the bank was always of greatly varying size along the circumference of the monument. Where bank is poached on either side of the breach close to the ‘causeway’, it can be seen to be composed mostly of earth with some small stones; the picture is similar where its outer face has been heavily eroded on ENE and SE sides, though here some boulders have been included. A small scoop has also been removed or eroded away from inner face of bank on S side. In addition to the loose boulder outside the narrow gap through the bank at NNW, a large boulder lies loose just beyond the bank at SW, another rests in the ditch at NNW, and other medium to large-sized boulders lie on or are embedded in top of bank at N and S; several of these are shown on the ASI plan. More significantly, a line of four large, kerb-like boulders—two of them depicted on the ASI plan—are embedded in outer base of bank just S of outer edge of large cavity visible in upper part of bank on W side, suggesting that this cavity—which, remember, opens on to the inner slope of the bank/ditch but is only a slight breach on the much smaller outer face of the bank—may be an original feature, and that the outside of the monument was in some way modified at this point; although, in the absence of further comparative material, excavation, etc., this must remain speculative. Various parallel grooves are visible running N-S across central mound; these are clearly visible as old cultivation ridges on aerial photographs of the site and do not form part of the original monument. Although accepted as a ring-barrow by the ASI, the large size of this earthwork prompted the archaeologist who wrote the ASI account of the monument dated 29/3/73 to describe it as a ‘barrow or henge’ [SMR file]; the absence of any clear evidence for an ancient causewayed entrance or entrances, however, strongly supports its interpretation as a ring-barrow.

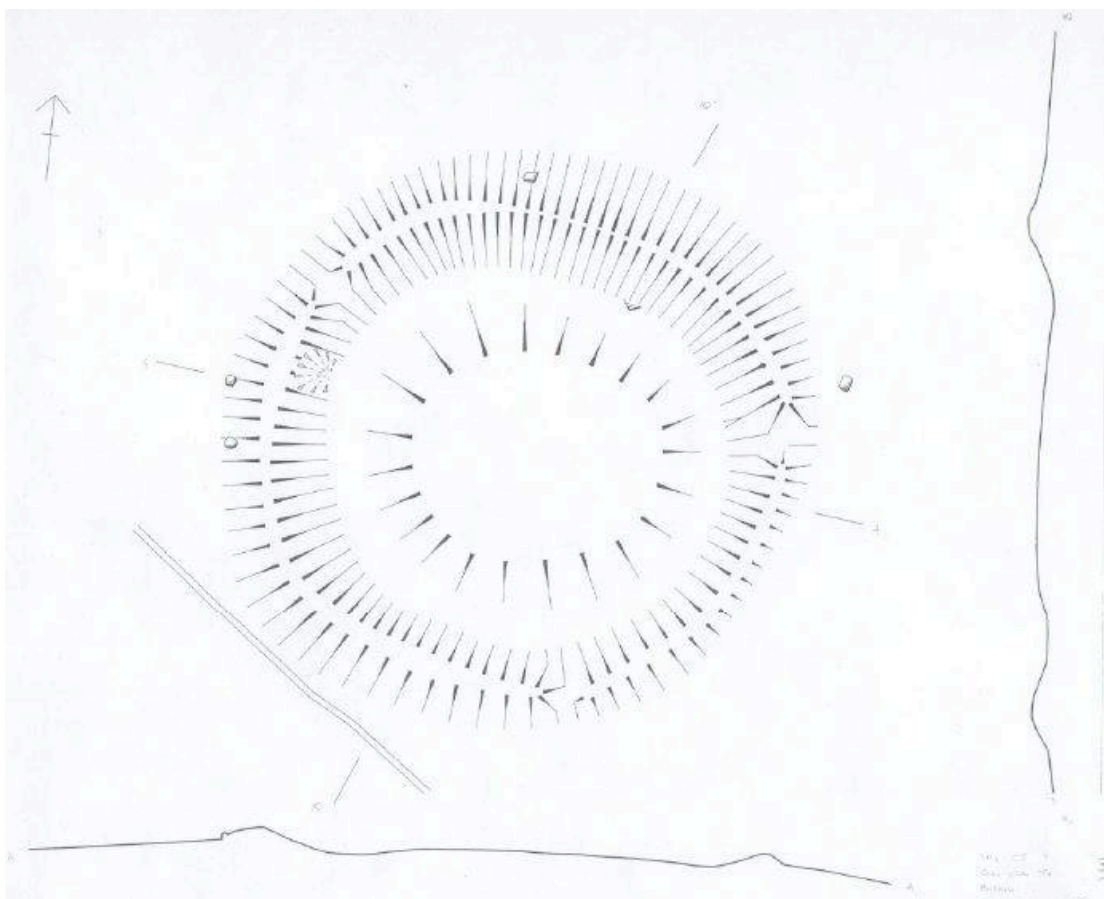


Fig. 7: Ground-plan and profiles (WNW-ESE (*Lower*) and WSW-ENE (*Right*)) of gigantic Ring-Barrow at Coolvuck Upper (No. 7), as prepared by ASI fieldworkers and published on the NMS website. For scale, the monument measures 68.5m NS x 69.5m EW in overall diameter. Note how the outer bank rises well above the central mound.

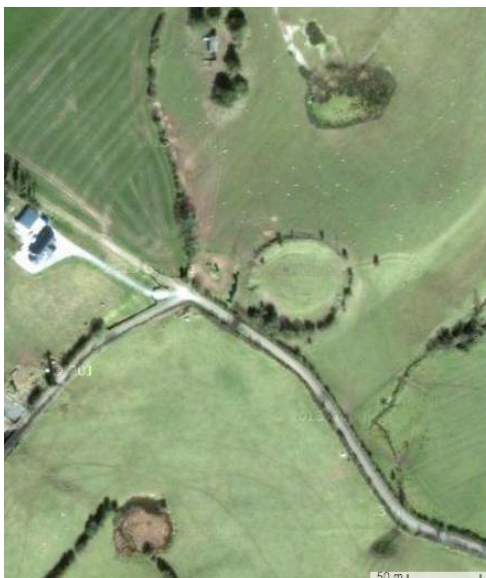


Fig. 8: Enormous Ring-Barrow at Coolvuck Upper (No. 7) as it appears on Google Earth (© Google). Note the kettle-holes to N and SSW.

Monument lies in relatively poor pastureland, particularly so to the E where it abuts and partly overlaps a natural escarpment which drops down almost immediately to a low-lying marshy area running SW-NE, now partly reclaimed; from aerial imagery on Microsoft Bing and Google Earth, it seems possible that the 'causeway' feature at ENE (see above) and the odd shape of the central mound might be explained by the mound having been shaped in part from this escarpment.

Monument is positioned between two kettle-lakes, one c. 70m to N and the other c. 130m to SSW, as measured on Google Earth (see Fig. 8). A monument identified as a motte in the RMP (WM029-006) lies over 350m to WNW of barrow.

8. CORGARVE (*Moycashel B^y*), **BOWL-BARROW WITH OUTER BANK** (Fig. 9)

V

SMR: WM031-084 (RMP: 'Barrow'); **NGR:** 22839/24048; **Altitude:** 80-90m OD

Well preserved bowl-barrow, now densely overgrown with gorse and other vegetation (much as it was when visited for ASI fieldwork in 1973 [SMR file]) but sufficiently visible to allow a simple description and some basic measurements. It comprises a roughly circular mound surrounded by a ditch and a substantial outer bank (Overall diam. 31m NE-SW). Central mound is 15.2m in diameter (NE-SW) at the base, and though its upper surface is slightly domed rather than flat, there is a clear break in slope near the top and upper part of mound measures about 10.2m in diameter (NE-SW); a young sycamore grows at centre of mound in a roughly circular depression, 3.60m across, which was also recorded in 1973 and appears to indicate either a collapsed burial chamber or, perhaps more likely, ransacking by treasure-hunters. Where mound is poached it can be seen to be composed of earth with some stones. About 1m SE of edge of central hollow, and possibly formed by spoil thrown up from it, is a tiny, low, irregularly shaped mound, 2.10m x 2.00m across and up to 0.25m in height; just SW of this mound is a kind of sloping, hollowed 'entrance', 1m in width, which appears to be the result of later disturbance, and the tiny mound might also be formed of spoil thrown up when this feature was created. Outer bank and ditch are completely overgrown from SW-W-NW and the bank especially from NE-E-SE. Where measurable on the NE-SW axis, through which a trackway has been beaten, width of ditch varies from 2.70m (SW) to 4.10m (NE); on same axis, width of bank varies from 4.40m (SW) to 4.50m (NE). Where bank is accessible and well preserved at SW, it rises 0.73m over the ditch and 1.04m over external ground level, and at the same location the central mound rises 1.43m over the ditch and 0.80m over the bank. At NE side, where these measurements are also available, outer bank rises 0.62m over the ditch and 0.55m over external ground level, and central mound rises 1.54m over the ditch and 0.93m over the bank. What appears to be a small cross-bank, 1.65m in width runs E-W across ditch at W, more obliquely than precisely radially, but this does not reach the full height of the central mound or even the outer bank, rising no more than 0.25m over the base of the ditch. Simply listed as a 'Barrow' in the RMP, the monument has more recently been identified as a 'Ring Barrow' on the NMS website, although the height of its central mound over the bank makes it more readily classifiable as a bowl-barrow.



Fig. 9: Bowl-Barrow at Corgarve (No. 8) as depicted on OS 6" map (© OSi)

Barrow is prominently located on a hilltop which, in the absence of vegetation, would have excellent visibility all round bar N and NW where there is higher ground close by; the Slieve Blooms are visible to S. About 700m to ESE, beside Donore Cross in Ballyhattan townland, the possible site of a cairn (WM031-094) has been documented by the ASI; this appears to be the location of the now-destroyed megalithic tomb described and illustrated by the antiquary Austin Cooper and the surveyor J. Brownrigg in the late 18th century – apparently a simple dolmenic passage tomb of the Carrowmore type from these accounts – which was located 'on the brow of an eminence' close to Donore Cross (Price (ed.) 1942, 122-3, Fig. p. 122; Harbison 2004, 248-9, Fig. 30.2) – see Fig. vii in main text.

9. CULLEEN MORE (*Moyashel & Magheradernon B^y*), **UNCLASSIFIED-BARROW** (Figs 10-12)

V

SMR: WM019-002 (RMP: 'Earthwork'); **NGR:** 24220/25736; **Altitude:** 110-120m OD

Unusual earthwork, spectacularly sited on and moulded from Captain's Hill, a striking steep-sided knoll on SE shore of Lough Owel, and comprising a central, irregular-oval or eye-shaped, flat-topped mound or platform with sharply defined edge, surrounded by a ditch and an outer bank

(Diam. (overall), 22.5m NS x 26.4m EW x 26.5m NE/SW) which, given the steep slope of the knoll, is much lower than the central mound positioned on its summit; this gives it the superficial appearance of a bowl-barrow with flat-topped mound and outer bank. Upper surface of central mound has dimensions of 9.90m NW-SE x 5.50m NE-SW, the excessive length of the NW-SE axis being due to a ramp-like extension of the mound on this side (see below); its height over the ditch ranges from 1.73m (W) to 1.87m (N) to 2.71m (E). Ditch varies in width from 3.50m (E) to 4.50m (N) to 5.10m (W), the much greater dimension at W being probably due to the mound having been severely eroded or partly dug away, as its sharp jagged edge on this side would seem to suggest; the ASI account (as summarised on the NMS website) describes this as a 'small post-medieval gravel/quarry pit cut into WSW face of mound'. The width of ditch given for E should be taken as only an approximation given that the outer bank has almost entirely eroded away on this side. At SE and NW sides of barrow the outer bank is missing for arcs of 11.30m and 10.40m respectively, if it ever existed in these places; this appears to be deliberate for part of SE arc, where there seems to be a 5.70m-long ramped causeway running from ground-level up and merging with flat upper surface of central mound at SE, such that diameter of central mound is only 12m NE/SW compared to 18m NW/SE. Where outer bank is best preserved at N it is 3.60m in width and rises 0.48m above the ditch and 0.93m above steeply sloping external ground level; the less well-preserved stretch of bank on W side is 2m in width and rises 0.09m above ditch and 0.65m above external ground level. On NW side of monument, at W end of surviving NE-stretch of bank, the latter curves in slightly towards mound, at which point a 3m-stretch of ditch appears either to have been partly filled in or only partly excavated to begin with, and the bank trails off. As can be the case with barrows erected on steep-sided hills, the outer bank snakes up and down with reference to a horizontal plane, an effect which is most marked on N side of monument when viewed from down-slope (Fig. 10). The sharp edges of the central mound and the ramp reaching its summit may indicate that this barrow has been reshaped at a period subsequent to its construction. Although simply an 'Earthwork' in the RMP, monument has since 2015 been classified as a ring-barrow on the NMS website.



Fig. 10: Unclassified-Barrow shaped from summit of Captain's Hill, Culleen More (No. 9), from N, showing outer bank snaking up and down with reference to horizontal plane (1m scale)

Monument is strikingly positioned atop Captain's Hill on SE shore of Lough Owel, with excellent visibility across the lake, including Frewin Hill on W shore which forms the focus for a large group of barrows. In a more low-lying lakeshore field a short distance to S of barrow is a series of at least three low, sharply defined rectangular earthen platforms and a larger square earthen feature, hollowed in the centre (Fig. 12); the significance of these features is unclear and they are not listed in the RMP for Westmeath.

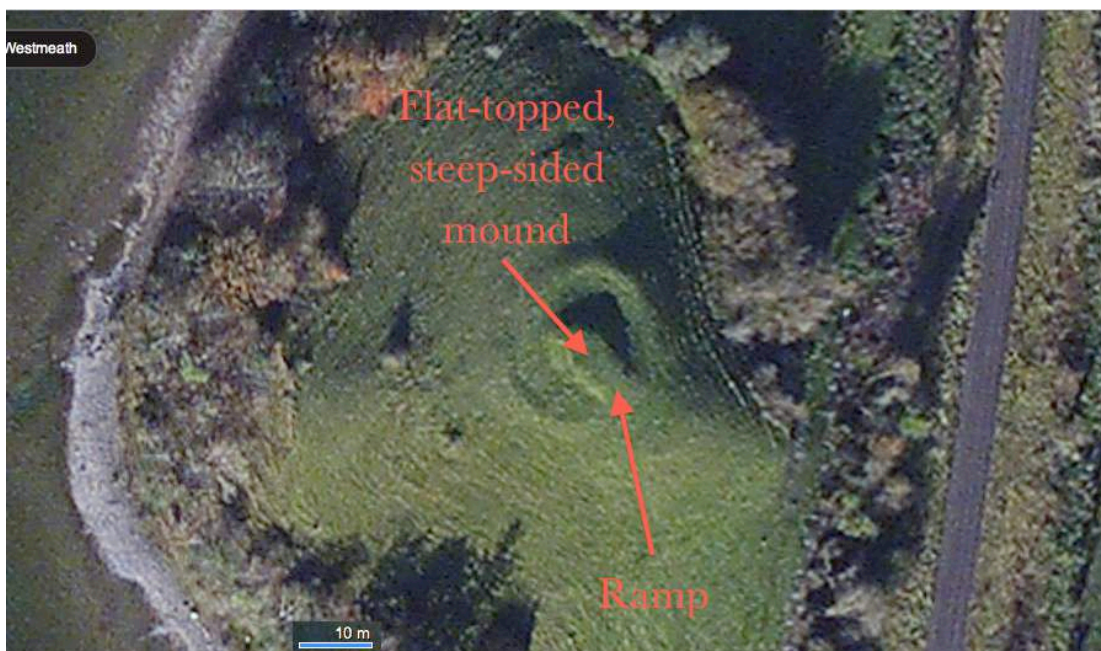


Fig. 11: Overhead view of Unclassified-Barrow at Culleen More (No. 9), moulded from summit of Captain's Hill, from Bing with annotations added (© Microsoft).



Fig. 12: Rectangular platforms above shore of Lough Owel to S of Unclassified-Barrow at Culleen More (No. 9) (© Microsoft Bing).

In local tradition, Captain's Hill is the site where the oppressive ninth-century Viking chieftain Turgesius was killed by King Maelseachlainn, being rolled down the steep slopes of the hill in a barrel into the waters of the lake. In the Annals of the Four Masters he was simply drowned in the lake by the king, although the exact location is not specified; other sources give Lough Ennell as the location of his death.

10. DALYSTOWN (*Fartullagh B^y*), UNCLASSIFIED-BARROW (DESTROYED) (Fig. 13)

V

SMR: —; **NGR:** 24011/24243; **Altitude:** 100-110m OD

Monument was discovered and two-thirds of it removed during a rescue excavation by Bernice Molloy in 2002, as part of construction of Dublin-Limerick gas pipeline; the remaining third extended beyond S edge of pipeline corridor. The U to V-shaped ditch as excavated was subcircular (Diam. c. 11.25m EW x 9.2m NS), averaged 1.55m in width and ranged in depth from 0.55-0.72m; the uppermost layer of the natural silt-infill of the ditch contained some cremated bone. Sunk below ground level within the ditched enclosure, and sealed under the very slight remains of a central

mound (H. 0.1-0.2m), were a series of pits containing fragments of cremated bone. Also within area enclosed by ditch, but predating the barrow, were a possible pyre and associated series of stake-holes, and two pits containing cremation burials. An associated cluster of similar but undated cremation pits, arranged in arcs and other patterns, was excavated just E and SE of the ring-barrow; these contained high concentrations of bone and, in one instance, sherds of possible Beaker pottery. A third phase was represented by a single oval cremation pit, which was inserted into the mound. A single radiocarbon date of 930-800 cal. BC was obtained from charcoal from the upper ditch-infill.

But for the very slight remains of a central mound this monument might have been labeled a ring-ditch and suggests that some examples of this latter type are nothing more than severely eroded barrows with low, eroded central mounds. But it is worth noting that the edge of the mound was separated from the ditch by a 'narrow berm', a feature normally found in the much larger bell-barrows most commonly found in Early Bronze Age Wessex (Ashbee 1960, 24, Fig. 2); as such the excavator's identification of this monument as a ring-barrow cannot be accepted.

According to Molloy's original summary report, monument 'lay on the slight south-facing slope of a low-lying gravel ridge, which sloped to the east and west. There was good drainage at this location, whereas the low-lying areas to the east and west were liable to flooding'. It was part of a complex of prehistoric sites spread along 500m of the pipeline corridor, including an isolated pit containing clay fill with some charcoal and a bone fragment, and two burnt mounds or *fulachta fiadh*—one with a radiocarbon date of 1300-1000 cal. BC—with several associated pits containing burnt stone inclusions.

References: Grogan *et al.* 2007, 337-9, Fig. II.124; B. Molloy, 'Westmeath 2002:1854 Dalystown (BGE 1B/68/1) Ring-barrow' (on www.excavation.ie)

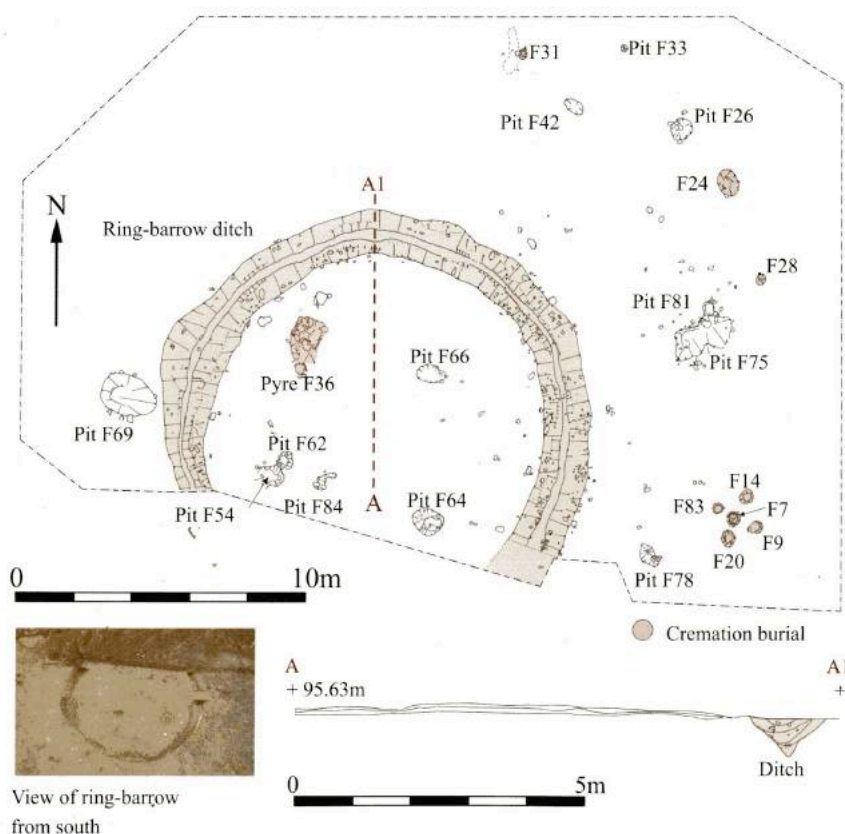


Fig. 13: Bernice Molloy's plan, profile and aerial view of the excavated Unclassified-Barrow at Dalystown (No. 10) and associated pits (after Grogan *et al.* 2007, Fig. II.124).

11. DRUMRANEY (*Kilkenny West B^y*), MOUND-BARROW (Figs 14-16) V

SMR: WM023-043 (RMP: 'Mound'); **NGR:** 21643/24830; **Altitude:** 120-130m OD

This monument appears to be a greatly disfigured mound-barrow, comprising a subcircular mound, shaped almost like a long oval or eye-shape, with the diameter along the long axis (EW) measuring

19.50m, and that along the short axis (NS) measuring only 15m; upper surface of mound (5.0m NS x 5.2m EW) is flattish but not level, with a gradual slope downwards from S-N. Monument has been reshaped at some time (see below), such there are now clear upper and lower steps on its N and S sides; on N side, top of mound rises 0.95m above lower step and 1.12m above ground level; and on S side, top of mound rises 1.15m above lower step and 2.05m above ground level. Partly surviving on S face of upper step or tier is a vertical face of dry-walling, 4.50m in length and up to 0.60m in height, which, with the stones embedded in the in the soil of the mound, has the appearance of some antiquity; where this dry-walling is positioned, a large chunk of S side of mound has been poached away. There a step or ledge on NW side of mound, 4.50m in length; but, though there is no clear evidence for walling here, the whole face of the step has stones and medium-sized boulders visible through the sod. In NE quadrant of mound there is a clear lower step visible but the mound slopes down fairly gradually to the lower step and the upper step is not nearly so distinct as elsewhere. The context of the mound's reshaping is not difficult to reconstruct: The base of a flattened field fence, which is clearly visible in aerial photographs, presents as a broad linear feature running E-W from a gate with two stone pillars and a sheep-gap lying c. 60m to W, as far as the barrow where it connects to its W side, giving the barrow its pointed shape; the S face of this otherwise flattened fence is marked by the line of walling exposed on S side of mound, and it appears to run on past mound as far as a field-fence running NNE-SSW less than 50m to E. At W point or narrow end of mound, just S of line of wall, a large boulder resting on the ground presumably once formed part of the field wall. While the stepped effect is prominent over most of mound, part of the SE quadrant appears on the surface retain the original streamlined appearance of a mound-barrow. Although listed simply as a 'Mound' in the RMP, in the 1971 ASI account it is suggested that it is a partly quarried-away bowl-barrow (presumably in the British sense of a ditchless bowl-barrow, in other words an Irish mound-barrow); more recently (2015) it is given as an unclassified-barrow on the NMS website on account of its stepped appearance, but we have seen above that on S side of monument at least this appears to be due to it having formerly been crossed and modified by a field fence rather than quarrying or deliberate stepping. Given its damaged state it taken here as a possible mound-barrow.

Barrow is prominently positioned on a hilltop in pastureland, with very good visibility to N and S, with the Leitrim hills visible to NNW, and the Slieve Blooms and Knockastia visible to SSE and SE respectively; the views to E and W are currently obscured by trees. It marks the Ordnance datum point for 401ft as depicted on 1837 OS 6" map. A square earthen enclosure of a similar size to a ringfort, classified simply as an 'Earthwork' by the ASI (WM023-044), is prominently positioned and clearly visible on a lower summit of the same hill c. 130m to S.

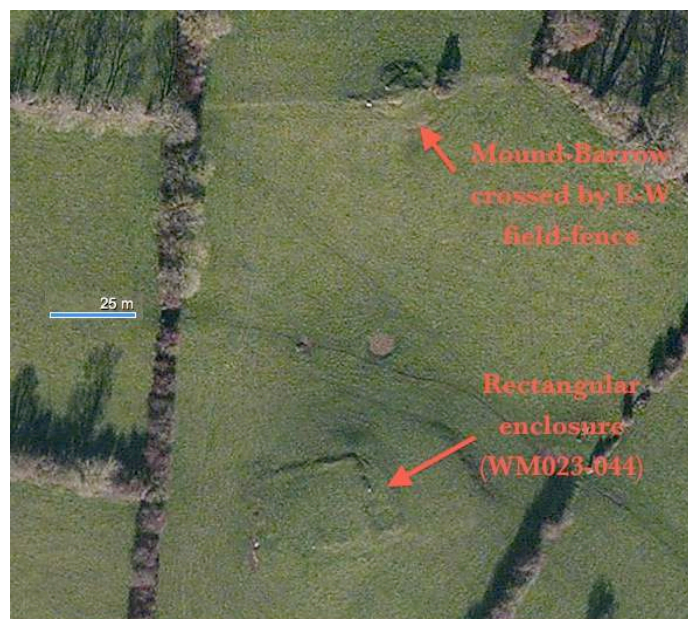


Fig. 14: Mound-Barrow at Drumraney (No. 11) and rectangular earthen enclosure (WM023-044) as shown on Bing (© Microsoft). Note faint trace of a removed field-fence running E-W across the barrow.

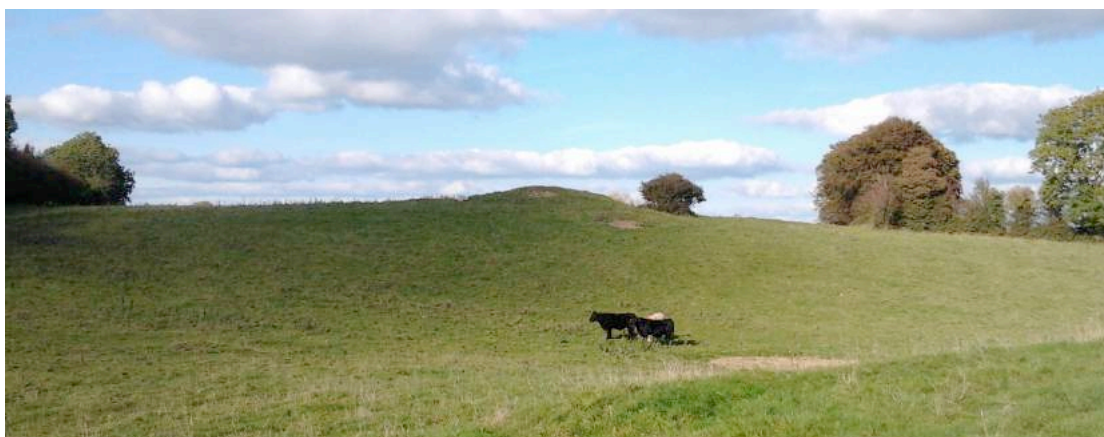


Fig. 15: Mound-Barrow at Drumraney (No. 11): (*Upper*) from the S; (*Middle*) from the SW; (*Lower*) Remains of coarse dry-walled revetment on S side of barrow, continuing the line of a now-removed field-fence which crossed the barrow from E to W and is apparently responsible its stepped appearance on this side at least.



Fig. 16: View of unusual rectangular earthen enclosure to S of Mound-Barrow at Drumraney (No. 11), identified simply as an 'Earthwork' by the ASI (WM023-044).

12. FORE (Fore B^y), POSSIBLE MOUND-BARROW (Figs 17-18)

V

SMR: —; **NGR:** 25110/27085; **Altitude:** 90-100m OD

Not previously recorded, this monument comprises a low round mound (Diam. 7.80m NS x 7.50m EW) having a slightly domed profile but with flattish upper surface (4m NS x 3.10m EW), and is currently irregular in shape with its SW edge being almost straight, although this edge appears to follow the line of a track or linear hollow running up to the mound from WNW and is presumably the result of alteration. Situated on ground sloping down to NNW, height of mound at cardinal points varies from 0.33m (S) to 0.60m (E) to 1.15m (W) to 1.32m (N). At junction of upper surface and steep side of mound on S side there is an overgrown boulder embedded in the mound.

Monument is located on sloping NNW side of Knocknamonaster Hill, which is enclosed by an imposing ditch and rampart at its base, and lies just N of the 12th-century Benedictine Priory and within the medieval walled town of Fore; a short distance S of priory are the varied remains of St. Feichin's important early medieval monastery of Fore, and just outside the walls to NE is a motte-and-bailey (WM004-029) which was formerly identified as a barrow by the ASI. A possible pond-barrow (No. 13) lies on the summit of the hill 54m to SE and there is a dead-ice hollow some 34m to S, its lower rim opening to NW. Some 2.5m to E of mound is a broad low bank, apparently cut through by cultivation ridges, which is either a trackway or a flattened field fence running downhill past the barrow towards the motte to NE.



Fig. 17: Possible Mound-Barrow on the summit of Knocknamonaster Hill (No. 12) beside the medieval monastic remains at Fore, from the E (1m scales).



Fig. 18: Possible Mound-Barrow on the summit of Knocknamonaster Hill (No. 12) beside the medieval monastic remains at Fore, from the W (1m scales).

13. FORE (Fore B^y), POSSIBLE POND-BARROW (Figs 19-20)

V

SMR: —; **NGR:** 25115/27080; **Altitude:** 90-100m OD

Not previously recorded, this monument is closely similar in form to the larger earthwork recently identified as a possible pond-barrow by the ASI at Clonydonninn (No. 6). It comprises an annular bank, very slightly subcircular, which surrounds a sunken, dished interior (Diam. (overall) *c.* 11.50m NS x *c.* 11.10m EW; Diam. (interior) 6.50m NS x 5.60m EW). Height of bank over interior at cardinal points varies from 0.12m (E) to 0.21m (N) to 0.34m (S) to 0.41m (W). Although, as with the closely similar monument at Clonydonninn (No. 6), outer edge of bank blends almost seamlessly with external ground level, it is clearest and best preserved at SSE where its width and height over external ground level can be estimated as 2.50m and 0.37m respectively; and while the same ambiguity prevents an accurate depth measurement of the interior with reference to external ground level, it certainly has the appearance of falling below ground level. Near the centre of the monument is a large, overgrown and apparently earthfast boulder (L. 1.05m; W. 0.70m; H. 0.35m)

Monument is prominently positioned on summit of the low but striking Knocknamonaster Hill, some 54m to SE of a possible mound-barrow (No. 12) and some 12.5m to ESE of a dead-ice hollow, the low rim of which faces NW.



Fig. 19: Possible Pond-Barrow on the summit of Knocknamonaster Hill (No. 13) beside the medieval monastic remains at Fore, from the N. The 1m scales are placed on the bank and in the hollowed interior.



Fig. 20: Possible Pond-Barrow on the summit of Knocknamonaster Hill (No. 13) beside the medieval monastic remains at Fore, from the W. The 1m scales are placed on the bank and in the hollowed interior.

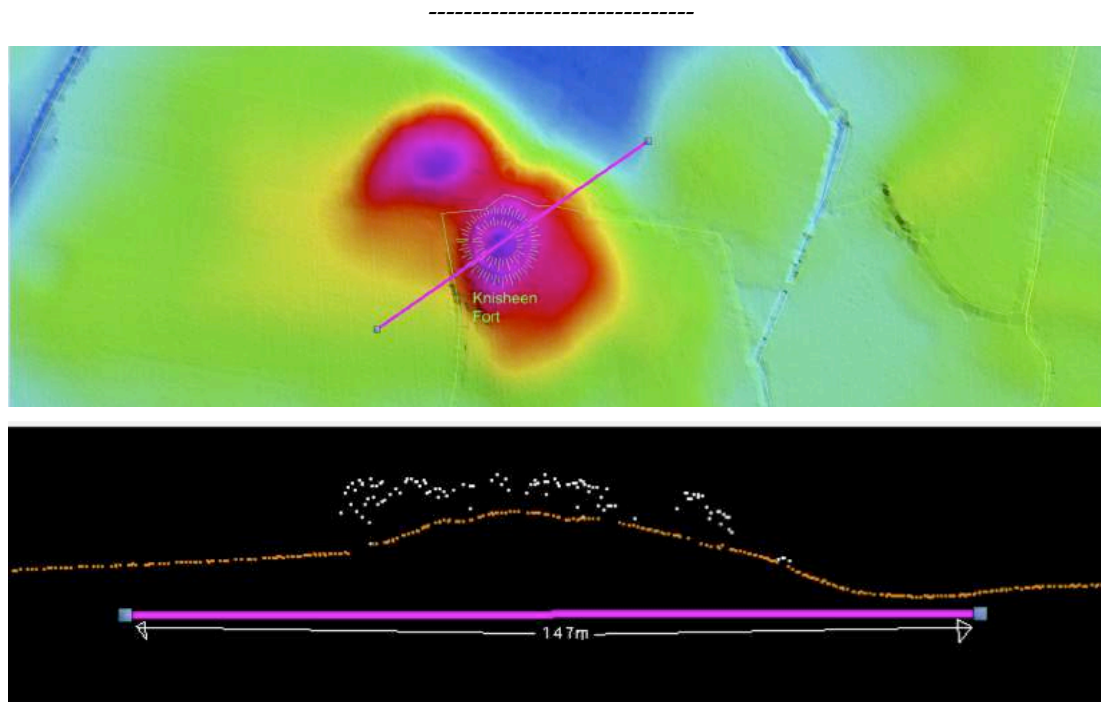


Fig. 21: LiDAR image of Garryduff Ring-Barrow (No. 14), 'Knisheen Fort', with vertical overhead view and SW-NE section across barrow (© OSi)

14. GARRYDUFF (*Moycashel By*), RING-BARROW (Fig. 21)

V

SMR: WM038-024 (RMP: 'Barrow'); **NGR:** 23680/23542; **Altitude:** 90-100m OD

Large, roughly circular ring-barrow, comprising a steep-sided, flat-topped central mound, surrounded by a ditch and outer bank (Overall diam. 31m NE-SW); monument is fairly overgrown with hazel scrub and other vegetation, restricting the availability of measurements. Where measureable, basal diameter of mound ranges from 14.50m (NS) to 15.5m (NE/SW); its flat upper surface (Diam. 11m NE/SW) appears to slope gently down to ESE, its height over ditch varies from 0.91m (SSW) to 1.15m (N), and its height over outer bank varies from 0.37m (SSW) to 0.54m (N). Outer bank is overall quite poorly preserved: it has been almost entirely removed for 19m from W-NW, giving a profile in this area similar to that of a stepped barrow; again for a 26m-stretch from NE clockwise to SSE, where a similar profile is evident; but the most drastic damage has occurred at SE,

where bank has been entirely removed and wheel-ruts of farm vehicles run through it, and here also ditch has been churned up and edge of central mound has apparently been shorn off. Where bank is sufficiently well preserved and accessible to measurement, its height above ditch ranges from 0.52m (SSW) to 0.54m (N), and its height above external ground-level ranges from 0.51m (SSW) to 0.56m (N). Where monument is fairly well preserved at NNW, the broad, flattish-based ditch is 4.80m in width and bank is 3.50m in width. Where monument has been poached, or the sod otherwise removed, at NNE side, outer bank can be seen to be composed of very stony soil. This appears to be a ring-barrow and, though the central mound or platform is noticeably higher than the outer bank, this is probably attributable to the shape of the hilltop on which the monument is located or from which it has been shaped – it does not have the appearance of a bowl-barrow.

Monument is marked 'Knisheen Fort' on OS 6" map, and is positioned on, or shaped from, the summit of the SE-most of two hillocks conjoined on a NW-SE axis. If not for trees, visibility would be excellent except to NW, where the second hillock obscures the view. Land around the monument is used for pasture.

15. GARRYNAFELA (*Brawny By*), MOUND-BARROW (Figs 22-23)

V

SMR: WM029-041 (RMP: 'Barrow'); **NGR:** 20569/24392; **Altitude:** 40-50m OD

Monument comprises a very large circular or slightly subcircular mound (Diam. 31.1m NS x 30.6m EW) with elegantly domed profile, flattened apex and fairly steep sides; its height ranges from 3.17m on S side to 3.73m on N side. Several thorn trees and other vegetation grow on N half of mound, preventing close inspection of this part. There is no visible trace of a surrounding ditch, such that, unless earth was scraped from a large area around or close to the mound, it was presumably constructed from a pre-existing kame or other glacial hillock; in support of this the mound lies between two kettle-holes (see below). The NNE perimeter of mound is poorly defined and much rough vegetation here suggests that it has been interfered with. A great deal of stone, including some large boulders, protrudes through surface of mound, and where poached or otherwise disturbed it can be seen to comprise a mixture of earth and stone. According to ASI account of 10/6/85 this 'high flat-topped mound' is 'too low for a small motte and might best be termed a barrow', and it is currently given as a mound-barrow on the NMS website.

Monument is located in low-lying, undulating terrain, now improved pastureland, close to two seasonally-flooded kettle-holes, one 19.7m to N and the other 21.6m to ESE; the sheer size of the mound compensates somewhat for its inconspicuous location. Visibility of the surrounding landscape is limited.



Fig. 22: Large Mound-Barrow at Garrynafela (No. 15), sited on undulating land but with its symmetric shape with reference to the vertical axis preserved in spite of this.



Fig. 23: Large Mound-Barrow at Garrynafela (No. 15) with nearby seasonally flooded kettle-holes, from Bing (© Microsoft).

16. GLENIDAN (*Fore B^y*), POSSIBLE MOUND-BARROW

V

SMR: WM008-012 (RMP: 'Mound'); **NGR:** 25518/26898; **Altitude:** 120-130m OD

Although the survey-team were unable to gain access to this monument, it was described for the ASI on 23/3/73, when it was seen to consist of a:

... substantial broad earthen ring encompassing a saucer-shaped depression. The ring is continuous at present and there is no visible trace of an entrance way. No visible trace of a fosse. It is difficult to decide without excavation whether this was a circular ring originally or whether it was a mound which has been mutilated by digging down at the centre and throwing out the dug material. The site is completely overgrown with furze and briars. Sited on a very slight natural rise and surrounded by gently undulating land of average to good pasture. Part of a modern field bank has been built against the mound on the WNW. I prefer to regard this earthwork as a mutilated mound. [SMR file]

Apparently based on the above, a second account considers that while 'this may have been a mound which has been mutilated by digging down at the centre and throwing out the upcast', 'it may also have been a not too ancient house-site altered by time so as to have the appearance of a mound. Note its proximity to the modern buildings.' [SMR file].

A third, undated description comes down on the side of barrows:

This is a small roughly circular mound of earth. At its highest point the mound is about 2m in height. There is a wide circular depression on top of the mound. A field bank adjoins the mound on the western side..... This is presumably a disturbed bowl barrow. [SMR file]

If its interpretation as a barrow is correct, it is clearly a mound-barrow, the current Irish term for what in Ashbee's British schema (1960, Fig. 1) is a ditchless bowl-barrow.

The SMR file also includes a profile by ASI fieldworkers, and a sketch-plan and profile by H.A. Wheeler, who examined the site in 1956.

17. GORTMORE (*Kilkenny West B^y*), POSSIBLE UNCLASSIFIED-BARROW (Figs 24-25)

V

SMR: WM016-033 (RMP: 'Barrow'); **NGR:** 21763/25123; **Altitude:** 50-60m OD

Tiny, well-preserved oval or subcircular mound, measuring 7.80m on its long axis (ENE/WSW) and 6.50m on its short axis (NNW-SSE); its negligible height varies from 0.36m (S) to 0.42m (N), although, if the current monument is indeed that listed as WM016-033 in the RMP, the ASI description of 22/3/79 unaccountably gives its central height as 0.70m. There appear to be no surface traces of a ditch. Although not a barrow of any recognised type, it does not clearly belong to any other category of field monument known to the writer, and there are two similar monuments (Nos. 18-19) in fairly close proximity, suggesting the kind of cemetery grouping that is widespread among Irish barrows. Noting a fourth mound NE of No. 18 which 'appears to consist of ... rock outcrop covered by sod' and 'appears to be a natural feature', the ASI account of 22/3/79 suggests that Nos 17 and 18 are possibly also natural features [SMR file], but this seemed unlikely to this

project's survey-team, not least given the apparent cemetery grouping of three monuments since the discovery in 2001 of a further example (No. 19).

Barrow is located fairly close to two similar barrows (Nos. 18-19) in undulating pasture with poor visibility. Monitoring of groundworks associated with the construction of a house and septic tank near these barrows uncovered no archaeological remains.

References: B. Guinan, 'Westmeath 2001:1268 Gortmore' and 'Westmeath 2002:1865 Gortmore Barrow' (both on www.excavation.ie)



Fig. 24: Minuscule oval-shaped Unclassified-Barrow (No. 17) at Gortmore (1m scale).

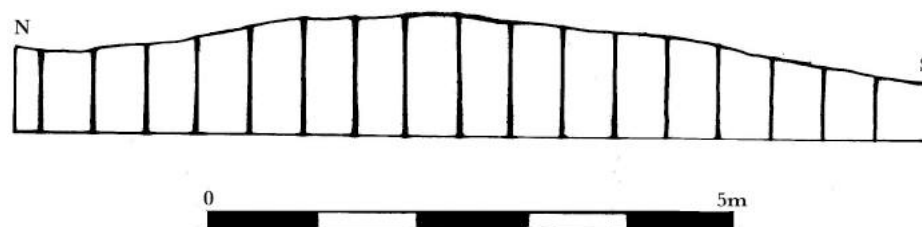


Fig. 25: Profile across short axis (NS) of minuscule oval-shaped Unclassified-Barrow (No. 17) at Gortmore.

18. GORTMORE (*Kilkenny West B^y*), **POSSIBLE UNCLASSIFIED-BARROW** (Figs 26-27)

V

SMR: WM016-032 (RMP: 'Barrow'); **NGR:** 21754/25120; **Altitude:** 50-60m OD

Tiny, low, oval-shaped mound (6.00m NE/SW x 4.2m NW/SE) rising to a height of only 0.30m on SSW side; faint traces of what could be a ditch are visible at SW but nowhere else. Centre of mound has been greatly disfigured by a large, recently excavated hollow (1.40m x 1.30m), possibly the result of poaching; this shows the monument to be earthen in composition. Although not a barrow of any recognised type, it does not clearly belong to any other category of field monument known to the writer, and there are two very similar monuments (Nos. 17, 19) in fairly close proximity, suggesting the kind of cemetery grouping that is widespread among Irish barrows. Noting a fourth mound NE of the present one, which 'appears to consist of ... rock outcrop covered by sod' and 'appears to be a natural feature', the ASI account of 22/3/79 suggests that Nos 17 and 18 are possibly also natural features [SMR file], but this seemed unlikely to this project's survey-team, not least given the apparent cemetery grouping of three monuments since the discovery in 2001 of a further example

(No. 19), but also given that the recent damage to the present site clearly indicates an earthen composition.

Barrow is located fairly close to two others (Nos. 17, 19) in undulating pasture with poor visibility; a tiny stream (or drain) flows past 25.50m to SE and the Dungolman River flows c. 200m to E. An earthfast boulder of the kind of coarse limestone found on the Hill of Ushnagh is noticeable 37.50m to NNE.

References: B. Guinan, 'Westmeath 2001:1268 Gortmore' and 'Westmeath 2002:1865 Gortmore Barrow' (both on www.excavation.ie)



Fig. 26: Tiny oval-shaped Unclassified-Barrow (No. 18) at Gortmore (1m scale).



Fig. 27: Recently excavated hollow in tiny oval-shaped Unclassified-Barrow (No. 18) at Gortmore (1m scale).

19. GORTMORE (*Kilkenny West B^y*), **POSSIBLE UNCLASSIFIED-BARROW****SMR:** –; **NGR:** na; **Altitude:** 50-60m OD

This barrow, not located by the survey-team during a single, brief search, was discovered ‘close to’ Nos. 17-18 during archaeological monitoring in the vicinity of these monuments. Bernard Guinan, who carried out this work, describes it as ‘a low oval mound, c. 0.25m high. Its long axis (north-east/south-west) is c. 7m long. The shorter axis is c. 5m across’. Although not a barrow of any recognised type, it does not clearly belong to any other category of field monument known to the writer, and there are two very similar monuments (Nos. 17-18) in fairly close proximity, suggesting the kind of cemetery grouping that is widespread among Irish barrows.

References: B. Guinan, ‘Westmeath 2001:1268 Gortmore’ and ‘Westmeath 2002:1865 Gortmore Barrow’ (both on www.excavation.ie)

20. KILLINURE NORTH (*Kilkenny West B^y*), **POSSIBLE BOWL-BARROW** (Fig. 28) **V****SMR:** WM022-020 (RMP: ‘Mound’); **NGR:** 20725/2477; **Altitude:** 70-80m OD

Monument comprises an apparently roughly circular mound, now heavily overgrown except for E side, such that only a single diameter measurement is available (Diam. 13.35m N-S); on E side its height reaches 2.05m. Although much concealed by vegetation, top of mound appears to be partly hollowed out and disturbed, and just SE of summit of mound is a pile of overgrown stones, now grassed over, which looks like spoil thrown up when it was dug into; it may originally have been flat-topped, as the simple profile prepared by ASI fieldworkers indicates (Fig. 28), but this is now far from certain due to the disturbance and overgrowth, and the 1970s ASI description (see below) mentions the hollowed summit but doesn’t depict it on the profile. The ASI profile also shows a ditch at the base of the mound, justifying its recent classification as a bowl-barrow on the NMS website, although there are some doubts about parts of this ditch in the ASI account of 10/7/78:

Poorly preserved circular-shaped flat-topped mound (top diam. 4.5m; overall diam. c. 17m; H 2-2.5m) of earth and stones with partial remains of a shallow fosse visible. A short stretch of the fosse on the SE side appears to be a modern feature. The mound is poorly preserved due to quarrying activity especially on the W side where the top of the mound has been quarried into. [SMR file, as published on NMS website]

Monument is fairly inconspicuously located in well-drained pasture and, but for trees, visibility would be good in all directions. According to SMR file, it is marked as ‘Moat of Ballynagle’ on 1837 OS Fair Plan.

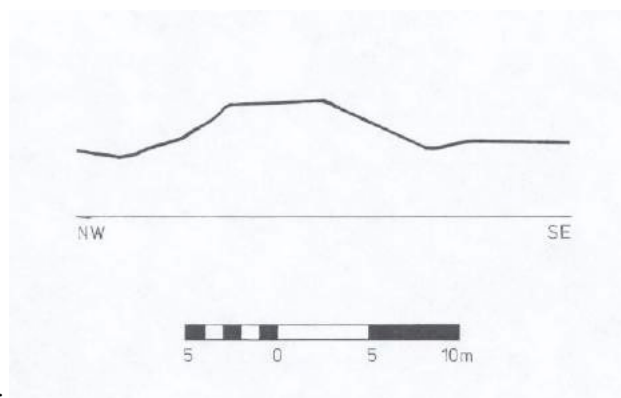


Fig. 28: Profile across Bowl-Barrow at Killinure North (No. 20), as prepared by ASI fieldworkers and published on the NMS website (WM022-020).

21 & 21A. KILLUA (*Delvin B^y*), **UNCLASSIFIED-BARROWS** (Figs 29-30) **V****SMR:** WM009-011 & -009 (RMP: ‘Mounds’); **NGR:** 26609/26793; **Altitude:** 90-100m OD

Surviving on the ground today is a subcircular, almost pear-shaped earthwork, very irregularly shaped and possibly modified, which comprises a roughly circular mound (Diam. 11.20m NS x 12.30m EW) surrounded by a ditch and doubtful external bank. Monument has been moulded from a glacial knoll, one of many in this heavily glaciated landscape, such that outer edge of ‘bank’ blends in places almost seamlessly into the natural ground and there is a strong sense in places that this ‘bank’ is little more than an effect produced by digging a ditch around a sloping knoll rather than a fully or even partly constructed feature. As such, measurements for overall diameter (13.90m NS x

16.60m EW) only include central mound and surrounding ditch. The monument does not fully occupy the summit of the knoll but rather spills down its slope at NE, such that the whole monument including the central mound slopes down sharply on this side. On the low side, from NNW clockwise to ENE, the 'bank' and apparently also the ditch are missing for a stretch of 9.60m and may never have been completed here. Ditch has an unusual appearance in this barrow in that its SW side bulges outwards almost as a narrow rectangle on its long axis, such that for a stretch of 7m the ditch has an extra 3m added to its outer edge, which reaches up to 0.29m below outer 'bank'; in addition, the mound is eccentrically positioned towards NE-half of the monument, so that the ditch is far wider overall on SW side. Height of mound over ditch at cardinal points ranges from 0.46 (S) to 0.67m (W) to 1.41m (E) to 1.43m (N). A large roughly circular hollow (4.80m NS x 4.70m EW) has been dug into NE side of central mound, probably by treasure-seekers in recent centuries. Except at N, where the bank and ditch are missing, width of ditch at the cardinal points varies from 1.50m (E) to 1.60m (S) to 2.40m (W), and height of 'bank' or external ground level over ditch at the cardinal points varies from 0.04m (E) to 0.14m (S) to 0.27m (W). There is a low, barely perceptible feature crossing the ditch just beyond W end of the narrow rectangular projection, but this is lower than both mound and bank and can hardly be interpreted as a causeway.

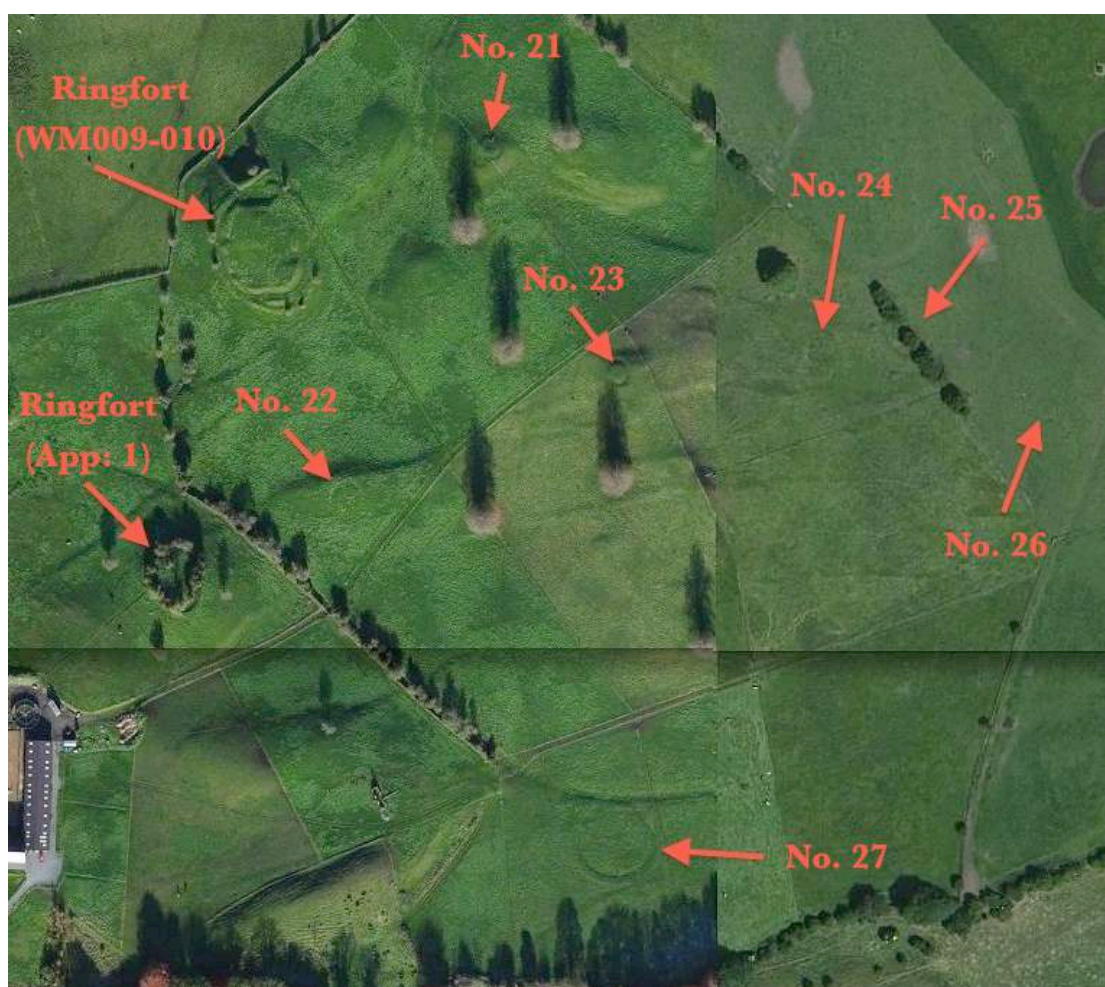


Fig. 29: Satellite image of fluvio-glacial landscape at Killua, formerly part of the heavily landscaped demesne of Killua Castle, with two unusual ringforts and nine barrows or related monuments (Nos 21-27; No. 21A, apparently close to No. 21, and No. 23A, just E of No. 23, are not marked here), from Bing (© Microsoft).

The ASI document two mounds close to this location, labeled 3 and 5 on map in SMR file—apparently equating to WM009-009 and WM009-011 on the RMP constraint sheet respectively (Fig. 30)—but only one is currently visible on the ground (the present survey-team examined both locations on multiple occasions, and the current landowner said she had only ever known of one), and from a comparison of the constraint sheet map (where WM009-009, apparently Mound 3, is positioned immediately to SE of WM009-011, apparently Mound 5) with satellite imagery, this, the

present site, would appear to be WM009-011; although from the ASI accounts and associated profiles it seems to be WM009-009. There is certainly some confusion in the SMR file, with '5?' added beside '3' and '3?' added beside '5' in the account of 29/7/76. Three separately dated accounts of these sites by two different fieldworkers are in the file, and these are given here in order that the reader can judge for themselves which monument the present site equates with. The account of 22/10/73:

Mound (3) Not marked on current 6-inch OS map. An approx. low circular platform with round upper edge surrounded by a narrow U-shaped fosse. No definite trace of a bank outside the fosse. Sited on the NW steep side of a natural rise so that the top of the platform slopes appreciably NW. Probably a burial mound. Overall diameter of mound is 9.25m. Overall W. of fosse is 2.50m. D of fosse = 50 cms. Height of mound = c. 45m [*recte* 45cm] average [Added 28/11/75:] Is this merely result of landscaping in vicinity of great house?

Mound (5) Approx. circular low earthen mound with a slight saucer-shaped depression in the top of it. There are vague suggestions of a fosse at its lower edge. The ground has been quarried at its foot on the SW. Sited on the NE slope of a natural rise, surrounded by gently undulating and hilly land of good pasture. Excellent views in all directions. Overall Diameter of mound 10m. Height = 1m average. [SMR file]

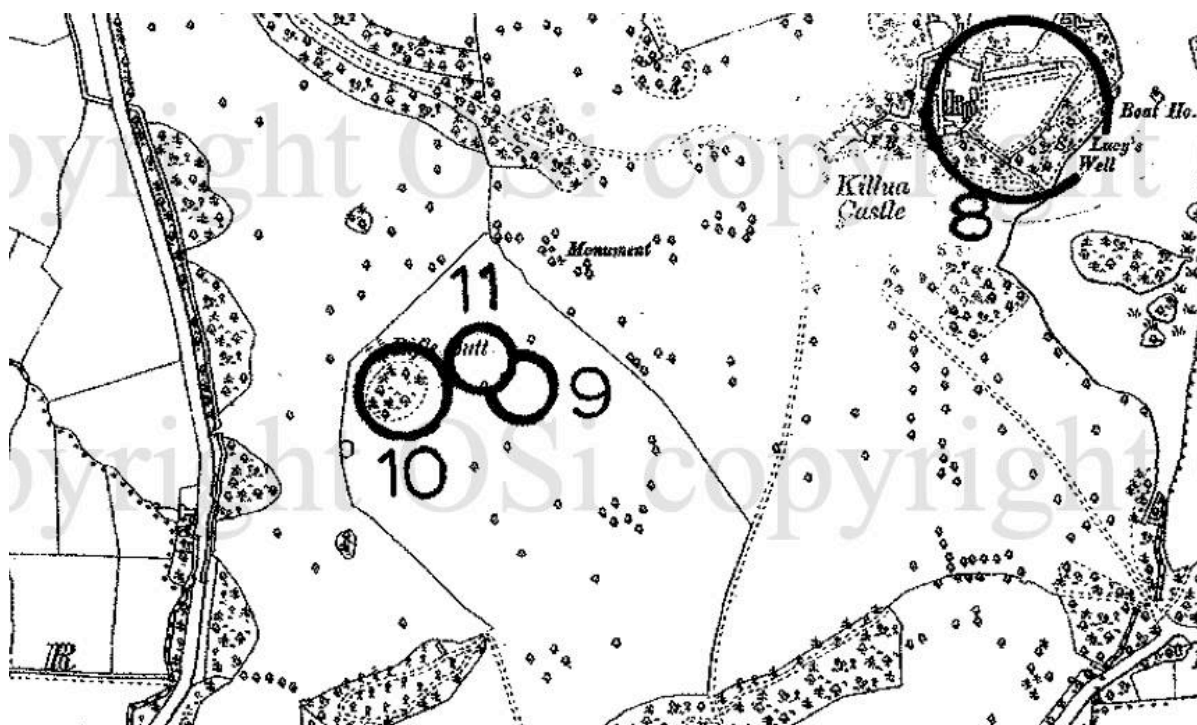


Fig. 30: Archaeological monuments documented at Killua by the ASI, as given on the constraint sheet accompanying the RMP (1997). Note the adjacent 'Mounds' (WM009-009 and WM009-011) between the Ringfort with later Rifle-Butt (WM009-010) and the 'Monument', an obelisk dedicated to Sir Walter Raleigh, relation of the Chapmans who built Killua Castle, the well-known Gothic Revival edifice visible at upper right (© OSi).

The same fieldworker revisited the site on 9/7/75, when he noted of Mound 3 that 'Diameter from lower edge of mound = 8.60m NNW-SSE and 10m NNE-SSW' [SMR file].

The account of 29/7/76 was by another fieldworker:

Artificial mounds (3 & 5) sited close to the ringfort & earthwork and rifle butt [*i.e.* WM009-010] are two low mounds. The first mound (3 [Added: '5?']) lying closest to the ringfort consists of a low roughly circular artificial mound surrounded by a very shallow fosse on the SW, SSE. It is sited on a low natural hillock. A single tree (lone bush) located on it. The second mound (5 [Added: '3?']) lies some distance to the SE and close to the NW-SE fence. It is a definite circular shaped very low earthen mound with a narrow shallow fosse like feature surrounding it. No trace of enclosing outer bank, There are a number of tree stumps in centre, therefore planted. Diam. 11m. [There is a SE-NW profile of what appears to be the monument visible today, which shows how it slopes down on one side where there is no ditch visible]

Artificial mound (5) This mound lies some distance to the SE of the first mound. It is a definite circular shaped low earthen mound with a narrow shallow fosse surrounding it. No trace of an enclosing outer bank. There are a number of tree stumps in centre. Could it not be part of the Killua Demesne landscaping? [On an unsigned page, its diameter is given as 11m] [SMR file]

There is also a SSE-NNW profile of Mound 5 in SMR file. These descriptions indicate that there were two separate barrow-like monuments (of which only one is visible today) apparently close to one another and to the ringfort with later Rifle Butt (WM009-010), even if there is some confusion on the part of the archaeologists who examined them on different occasions. As such they are presented here under the one heading as Nos 21/21A.

The ASI account of 22/10/73 notes of Mound 3 that it is 'Probably a burial mound', but an addition of 28/11/75 asks 'Is this merely result of landscaping in vicinity of great house?' [SMR file]. And the account of 29/7/76 asks whether Mound 5 with its tree stumps was part of the Killua Demesne landscaping. These queries are not to be lightly dismissed, as the area where all nine of the Killua barrows are located was once part of the very heavily-landscaped demesne of the Gothic Revival Killua Castle (built 1780), and one of them formed the basis for an ornamental labyrinth in these famed pleasure grounds, as marked on the 1838 OS 6" map (see No. 27 below; for this well-known demesne, see Ryan-Smolin 1996). Nonetheless, apart from the ringfort (WM009-010) and a single embanked ring-ditch (No. 25) which is cut through by a modern property boundary, both of which appear to be enclosed wooded areas on the 1838 map, there is no clear correlation between the trees depicted on this map and the monuments visible on the ground today.

The present monument (i.e. No. 21, that of the two under this heading which is currently visible) lies on a glacial knoll in dramatically undulating pasture, now given over to horses, a short distance to SSW of obelisk commemorating Sir Walter Raleigh (a relation of the Chapman family who built Killua Castle), and to ENE of an unusual multivallate ringfort (WM009-010) that has also been moulded from a glacial knoll; the ground around the barrow drops sharply from SE clockwise to NW, partly on account of a steep-sided glacial feature like a miniature canyon which separates the two knolls. The Loughcrew hills in Co. Meath, site of an important passage-tomb cemetery, are visible on the skyline to NW, with Cairn T clearly visible on Carnbane East. Also in Killua there are some seven other barrows or related monuments (Nos. 22-27, 23A) and a second 'ringfort' (see Appendix 1), unusual in appearance as with the first.

22. KILLUA (*Delvin By*), UNCLASSIFIED-BARROW (Figs 29, 31)

V

SMR: —; NGR: 26600/26775; Altitude: 90-100m OD

Monument comprises a rough but flattish, slightly oval-shaped space (18.5m NS x 15.3m EW), enclosed by a well-defined but shallow ditch (Diam. (overall) 20.7m NS x 18.3m EW) — clearly visible as a cropmark at ground-level — which is situated on markedly sloping ground, such that the interior drops some 1.72m over 18.5m from N-S. Width of ditch at cardinal points ranges from 1.20m (E) to 1.40m (W) to 1.60m (N), that at S being unavailable on account of monument having been partly clipped by farm machinery at its lower end, where the natural slope levels out. Monument would have the appearance of a ring-ditch but for a low, faintly defined bank immediately within line of ditch, which encloses a small subcircular space (10.8m NS x 9.4m EW). Height of this bank over ditch at cardinal points ranges from 0.13m (N) to 0.30m (E) to 0.46m (W) to 0.50m (S), although the measurement at S is only a vague approximation on account of damage to this lower end of the monument. There appear to be no traces of a bank beyond the ditch, some slight appearances to this effect being apparently due to the ditch being cut in sloping ground. At cardinal points, excluding the damaged S side, depth of ditch below external ground level varies from 0.05m (W) to 0.09m (N) to 0.19m (E). The slope on which the monument lies is in fact the steeply sloping side or end of an esker, the other side of which begins just N of the high N end of the monument, where there is a steep, sharply defined scarp running E-W. In spite of its internal bank and external ditch, which are normal in univallate earthen ringforts, both the small size of this earthwork and its position on a steep, unmodified natural slope, along with the absence of any clear entrance feature, tend to preclude its identification as a monument of this type. Nonetheless, the picture is complicated by the presence of two unconventional earthen ringforts very close by, both sited on (and moulded from) glacial landforms like the present monument and both including steeply sloping ground — although the very slight nature of the bank and ditch in the present monument is completely different from the much higher-relief ringforts. See No. 21/21A for possibility that this and the other Killua monuments are ornamental landscape features.

Monument lies on the steeply sloping end of an esker, in pastureland now used for horses. In addition to the two ringforts mentioned above, the fluvio-glacial landscape at Killua includes eight

other barrows or related monuments (Nos 21/21A, 23-27, 23A), several of which are also positioned on the sloping surface of eskers.

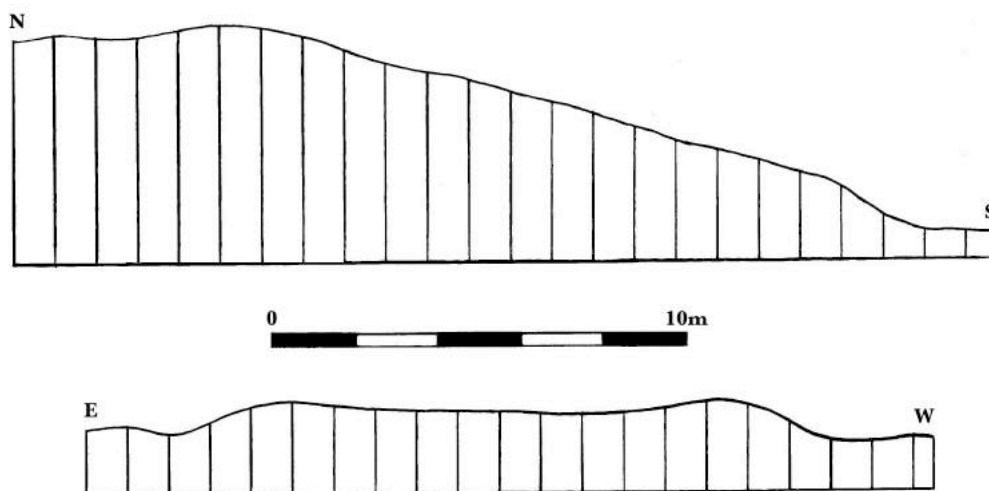


Fig. 31: Profiles (N-S and E-W) across Unclassified-Barrow (No. 22) at Killua (vertical X2).

23. KILLUA (*Delvin By*), UNCLASSIFIED-BARROW (Figs 29, 32-33)

V

SMR: —; **NGR:** 26615/26780; **Altitude:** 90-100m OD

Monument comprises a low, flattish-topped roughly circular mound (Diam. 10.6m NS x 10.2m EW), enclosed by a well-defined but shallow ditch (Diam. (overall) 13.6m NS x 12.6m EW)—clearly visible as a cropmark at ground-level—which is situated on steeply-sloping WNW end of an esker, such that the whole monument drops down by some 1.30m from ESE-WNW. No bank is visible outside the ditch. Due to slippage on its downhill side at WNW, the ditch here currently presents as a 1m-wide ledge or break in slope rather than a discrete hollow. Width of ditch at cardinal points ranges from 1.60m (N) to 1.70m (S) to 1.80m (E), that at W being too indistinct to measure; at the cardinal points, again with the exception of W, depth of ditch below the interior ranges from 0.08m (E) to 0.29m (S) to 0.53m (N), its depth below external ground level ranging from 0.12m (N) to 0.31m (S) to 0.33m (E). There is no sign that selective damage has been done to this or the other closely comparable monuments nearby, such that it appears to have been *designed* without any accompanying bank. See No. 21/21A for possibility that this and the other Killua monuments are ornamental landscape features.



Fig. 32: Unclassified-Barrow at Killua (No. 23) from the S (1m scale).

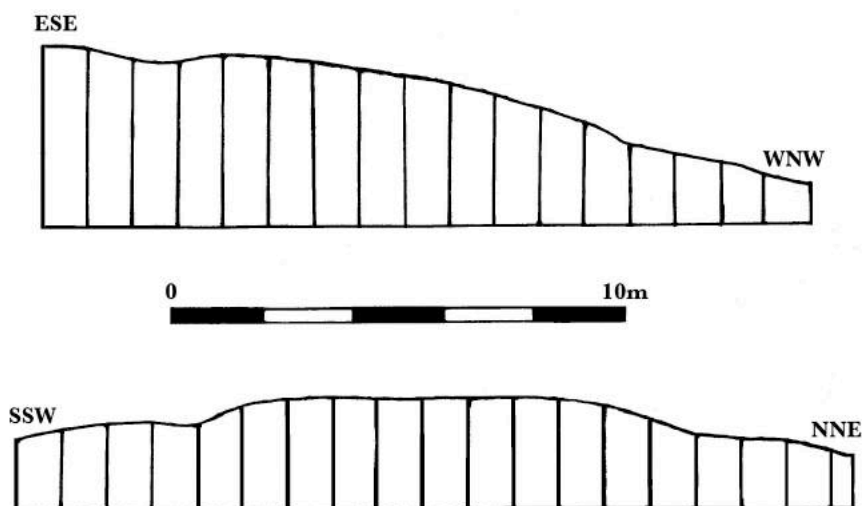


Fig. 33: Profiles (ESE-WNW and SSW-NNE) across Unclassified-Barrow (No. 23) at Killua.

Monument lies on the steeply sloping end of an esker, in pastureland now used for horses. In addition to two unusual ringforts, the fluvio-glacial landscape at Killua includes eight other barrows or related monuments (Nos 21-22, 21A, 23A, 24-27), several of which are also positioned on the sloping surface of eskers.

23A. KILLUA (*Delvin By*), POSSIBLE UNCLASSIFIED-BARROW (Fig. 34) V

SMR: –; **NGR:** 26625/26785; **Altitude:** 90-100m OD

Not certainly a barrow, this appears to be a low relief, very roughly circular mound (Diam. approx. 8.20m NS x 8.20m EW), rising up to 0.70m over ground level at S side; on the ground there appears to be no ditch, but monument was difficult to make out when visited in June on account of grass and other vegetation, and it certainly seems to have a ditch on satellite imagery (Fig. 34). The S side of mound has been partly shorn off by passing vehicles. See No. 21/21A for possibility that this and the other Killua monuments are ornamental landscape features.

Monument lies just 10.50m to E of, and on the same esker as, **No. 23**, but here it is on the flattish summit of the esker rather than its sloping end. Seven additional barrows or related monuments are found in Killua (Nos 21/21A, 22, 24-27).

Fig. 34: Possible Unclassified-Barrow (No. 23A), visible on satellite imagery just E of Unclassified-Barrow (No. 23), from Bing (© Microsoft).



24. KILLUA (*Delvin By*), UNCLASSIFIED-BARROW (Figs 29, 35) V

SMR: –; **NGR:** 26625/26785; **Altitude:** 90-100m OD

This well-preserved and elegantly formed earthwork comprises a low, domed circular mound (Diam. 10.8m NS x 11m EW) with central, shallow and quite smoothly profiled hollow, roughly-circular in plan (Diam. 4.2m NS x 4.2m EW); the mound is surrounded by a ditch beyond which is the natural ground, giving the overall appearance of a ring-barrow with no external bank (Diam. (overall) 15.4m NS x 15.8m EW), but it nonetheless seems quite clear from its otherwise well-

preserved appearance and the lack of any record of damage to the site of any kind (selective or otherwise) that there *never was* a bank. Monument lies on the gently sloping end of an esker, such that height of external edge of ditch on NW side is 0.70m above corresponding point on SE side some 16.9m away. At the cardinal points, height of mound over ditch ranges from 0.22m (W) to 0.27m (N) to 0.54m (S) to 0.63m (E); depth of ditch below external ground level ranges from 0.13m (E) to 0.19m (S) to 0.24m (N) to 0.42m (W); and width of ditch ranges from 2.20m (E) to 2.40m (S) to 2.70m (N, W). Ditch is most poorly defined at E, on the low, downhill side of the barrow. Central circular pit or hollow in mound reaches a depth of 0.21m below surface of mound immediately to W, on the upslope side; although this could be the result of treasure-hunting, a similar smoothly profiled, neat-looking hollow appears in the mound of a similar but slightly smaller monument close by (No. 26). See No. 21/21A for possibility that this and the other Killua monuments are ornamental landscape features.

Barrow lies on gently sloping upper surface of an esker in pastureland used for horses. In addition to two unusual ringforts, there are eight other barrows or related monuments spread across the fluvio-glacial landscape at Killua (Nos 21-23, 21A, 23A, 25-27), the nearest (No. 25) being 27m to ENE.

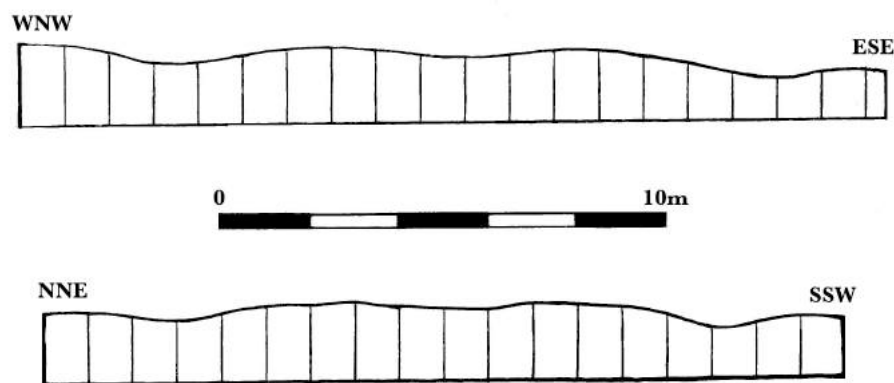


Fig. 35: Profiles (WNW-ESE and NNE-SSW) across Unclassified-Barrow (No. 24) at Killua.

25. KILLUA (*Delvin By*), EMBANKED RING-DITCH (Fig. 29)

V

SMR: –; **NGR:** 26630/26785; **Altitude:** 90-100m OD

Rather poorly preserved but nonetheless distinct earthwork, now spread over two land-holdings on account of a field fence cutting off its SW portion, the larger part of the monument being in the current grounds of Killua Castle. Monument comprises a slightly oval-shaped space (Diam. 21.7m NS x 25.1m EW) rather than a distinct mound, which is delimited by a ditch (Diam. 29.4m NS x 31.1m EW) and poorly preserved external bank which is best preserved at ESE and, overall, is least well preserved on N-half of site (Diam. (overall) 34.7m NS x 37.5m EW, the latter measurement being an estimate as the bank has all but disappeared on one side). Monument has been constructed on markedly sloping ground in a slight hollow created by fluvio-glacial landforms, such that interior of monument on WNW side is 1.02m above corresponding point on ESE side some 19m away; level ground would appear to have been available nearby, so that its awkward-seeming position is quite deliberate. At cardinal points, width of ditch ranges from 3.20m (N) to 3.40m (E) to 3.70m (W) to 4.10m (S), and depth of ditch below interior ranges from 0.08m (N) to 0.25m (E) to 0.28m (S), that at W being unavailable on account of the natural ground dropping down so sharply here that interior of monument appears to drop below level of ditch. Where clearest at SE, width of bank is 3.70m. At the cardinal points, height of bank over the ditch ranges from 0.22m (S) to 0.29m (E) to 0.62m (N) to 0.71m (W); where measureable at its best-preserved ESE side, height of bank above external ground level is 0.23m. See No. 21/21A for possibility that this and the other Killua monuments are ornamental landscape features.

Monument is located in the fluvio-glacial landscape at Killua, now used to pasture horses, where there are two unusual ringforts and another eight barrows or related monuments (Nos 21-24, 21A, 23A, 26-27), the nearest of these – two unclassified-barrows – lying 27m to WSW (No. 24) and 51m to SE (No. 26) respectively.

26. KILLUA (*Delvin By*), UNCLASSIFIED-BARROW (Figs 29, 36-37)**V****SMR:** —; **NGR:** 26635/26780; **Altitude:** 90-100m OD

This fairly well-preserved and elegantly formed earthwork comprises a low circular mound (Diam. 9.9m NS x 9.2m EW) with shallow, quite smoothly-profiled circular hollow (Diam. 3.2m NS x 3.4m EW) positioned approximately at its centre (actually closer to WSW edge of mound (2.1m) than ENE edge (3m)); the mound is surrounded by a circular ditch beyond which is the natural ground, giving the overall appearance of a ring-barrow with no external bank (Diam. (overall) 13.4m NS x 13.1m EW), but it seems clear that there *never was* a bank. Monument lies on the gently sloping side of a low glacial hillock, such that height of external edge of ditch on ESE side is 0.66m above corresponding point on WNW side some 15.8m away; the summit of the hillock, immediately to E, has been avoided, while its far side is delimited by a sunken trackway running N-S. At the cardinal points, height of mound over ditch ranges from 0.24m (E) to 0.37m (S) to 0.41m (N) to 0.46m (W); depth of ditch below external ground level ranges from 0.04m (S) to 0.07m (W) to 0.13m (N) to 0.29m (E); and width of ditch is uniformly 1.80m. On uphill side of barrow at SE is an unusual feature, though one for which a close parallel can be found in another of the Killua monuments (No. 21), i.e. a narrow, roughly rectangular projection to outer edge of ditch, such that for a stretch of 5.10m the ditch has an added width of 1.40m. Central circular pit or hollow in mound reaches a depth of 0.20m below surface of mound immediately to E; although this could be the result of treasure-hunting, a similar smoothly-profiled and neat-looking hollow appears in the mound of a similar but slightly larger monument close by (No. 24). See No. 21/21A for possibility that this and the other Killua monuments are ornamental landscape features.

Monument is located in grassland in the formerly landscaped grounds of Killua Castle, close to which is the ruined church of Killua and a burial ground, which Leo Swan identified as an early medieval church site on the grounds that the 'irregular polygonal form of graveyard with curving wall to SW and S' provided evidence of an original circular enclosure (Swan 1988, 12). Along with two unusual ringforts, there are eight other barrows or related monuments in the fluvio-glacial landscape at Killua (Nos 21-25, 21A, 23A, 27), the nearest (No. 25) being some 51m to NW. Only this monument and part of No. 25 are in the current grounds of Killua Castle, all the others being in a neighbouring land-holding to W. Several small, shallow lakes in the castle grounds to N of this site, and to NE of Nos 24-25, if not the result of landscaping, may be kettle-hole lakes.



Fig. 36: Unclassified-Barrow at Killua (No. 26) from the SW, with Killua Castle in the background.

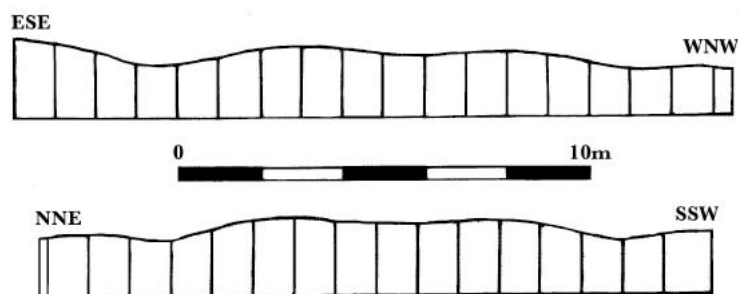


Fig. 37: Profiles (ESE-WNW and NNE-SSW) across Unclassified-Barrow (No. 26) at Killua.

27. KILLUA (*Delvin By*), EMBANKED RING-DITCH WITH CENTRAL RING-DITCH (Figs 29, 38)

V

SMR: —; NGR: 26605/26765; Altitude: 80-90m OD

Large, fairly low-relief earthwork, comprising a roughly circular space or low, fairly level platform (Diam. 35.3m NS x 34.7m EW) which is delimited by a ditch (Diam. 38.1m+ NS x 39.3m EW) and broad, low, external bank (Diam. (overall) 42.4m+ NS x 46.8m EW). Monument appears to have been clipped by a large ditch-like feature which runs E-W tangentially across its N edge, removing the bank and ditch, such that the N-S diameter measurements given here only includes the bank and ditch a single time; while the current landowner thought this feature to have been the result of historic drainage works, its appearance from the air on Microsoft Bing suggests a large natural escarpment, curving out gently on its S side, the present monument being placed just beyond its edge, like a small circle placed tangentially to the curve of a larger one (see Fig. 29). Nonetheless, that this curving linear feature was at least partly enhanced in recent times is clear from the ditch of the barrow, which, just before it joins onto the feature on N side, has been back-filled, plausibly with material from the excavation (or deepening) of the latter. With the exception of the arguably damaged N side of monument, at cardinal points width of ditch ranges from 2.50m (S) to 2.80m (E, W); depth of ditch below interior ranges from 0.23m (S) to 0.24m (W) to 0.44m (E); width of bank ranges from 3.40m (E) to 3.70m (W) to 5m (S); height of bank over the ditch ranges from 0.51m (E) to 0.54m (W) to 0.61m (S); and height of bank over external ground level ranges from 0.10m (W) to 0.11m (S) to 0.25m (E). Main ditch is flooded in places in this low-lying site. While its overall appearance is of a low ring-barrow or, more strictly speaking, an embanked ring-ditch, at the centre of the circular space is a faint, slightly oval-shaped ring-ditch delimiting either a very low mound or ground-level platform (Diam. (overall) 8.6m NS x 10.2m EW); the ring-ditch, approximately 1.30m in width where least poorly defined at SE, is not positioned perfectly centrally, its distance from the ditch of the overall monument at the cardinal points ranging from 11.7m (W) to 12m (S, E) to 13.4m (N).

Monument is located in pastureland used for horses at S edge of fluvio-glacial landscape at Killua, across which to N are positioned two unusual ring-forts and eight other barrows or related monuments (Nos 21-26, 21A, 23A). On 1st ed. OS 6" map (1838) this monument is marked 'Labyrinth' and depicted with multiple concentric circles, presumably planted bushes; this labyrinth was one of a range of garden features, including follies and obelisks, in the once-heavily-wooded demesne of the Gothic Revival Killua Castle, which was laid out by the Chapmans (relatives of Sir Walter Raleigh, to whom one of the obelisks is dedicated) from 1780 onwards, and was one of the most remarkable of Ireland's Romantic-period estates (Ryan-Smolín 1996). Although Ryan-Smolín states that no traces of the labyrinth remain, the surviving earthwork clearly formed the basis for this late Georgian garden ornament. In the absence of further archaeological investigations, it is unclear to what extent the monument was altered during this period.



Fig. 38: Labyrinth from demesne of the Gothic Revival Killua Castle, as depicted on 1838 OS 6" map, occupying the site of an Embanked Ring-Ditch (No. 27) (© OSi).

28. KILPATRICK (*Rathconrath B^y*), POSSIBLE RING-BARROW

V

SMR: WM018-097 (RMP: 'Barrow'; **NGR:** 23248/25381; **Altitude:** 140-150m OD

This monument, which the survey-team previously thought might have been destroyed based on a view from the roadside (McGuinness 2014, 53), was properly accessed this season and seen to be the very faint remains of what could be a barrow; although the current landowner indicated that it had not been interfered with since he acquired the land in the early 1970s, it has clearly been further damaged since the ASI examined its poorly preserved remains and noted a trig. station which is no longer visible:

Δ 496/Barrow.... This trig. point is situated on the remains of a barrow. The site consists of a low central, roughly circular mound, surrounded by a shallow fosse, and traces of a possible outer bank. The central mound is c. 18 m diameter N-S. The fosse is c. 3m wide. The outer bank, which is more of a raised outer lip of the fosse is clearest on NE-E. Roughly ¾ of the site survives. It is cut by a field fence which runs N-S. This fence cuts off the W section of the site. Slight traces of the enclosure can be made out in the next field to W. The site is situated on top of a hill, in good pasture land. It commands a very fine view especially to N. [SMR file]

From this description the monument can be tentatively identified as a ring-barrow – as on the ASI website – although the outer bank appears to be questionable. Now heavily denuded, it currently presents as a very roughly circular enclosure (Diam. (overall) c. 26m NS), its SW side removed where a modern house and garden are located. The central 'mound' is of indistinct outline but roughly subcircular, rises as high as 0.90m above external ground level at NE, and appears to be placed towards W side of site. What may be a broad ditch, approximately 5m in width, can be discerned around N half of mound where it appears as a band of grass darker than in the interior. As with the ASI, it appeared to the present survey-team that the 'bank', again vaguely discernible on N half of site, may be nothing more than natural ground beyond the ditch.

Monument is located in pastureland on a fairly low but very prominent eminence – it was chosen for a trigonometrical station – which is particularly striking when approached from the N; visibility is spectacular from W clockwise around to NE, with the barrow-rich Frewin Hill visible to NE, and Knockdrin, also capped by a mound-barrow, visible to ENE. The Slieve Bloom mountains are visible to S, while Croghan Hill in Offaly, again capped by a large tumulus, is visible to SSE. If not for a house being located immediately to SW of the current monument, and for vegetation around the 'motte' of Rathconrath (see Appendix 2), the latter would be clearly visible to WSW. A kettle-hole lake lies in the same field c. 250m to NE, and there appears to be a second, dry kettle-hole c. 200m to SSW on aerial photographs, suggesting that the hillock on which the monument is constructed is a large kame.

29. KNOCKDOMNY (Clonlonan By), BOWL-BARROW WITH OUTER BANK**V****SMR:** WM030-104 (RMP: 'Barrow'); **NGR:** 21636/23943; **Altitude:** 150-160m OD

This is a large, fairly well-preserved bowl-barrow comprising a classic, roughly circular dome-shaped mound surrounded by a ditch at its base (Overall diam. 18m). The ASI account of 6/4/73 documents a 'low bank' outside the ditch which 'has been destroyed on the eastern side' [SMR file]. As the monument is now almost completely overgrown with impenetrable gorse, with only the eastern side exposed, this bank was not visible to the present survey-team, such that the overall diameter given above only takes in the mound and ditch. A rough pathway has been beaten through the gorse across the ditch and mound from the E side, allowing its basic form and some dimensions to be recorded. On E side, mound rises 2.05m above base of ditch and 1.72m above external ground level (i.e. where the bank has been removed); height above ditch is identical on W side, although that above external bank is unavailable due to vegetation. The ditch is 2.00m in width at E and W ends of pathway across the monument, and up to 0.50m in depth below external ground level. According to the 1973 ASI account, 'Some disturbance has recently been caused to the top of the barrow. There is a flat limestone flag lying on the surface & some loose sods lie around it' [SMR file].

Barrow is located on the highest point of the broad, flat summit of Knockdomny Hill and is surmounted by a trigonometrical station; mobile phone masts lie to N, E and S. Although in what is ostensibly a very prominent location, the barrow itself is not visible from S until the summit is reached, its broad flat expanse extending far to S of barrow; on N side, by contrast, the hill begins to slope down almost immediately. Visibility is excellent, extending as far as the Sieve Blooms and the Slieve Aughties. A modern field fence curves around NW side of barrow, and what appears to be a ploughed-out field fence or the remains of an old raised trackway runs NNW-SSE from S side of barrow; this appears to be FitzPatrick's (2004, 219) 'old pathway (c. 3m wide) winding its way up the hillside from the east side', which 'leads up to the barrow on the summit and may have been the original route taken by those attending assemblies' (for which, see below). Lower down on Knockdomny some 0.65km to E (NGR 216962/239566), a Bronze Age round-house dating from between the 16th and 14th centuries BC was located during monitoring for a gas pipeline and excavated in 2002 (Hull 2006). FitzPatrick regards the present monument as the likeliest of three contenders for 'Tulach Mic Amhalghaidh', medieval inauguration and assembly site of the Magawleys (Mic Amhalghaidh) of the small lordship of Calraighe, coterminous with the civil parish of Ballyloughloe in N half of barony of Clonlonan. In support of this another bowl-barrow (at Rahugh—see McGuinness 2014, 58-9) has been identified by her as Cnoc Buadha, inauguration site of the Mac Eochagáin not far E of Calraighe. But more significantly, Knockdomny with its broad flat summit is recorded as a gathering site for the chief of the Mic Amhalghaidh in 1579 and 1599, and as a halting site for Aodh Ó Néill during the Nine Years War (1594-1603), indicating 'that Knockdomny was a parley venue for Calraighe at least in the sixteenth century'. Although the barrow is not specifically mentioned in these sources, 'certainly it would have made a most appropriate *tulach* for the election of a chief of that sept' (FitzPatrick 2004, 171).

References: FitzPatrick 2004, 171, 219, 232, 233, Fig. 3b**30. LISNABIN (Farbill By), BELL-DISC-BARROW (Figs 39-40)****V****SMR:** WM020-109 (RMP: 'Barrow'); **NGR:** 25496/25237; **Altitude:** 100-110m OD

Although the survey-team was refused access to the site, this unusual earthwork was described twice by the ASI in the early 1970s. The account of 16/4/70:

A small circular earthen mound, surrounded by a fosse with a wide, fairly smooth intervening berm-like space. The fosse is wide shallow and flat-bottomed. It is almost filled up from S-W. A lone thorn tree grows in the summit of the mound. There is modern shallow quarryhole in the top of the W side of the mound. It appears to have been round-topped. Situated on a fairly level site on gently undulating land of good pasture. The ground rises from the site to E and S, and W. Views restricted by surrounding land. There is modern earthen deposit in the fosse on the E. Natural pool nearby to N. Top width of fosse at N = 3.60m; Bottom width of fosse at N = 1.90m; Depth of fosse at N = 40cm. [SMR file]

Some further information is available in the account of 2/8/72:

The impression of a slight bank at the outer upper edge of the fosse appears to be due to denudation of the surface of the ground by water. The water level of the nearby pond was much higher at one time than it is now. The top of the mound is much disturbed by digging.... Later earth deposits in the fosse give the impression of causeways. Diameters from inner upper edge of fosse = 27m. A relatively lowlying site surrounded by hilly and gently undulating pasture and meadow land. [SMR file]

Fig. 39: Satellite view of Bell-Disc-Barrow at Lisnabin (No. 30), showing kettle-hole lake to N. Note the band of dark vegetation between them, indicating that the lake formerly extended almost as far S as the barrow (© Microsoft Bing).

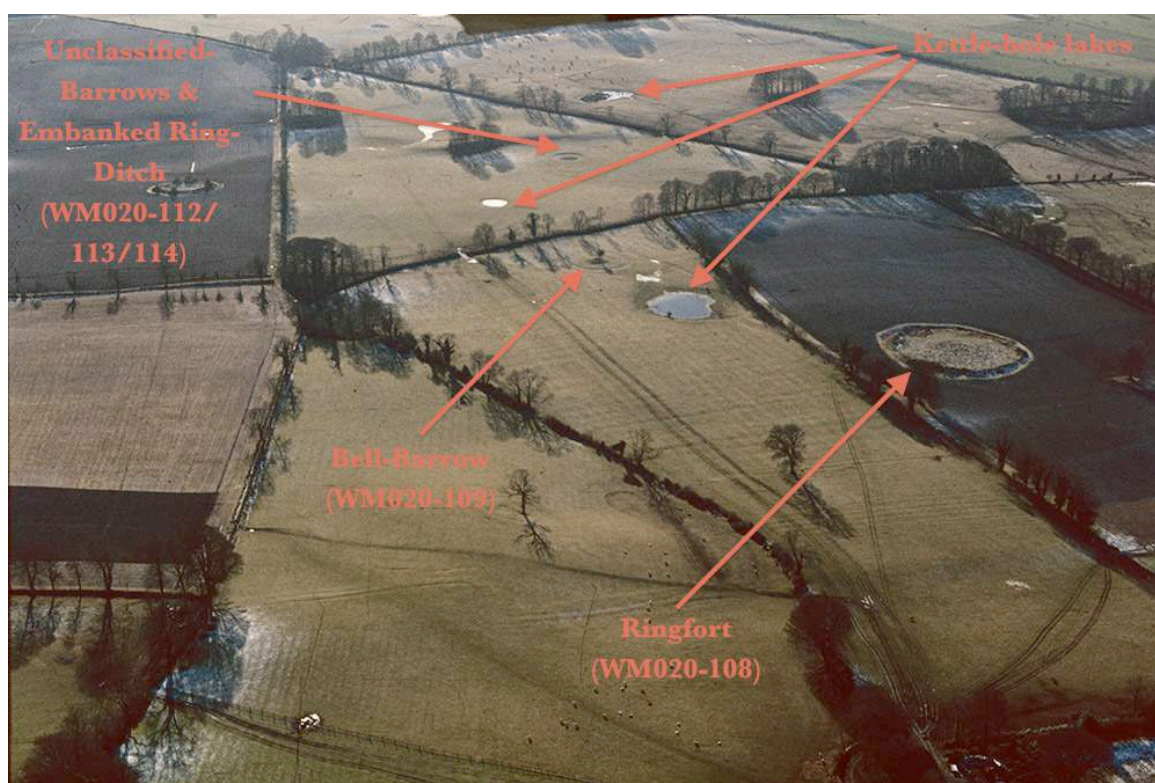


Fig. 40: Annotated reproduction of Leo Swan's aerial view of barrow cemetery in fluvio-glacial landscape at Rathnarrow/Lisnabin from the NE, showing the barrows' positioning with reference to nearby kettle-hole lakes. The Lisnabin Bell-Disc-Barrow (No. 30, WM020-109) lies between a large (once much larger) and a small kettle-hole lake near centre of photo, with an enormous ringfort visible to right of the larger kettle-hole (© Leo Swan Aerial Photography Collection).

From these ASI accounts and from aerial images (Figs 39-40), this unusual barrow with central mound, wide berm and ditch (but no external bank) comes closest in appearance to the Wessex bell-disc-barrow (Ashbee 1960, 24, Fig. 2) and is here identified as such.

The 'natural pool' or 'pond' mentioned in the ASI accounts as being close to the barrow—immediately to the N—is clearly visible from aerial photographs as a large kettle-hole lake; a smaller one is visible a similar distance to the S. A short distance to N of the larger lake is an unusually large ringfort (WM020-108). A short distance to SW of the smaller kettle-hole lake is a cluster of three further barrows or related monuments (Nos 47-49), beyond which is a further kettle-hole lake.

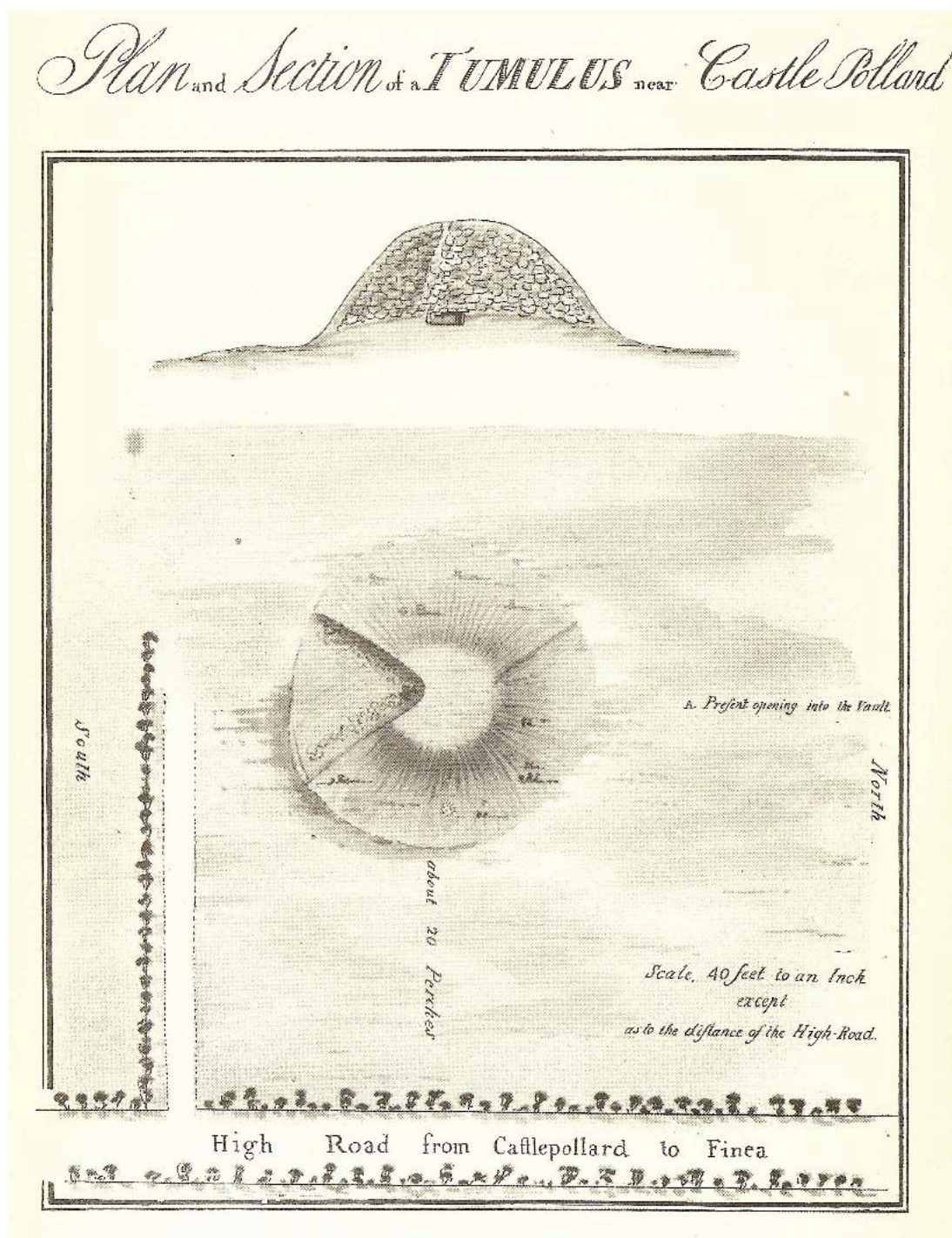


Fig. 41: Sketch of tumulus at Mullanakill (No. 31) dated 1793, sent by W. Chapman to the antiquary Austin Cooper (after Price (ed.) 1942).

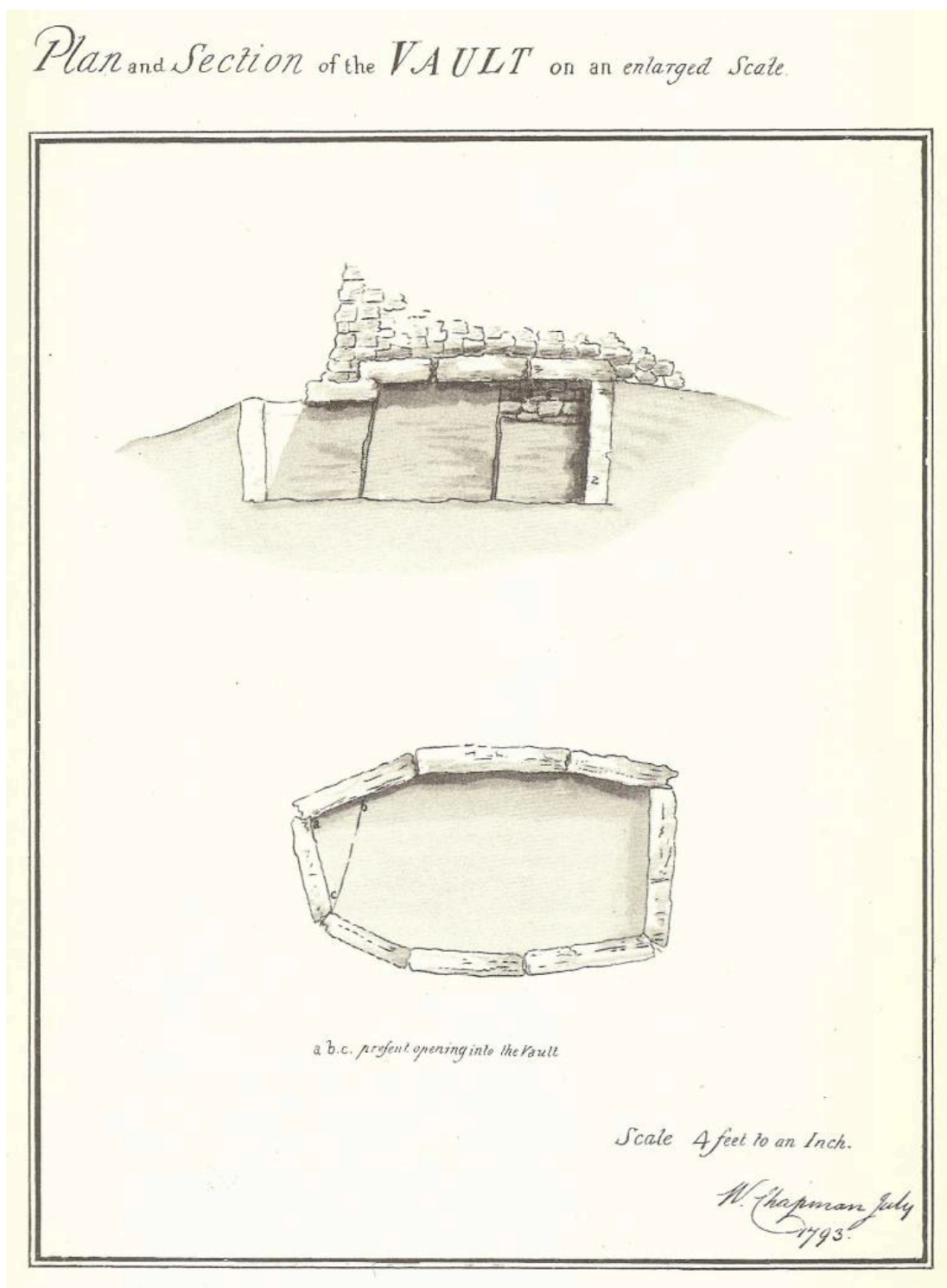


Fig. 42: Sketch of burial chamber in tumulus at Mullanakill (No. 31) dated 1793, sent by W. Chapman to the antiquary Austin Cooper (after Price (ed.) 1942).

31. MULLANAKILL (*Fore B^y*), UNCLASSIFIED-BARROW (Figs 41-42)

V

SMR: WM003-095 (RMP: 'Mound'); NGR: 24608/27086; Altitude: 100-110m OD

Substantial, roughly circular flat-topped mound with steep sides and sharp angle between top and sides, and no evidence for a bank around the top (Diam. summit 15m NW-SE), giving it the appearance of a very low-set motte or a platform ringfort. It rises 2.40m above ground-level on NW side. Although a ditch runs around part of S-half of mound and is very deep in places, this is not

found around the remainder of the mound and appears to be associated with a more recent field-fence on this side, which runs from NE to SW. Monument is now partly overgrown, making comprehensive measurement difficult, but there are accounts by three different ASI fieldworkers in the SMR file, along with a W-E profile of the mound. The earliest account, dated 15/5/74, is headed 'Mound – Ringfort?':

This is a circular mound of earth & stone which is approx. 3m high. The top of the mound is fairly even, sloping gently from West to East. The top of the mound rises slightly towards the edge on the North & South side. The top of the mound is approx. 19m in diam. There is wide shallow fosse outside the mound on North & East. This fosse could be part of a more recent field system. The mound is built on a rise in fairly well drained pasture land. There are good views of the surrounding countryside from the top of the mound. [SMR file]

The description of the ditch as being on the N and E side of the mound is mistaken, as is clear from the current appearance of the site and from the second account, dated 18/5/78 and headed 'Ringfort':

The roughly circular area is delimited by a scarp, with no apparent remains of a bank on its perimeter. The scarp is enclosed by a fosse in the S SE but here a modern field fence runs across from NE to SW. There is no trace of an entrance feature. The interior is very uneven sloping from W to E. There has been defacement of the scarp on the E side. Located on N edge of a S to N ridge, in fairly good pasture land. [SMR file]

The third account, dated 30/1/85, is most comprehensive, and by this stage there was evidence to suggest that it was a burial mound:

A roughly circular mound of earth outlined by a scarp. The scarp is higher on the W & N than on the E & S. A modern field bank-cum-hedge runs NE-SW just outside the perimeter on the SSE-S-SSW & a second field bank/hedge runs NNW-SSE just outside the site on the W-NW. A large depression in the side of the mound on the S-SE seems to be due to disturbance in the past. The top of the mound is fairly flat & no features are visible. At first sight this could be taken to be a Ringfort but is not and appears to be a mound – burial mound? D. top c. 18.0m D. overall c. 30.0m. This appears to be the mound-'tumulus' referred to by Wm. Chapman in letter of 1793 to Austin Cooper, in which a stone built chamber had been found with some bones inside. [SMR file]

This new evidence was William Chapman's letter to the antiquarian artist Austin Cooper, dated Dublin, July 1793, and published in Price's 1942 edition of Cooper's diaries and antiquarian correspondence. Chapman's account and accompanying illustrations (Figs 41-42) are worth reproducing in full:

The accompanying plans & Sections, taken from my Observations on an Ancient Rath, or Tumulus, lying within a quarter of a Mile of Cas: Pollard, and a few perches West of the high-road leading to Finea, will shew the state it was in when I saw it in the month of April last year [*i.e.* 1792]. The [Space here] or Cavern perfectly accords with some of those describ'd by Mr. Molyneux in the Natural Histy. of Ireland. Its immediate covering was of stones from the size of a Man's fist to about 5 times as large. This was superinduced by a coat of gravel & Earth of various thickness, but generally about 3 feet. The base of the Rath was about 90 yards in circumference, & its perpendicular Altitude about 30 feet. The only thing differing in it from what has been frequently describ'd is that the upper crust of the stones to the depth of about 2 ft. seems to have been cover'd or incrust'd with a coat of Lime, but altho' I am inclin'd to think this has been the case, I will not take upon me to determine, as the stones are all limestone, that this appearance may not have arisen from Decomposition of the stone thro' the Percolation of water during many Centuries; but I am inclin'd to the first Opinion from the defin'd termination of this appearance of Lime, because had it arisen from the cause suggested, it probably would have extended further into the mass & been progressive in its quantity. About a month before my accidentally seeing the place, the vault had been enter'd by taking off one of the flags, as appears in the sections, which left an opening barely sufficient for a middle siz'd man to enter. On examination I found only a few scatter'd bones, amongst which was a thigh bone, which was only 15 Ins. long, from the best Information I could obtain, 4 or 5 Human Skeletons were found, but their skulls & most of their bones were soon carried away by the people. On passing the same road a few months since, I again visited the Rath & accidentally met with a person who was the Cause of its being opened, & gave the following account of the Circumstances. He said that he had frequently dreamt that if he were to dig in the Rath, he would find some hidden treasure, & that in Consequence of these dreams, he dug of the So. side of it, untill he came through the covering of Earth & found himself interrupted by the mass of Stones, which occasion'd him to give up his search as fruitless, but that the discovery of the Stones with so light a covering, induc'd his Neighbours who were building Cottages at the north end of Castle Pollard to have recourse to the Rath as the cheapest and most convenient place for obtaining Rubble Stone. That in the course of their working they laid bare the end of the cell or inclos'd receptacle & took of a covering Stone. That he happened to be there at the time, and was the only person who would venture into the vault. That he remain'd there a considerable time before any person came into him, & that he found nothing, but simply the Human Skeletons.

This Story carries a certain degree of plausibility with it, & may deserve credit on every part but one, his finding nothing but the Skeletons. The only things I suspect he found, are golden ornaments which he might easily have conceal'd whils't so long alone in the vault. Had there been any warlike implements he could not have done so with them, and I am inclin'd to think there were none from two causes. On the first visit, whilst the Affair was so recent, I offer'd a handsome reward for any thing that might have been found, but the result of my enquiry was, that there was nothing discov'd but the Skeletons. The other circumstance is that there appears a deep Indenture in the North [*recte* South, *cf.* Chapman's plan, Fig. 39 *here*] face of the mount, nearly corresponding with the Stone in the Vault that is deficient in height & has its

vacancy completed with Rubble Stone. Therefore it appears that at some subsequent period to the founding of this Tumulus, that it has been opened in that part, & the filling subsided. This circumstance combin'd with the smallness of one of the thigh bones, renders it probable that it has not been the Tomb of Warriors who have fallen in Battle, but a burial place of some Chieftain & his family such as describ'd by Mr. Molyneux, P. 197 in *Boats Natural Histry. of Ireland*. The long narrow gallery he there describes may also probably be in this: which case the hollow I have mention'd may either have arisen from the falling in of the gallery or the removal of the Stones & Earth to repair it—these Conjectures may easily be refuted or verified by taking down the Stone I have mention'd, which from its deficiency of height & loose covering of rubble Stones, has probably been designed for an occasional opening into this repository of the Dead. I beg leave to remark that I may not be quite correct as to the precise Number of Stones forming the ends & roof of the Vault, but that the general principles & dimensions were pretty closely copied for a transient & accidental visit, & that the second time I saw the Rath the entrance of the Cavity was so far choked up that I could not easily obtain admission.... (Price (ed.) 1942, 125-7).

A copy of Chapman's illustrations, with some measurements added from his letter, was made by the antiquarian artist William Frazer in one of his sketchbooks now in the National Library of Ireland.

A letter by the archaeologist Con Manning, dated 20/12/82 and addressed to the subsequent author of the third ASI account, is also included in the SMR file and in this Manning discusses the mound mentioned in Chapman's letter:

I am particularly interested in the site near Castlepollard ... which is a likely candidate for a Linkardstown Type Burial and the makeup of the mound is very similar to the site I excavated at Ashleypark. I was curious did anything remain of the site or is it that marked in Mullanakill td. just north of Castlepollard?... Perhaps it is more likely that it was in the SE corner of the td where there is a lane marked running along the townland boundary.... [SMR file]

Manning's reason for suggesting an alternative location for Chapman's mound near the SE corner of the townland is clearly based on Chapman's plan of the mound (Fig. 39), which shows a side-road running directly W from the Castlepollard-Finea road a short distance S of the mound; this appears to be the short lane running WSW from the main road less than 200m S of the mound, and along the townland boundary from its SE corner. This indeed raises questions, for while Chapman's plan indicates that his Scale of 40 feet to 1 inch does not apply to the distance of the mound from the Castlepollard-Finea road, which is marked on the plan as 'about 20 Perches' (i.e. *c.* 100.6m), the side road is shown as less than half that distance on his plan. Nonetheless, his distance of *c.* 20 perches from the main road would fairly accurately describe the position of the present monument, and there appears no record of another mound farther S and closer to the lane. As such, in the absence of additional evidence, it seems likely that the third ASI account is correct in suggesting that the present mound is the site in question. If this is not the case, the present catalogue entry includes two separate monuments, one certainly and the other possibly a burial mound.

The circumference of 90 yards given by Chapman would give a diameter of *c.* 26m, which is not too far off the 30m given for the Mullanakill mound in the ASI account of 30/1/85, the difference perhaps being accountable for in terms of the differing degrees of accuracy sought by each party, combined with the difficulty of deciding where the precise edge of the mound is on its southern half, where field fences have created a ditch around its edge; and from Chapman's account and plan, this side was marked by 'a deep Indenture' when he saw it, through which access to the chamber was gained. By contrast, Chapman's height of 30ft for the mound, or *c.* 9.1m, greatly exceeds both the 2.40m recorded by the present survey-team on its NW side, and the 3m given in the ASI account of 15/5/74; although if Chapman documented the height on the S side, with its deep ditch and field fences, this would be substantially larger than either measurement recorded by archaeologists with a more discriminatory approach to what was original. What seems clear though, is that the mound has not been decreased in height since Chapman's time, given its flat surface and sharp edges. From Chapman's plan and section of the mound it does not have the fairly low-set flat-topped appearance of the mound described here, although there is a definite break in slope near the top and a flattish summit; and in any case, as with many antiquarian illustrations, this one based on a 'transient & accidental visit' can hardly be taken as a scientifically accurate depiction of the monument, and could simply be a schematic or idealistic rendition, analogous to some early depictions of Newgrange which give an almost conical shape to that tumulus.

The Mullanakill mound lies in SW corner of a low-lying field of pasture, with a kettle-hole lake in adjacent field *c.* 100m to NW. Visibility is quite poor.

References: Price (ed.) 1942, 125-7; Plans and Sections of a Burial Mound near Castlepollard, Co. Westmeath, in William Frazer's Sketch Books of Irish Antiquities, National Library of Ireland, PD 1975 TX 27 (66)



Fig. 43: Mound-Barrow at Mullenmeehan (No. 32) from the N (*Upper*) and from the SE (*Lower*), the latter showing the downward slope of the land from N-S (1m scale).

32. MULLENMEEHAN (Rathconrath B^y), MOUND-BARROW (Fig. 43)

V

SMR: WM023-068 (RMP: 'Bowl-Barrow'); **NGR:** 22071/24705; **Altitude:** 100-110m OD

Poorly preserved mound-barrow, comprising a simple, subcircular mound (Diam. 11.50m NS x 9.40m EW), its domed surface now rough and disturbed, with partly sod-covered stones embedded or piled to a height of 0.50m on its summit; other similar, smallish stones can be seen at W and WSW edges of mound. It is unclear whether these stones represent relatively recent clearance activities, or whether they are an original part of the monument, which would then have been part-cairn. Barrow is on ground sloping down gently from N-S, such that its height (including the stones piled on top) varies from only 0.87m on N side to 1.58m on S.

Barrow is located on S side of broad summit of hill with great views to S, including the Slieve Blooms on the horizon to S and Knockast c. 5km to SE. Just 6m to NNE of the barrow is a broad, subcircular pit, possibly natural, measuring 15m NS x 12m EW and up to 0.62m in depth below its SW edge.

This appears to be the same monument described twice by ASI fieldworkers in the 1970s, although it is marked in a different location c. 150m to N on both the constraint sheet in the RMP and the NMS website (NGR: 22072/24720), and indeed what appears to be a small mound is depicted in

this location on the OS 6" map on which the constraint sheet is based. Nonetheless, nothing that might be interpreted as a barrow was visible to the present survey-team in this location, and both ASI descriptions in the SMR file appear to describe the same monument described here. The ASI account of 28/9/71:

A small earth and stone round-topped mound. Prob circular originally but the lower slopes are disturbed by digging and later plough? scarps. Red earth is visible in places where the mound is broken down. Not many stones are visible. There is a very slight earthen mound (modern looking) on the top of the barrow. No visible trace of a fosse. There is an old quarryhole to the N of the mound. Situated on a high prominent hill. The ground rises gently from the site to the S. There are good views to the N. Overall diameters=9.30m N-S and 9m E-W. Height=1.50m. [SMR file]

And that of 15/6/77:

Barrow. This is a very small subcircular mound of earth & stones. The mound is gently rounded. The surface & base of the mound have been disturbed by digging. There is no trace of a surrounding fosse. The barrow is approx 2m in overall height and approx 8m wide. The barrow is set on a rise with wide views to North, East & West & restricted views to South. [SMR file]

The 'old quarryhole to the N' is presumably the shallow pit just 6m NNE of the mound; if not a natural feature, it is perhaps conceivable that the material for the mound was quarried from this pit.

The identification of this monument as a bowl-barrow in the RMP presumably has the sense of Ashbee's ditchless bowl-barrow, and this is confirmed by its more recent identification as a mound-barrow on the NMS website.

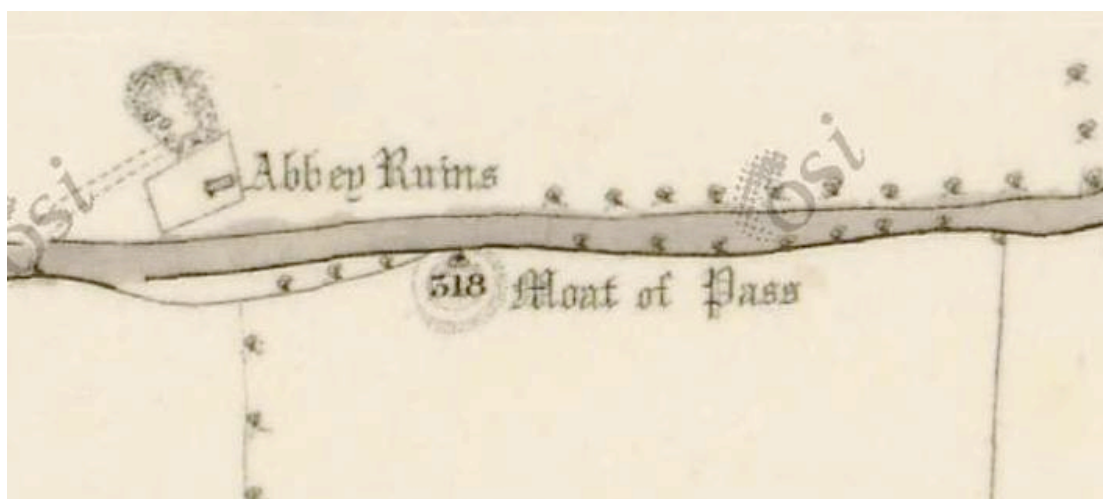


Fig. 44: The 'Moat of Pass', a possible Unclassified-Barrow at Pass of Kilbride (No. 33), as depicted on 1st ed. OS 6" map (1838), with cemetery and ruined church (WM034-002) to W (© OSi). Note the shaded area running clockwise from NE to SW at the base of the mound, which seems to equate with a ditch recorded by an ASI fieldworker in 1977 but no longer extant. Monument is identified as a Norman motte in the RMP.

33. PASS OF KILBRIDE (*Fartullagh By*), POSSIBLE UNCLASSIFIED-BARROW (Fig. 44)

V

SMR: WM034-003 (RMP: 'Castle-motte'); **NGR:** 25153/24420; **Altitude:** 90-100m OD

This overgrown, tree-covered earthwork comprises a large, roughly circular mound with flat upper surface (Diam. 14.2m NS x 14.5m EW) and steep-sides (Overall diam. 23m NE-SW), near centre of upper surface of which is a tiny mound or upper step (Diam. 4.5m), which may or may not be original, on which grows a mature sycamore, its thick, protruding roots at the very least greatly altering the shape of the mound. Several other sycamores grow from the mound, two at SW and a large one at E, the roots of the latter having clearly altered the shape of the mound on this side. Apart from a slight depression on E side, the survey team discerned no surface evidence for a ditch surrounding the mound, suggesting that it was constructed using soil taken from a broad area around it or by shaping an existing glacial hillock; but these observations appear to be contradicted by the ASI account of 1977 (as published on the NMS website)—read through *after* the present survey team's single visit to the site—which notes that 'At the base of the motte from NE-E-S-W to WNW there is a wide shallow fosse'. And the depiction of the monument on the 1st ed. OS 6" map of

1838 is larger and more complex than the mound currently appears when superimposed on satellite imagery on the OSi website, with a second ring around the mound, and, beyond this, a shaded area running clockwise from NE to SW, which appears to equate with the ditch documented around the base of the mound from NE-E-S-W in the ASI account. As such, unless this feature was missed by the present survey-team, it must be concluded that the fosse has been filled-in since 1977. Where a gap in vegetation at E permitted the height to be measured, upper surface of mound rises 1.90m above ground level; it appears to be higher on overgrown NW side. Small upper mound or step is positioned near centre of flat upper surface of main mound, at distances of 5.6m (N), 5.6m (E), 5m (S) and 6.2m (W) from its edge. Monument is identified as a Norman motte in the RMP.

Monument, marked 'Moat of Pass' on OS 6" map, lies at the edge of a field of pasture with poor visibility, c. 700m to WSW of a flat-topped rectilinear barrow with ditch examined last season (McGuinness 2015, 60-63). Less than 100m to W is a cemetery with ruined church (WM034-002; see Fig. 44), a short distance to N of which is St. Bridget's Well (WM034-001); according to the landowner, James Cole, when work was carried out around the once much larger cemetery, his great-great-grandfather reburied some bones from it in the mound—something that would require due consideration if the mound were ever excavated. Could the small mound or upper step represent a covering for these reburied bones?

34. PORTNASHANGAN ('BULL-RING') (Corkaree By), POSSIBLE UNCLASSIFIED-BARROW (Figs 45-47) V
SMR: —; NGR: 24115/25905; Altitude: 90-100m OD

Very large, roughly circular earthwork (Diam. c. 104.5m NE-SW) comprising a flat-based external ditch with accompanying internal bank, within which is a broad berm surrounding a broad, flooded, flat-based and sharply-defined ditch (plausibly dating to recent centuries in its current form), which in turn surrounds a level circular space. Monument has become densely overgrown and tree-covered since Swan photographed it from the air (Fig. 47), and is measurable only approximately on a NW-SE axis: on this line, width of outer ditch ranges from 2.10m (SW) to 2.70m (NE), width of bank ranges from 2.90m (SW) to 3m (NE), width of berm ranges from 12.5m (SW) to 14m (NE), width of inner ditch ranges from 5m (NE) to 5.80m (SW), and the central circular space enclosed by the inner ditch measures 56.5m across. At NE end of this line, outer ditch drops 0.65m below external ground level and bank rises 1.20m over ditch and 0.60m over the berm; depth of flooded inner ditch could not be ascertained. It is possible that there are other, low-visibility features in the interior of this large monument but this is unclear due to vegetation.

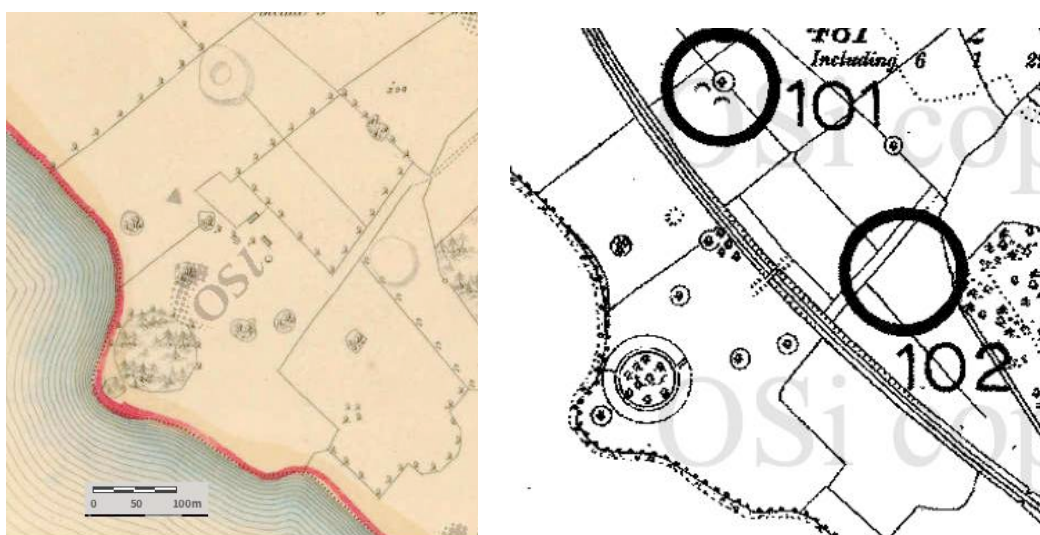


Fig. 45: The Bull-Ring (No. 34, large circular feature at lower left) and adjacent ring-ditches (Nos 35-44, small circular features) as depicted on the 1st ed. OS 6" map of 1838 (Left) and on Constraint Map in the *Record of Monuments and Places, County Westmeath* (1997), based on later eds of OS 6" sheet 12 (Right), with only two of these monuments (Nos 41-42)—the circular enclosures without trees on the 1838 map—identified as archaeological features by the ASI (WM012-101/2, both listed as 'Earthwork') (© OSi).



Fig. 46: The 'Bull-Ring' (No. 34, large circular feature at lower left) and adjacent ring-ditches (Nos 36-42, smaller circular features) close to E shore of Lough Owel at Portnashangan. An additional ring-ditch (No. 35) lies just below lower-left corner, another destroyed one (No. 44) lay partly on the line of the railway at lower side of picture; and the tree visible midway along a field fence near upper-right corner is marked in a similar way to the other ring-ditches on the 1838 OS 6" map (No. 43; See Fig. 45 (Left) above), although this was not examined by the survey-team. The linear grooves crisscrossing the image are the remains of a relict field- or drainage-system more clearly visible in Leo Swan's aerial view, Fig. 47 (Upper) below, and on 1838 OS 6" map, Fig. 45 (Left) (© Microsoft Bing).

Monument lies close to E shore of Lough Owel, where it is surrounded by a significant cluster of what appear to be ring-ditches (Nos 35-44), all in pastureland, the nearest of which (No. 35) abuts the SW side of the Bull-Ring almost on the brink of the lakeshore; its ditch appears to have been cut through by the outer ditch of the Bull-Ring. All of these monuments were there in the 1830s when marked on the First Edition OS 6" map (1838). All but two of them (Nos 41-42), including the Bull-Ring itself, have been excluded from the RMP and therefore rejected as archaeological monuments by the ASI. This is presumably because all have trees depicted in them on the 1838 map, which has more recently (than the RMP) allowed them to be brought under the heading 'Designed landscape - tree-ring', as given in the Class List Definitions on the National Monuments Service website:

A wall, bank, fosse or an earthwork platform, or any combination of these, usually circular or oval in plan, used to define or enclose a cluster of ornamental trees. These date from the 17th to the 19th century AD.

The two that have been accepted as archaeological monuments (Nos 41-42), in each case classified as 'Earthwork' in the RMP, are shown without trees on the 1838 map. One of them (No. 41) is also depicted as a double ring much larger than the others on the map. However, the present survey-team found this to be similar in shape and size to the ring-ditches closer to the Bull-Ring, and its depiction as a double ring is due to the hillock on the summit of which it lies being mistaken as part of the monument. The other treeless ring-ditch (No. 42) is fairly accurately depicted as much larger than the others though not as large as the Bull-Ring itself.

While there may be some doubt as to the prehistoric origin of these features, this cannot be solely based on the presence of trees in them in 1838, given that two monuments—one of them closely similar in appearance to the small tree-covered ring-ditches—did not have any trees on it in 1838. Perhaps more significantly, Lough Owel, more than any other of the Westmeath lakes, is the focus for a remarkable cluster of barrows of various forms, with monuments present on or close to its eastern and western shores (cf. No. 9 in this catalogue; also see numerous entries in McGuinness 2012). This is not to say that they could not have been co-opted for alternative uses in recent



Fig. 47: Leo Swan's aerial views of the 'Bull-Ring' (No. 34) and some of the nearby ring-ditches (Nos 35-40, 42 & 44, smaller circular features) close to E shore of Lough Owel at Portnashangan (© Leo Swan Aerial Photography Collection).

centuries. The 'Bull-Ring' itself was presumably used for bull-baiting, and this may account for the sharply-cut, water-filled ditch visible today; certainly it is a much more high-relief monument than the other large enclosure across the railway line to ENE of it. The form of all of the monuments bar the Bull-Ring itself, while they might fit the NMS definition of an ornamental tree-ring, are hardly that far removed from other NMS Class List Definitions, including ring-ditches and ditch-barrows, although their tight range of maximum recorded diameters of 27.8-30.4m appear to be beyond what is normal for each of those types as currently known, ring-ditches being 'usually less than 10m in diameter' and ditch-barrows 'generally less than 20m in diameter' [NMS website]. Nonetheless we do not yet have a comprehensive knowledge of these types, and, as such, it seems that small-scale excavation of one or more of the Portnashangan monuments with the intention of ascertaining their age and function would be a most valuable exercise; and the same might apply to the Killua monuments (Nos 21-27, 21A, 23A above), which are known to have been located in a heavily landscaped demesne.

Not far from the lakeshore about 0.7km to NW an 'Abbey (in ruins)' in a burial ground is marked on the OS 6" sheet (WM012-086), immediately W of which is a ringfort (WM012-098), and just E of which, across railway line, is an 'Earthwork' (WM012-087). From the segmental form of the graveyard around the ruined church, which was suggestive of a monastic *vallum*, Leo Swan drew on his extensive experience in identifying it as an early medieval ecclesiastical site (1988, 10).

35. PORTNASHANGAN (Corkaree B^y), RING-DITCH (Figs 45, 47)

V

SMR: —; **NGR:** 24112/25900; **Altitude:** 90-100m OD

Large, roughly circular space enclosed by a well-defined but shallow ditch (Diam. 29.80m NS x 29.60m EW), situated on level ground. Width of ditch at cardinal points ranges from 2m (N, E, W) to 2.20m (S); where deepest at W, ditch drops 0.21m below ground level. There is no sign that damage has been done to this or any of the other closely comparable monuments nearby (Nos 36-41), such that it appears to have been *designed* as a circular ditch without either accompanying bank or mound. For the possibility that this represents an ornamental tree-ring, see No. 34 (the 'Bull-Ring') above.

Monument lies in pasture 18m NE of E shore of Lough Owel and just 10.5m from a break in slope indicating the high-water mark, and is located immediately SW of the large earthwork known locally as the 'Bull-Ring' (No. 34), such that the outer ditch of the latter actually appears to cut through the ditch of the present monument, leaving a gap of 19m in the ring-ditch where it abuts the larger monument. Other ring-ditches lie close by (Nos 36-44).



Fig. 48: Ring-ditch (No. 36) on sloping ground to E of complex circular earthwork known as the Bull-Ring at Portnashangan.

36. PORTNASHANGAN (Corkaree B^y), RING-DITCH (Figs 45-48)

V

SMR: —; **NGR:** 24130/25905; **Altitude:** 100-110m OD

Large, roughly circular space enclosed by a well-defined but shallow ditch (Diam. 28.2m NS x 27.8m EW), situated on markedly sloping ground such that the interior drops some 3.76m over 25m from NE-SW. Width of ditch at cardinal points ranges from 1.10m (W) to 1.20m (N) to 1.40m (S, E); where deepest at E, ditch drops 0.35m below ground level. There is no sign that damage has been done to

this or any of the other closely comparable monuments nearby, such that it appears to have been *designed* as a circular ditch without either accompanying bank or mound. For the possibility that this represents an ornamental tree-ring, see No. 34 (the 'Bull-Ring') above.

Monument lies in undulating pasture near E shore of Lough Owel, just 41m E of the large earthwork known locally as the 'Bull-Ring' (No. 34). Other ring-ditches lie close by (Nos 35, 37-44).

37. PORTNASHANGAN (*Corkaree B^y*), **RING-DITCH** (Figs 45-47) **V**
SMR: —; **NGR:** 24135/25905; **Altitude:** 100-110m OD

Large, roughly circular space enclosed by a well-defined but shallow ditch (Diam. 27.8m NS x 27.7m EW), situated on level ground. Width of ditch at cardinal points ranges from 1.50m (W) to 1.60m (E) to 1.80m (N) to 1.90m (S); where deepest at S, ditch drops 0.17m below ground level. There is no sign that damage has been done to this or any of the other closely comparable monuments nearby, such that it appears to have been *designed* as a circular ditch without either accompanying bank or mound. For the possibility that this represents an ornamental tree-ring, see No. 34 (the 'Bull-Ring') above.

Monument lies in undulating pasture near E shore of Lough Owel, just 27.7m to NE of and upslope from the previous ring-ditch (No. 36). Further ring-ditches lie close by (Nos 35, 38-44), along with a larger, more complex earthwork known as the 'Bull-Ring' (No. 34).

38. PORTNASHANGAN (*Corkaree B^y*), **RING-DITCH** (Figs 45-47) **V**
SMR: —; **NGR:** 24122/25910; **Altitude:** 100-110m OD

Large, roughly circular space enclosed by a fairly well defined but shallow ditch (Diam. 28m NS x 28.30m EW), situated on gently sloping ground such that the interior drops some 1.29m over 25.40m from NE-SW. Width of ditch at cardinal points ranges from 1.30m (N, S) to 1.40m (W) to 1.70m (E); where best defined at SE, ditch drops 0.15m below ground level. There is no sign that damage has been done to this or any of the other closely comparable monuments nearby, such that it appears to have been *designed* as a circular ditch without either accompanying bank or mound. For the possibility that this represents an ornamental tree-ring, see No. 34 (the 'Bull-Ring') above.

Monument lies in undulating pasture near E shore of Lough Owel, just 32m NE of the large earthwork known locally as the 'Bull-Ring' (No. 34), in the vicinity of which are numerous other ring-ditches (Nos 35-37, 39-44).

39. PORTNASHANGAN (*Corkaree B^y*), **RING-DITCH** (Figs 45-47) **V**
SMR: —; **NGR:** 24127/25920; **Altitude:** 100-110m OD

Large, roughly circular space enclosed by a fairly well defined but shallow ditch (Diam. 29.2m NS x 29m EW). Width of ditch at cardinal points ranges from 1.60m (W) to 1.70m (N, S, E); where best defined at NW, ditch drops 0.24m below ground level. There is no sign that damage has been done to this or any of the other closely comparable monuments nearby, such that it appears to have been *designed* as a circular ditch without either accompanying bank or mound. For the possibility that this represents an ornamental tree-ring, see No. 34 (the 'Bull-Ring') above.

Monument lies in undulating pasture near E shore of Lough Owel, 46m to NE of and upslope from the previous ring-ditch (No. 38). Further ring-ditches lie close by (Nos 36-37, 40-44), along with a larger, more complex earthwork known as the 'Bull-Ring' (No. 34).

40. PORTNASHANGAN (*Corkaree B^y*), **RING-DITCH** (Figs 45-47) **V**
SMR: —; **NGR:** 24115/25918; **Altitude:** 100-110m OD

Large, roughly circular space enclosed by a fairly well defined but shallow ditch (Diam. 28m NS x 28m EW), situated on gently sloping ground such that the interior drops some 1.73m over 24.10m from NE-SW. Width of ditch at cardinal points ranges from 1.40m (W) to 1.60m (S) to 1.80m (E) to 1.90m (N); where deepest at SE, ditch drops 0.16m below ground level. There is no sign that damage has been done to this or any of the other closely comparable monuments nearby, such that it appears to have been *designed* as a circular ditch without either accompanying bank or mound. For the possibility that this represents an ornamental tree-ring, see No. 34 (the 'Bull-Ring') above.

Monument lies in undulating pasture near E shore of Lough Owel, 68m to W of the previous ring-ditch (No. 39) Further ring-ditches lie close by (Nos 35-38, 41-44), along with a larger, more complex earthwork known as the 'Bull-Ring' (No. 34).

41. PORTNASHANGAN (Corkaree By), RING-DITCH (Figs 45-47) V

SMR: WM012-101 (RMP: 'Earthwork'); **NGR:** 24127/25937; **Altitude:** 110-120m OD

Large, roughly circular space enclosed by a well-defined but shallow ditch (Diam. 29.80m NS x 30.40m EW), which surrounds the summit of a low knoll giving the apparently superficial appearance of a low domed mound, the ditch actually appearing like a step or berm at base of 'mound' on steeply sloping W side. Perhaps on account of this slightly mounded appearance, it is depicted differently from the other ring-ditches on the 1st ed. OS 6" map of 1838 (Fig. 45 (Left)). Width of ditch at cardinal points is uniformly 2m; where deepest at SW, ditch drops 0.40m below ground level. There is no sign that damage has been done to this or any of the other closely comparable monuments nearby, such that it appears to have been *designed* as a circular ditch without either accompanying bank or artificial mound. For the possibility that this represents an ornamental tree-ring, see No. 34 (the 'Bull-Ring') above.

Monument lies in undulating pasture near E shore of Lough Owel, on the opposite side of the railway line to the 'Bull-Ring' (No. 34), close to which are numerous other ring-ditches (Nos 35-40, 42-44).

42. PORTNASHANGAN (Corkaree By), RING-DITCH (Figs 45-47) V

SMR: WM012-102 (RMP: 'Earthwork'); **NGR:** 24147/25916; **Altitude:** 100-110m OD

Large, very faint, low-relief earthwork, extremely difficult to see on the ground during a single visit by the survey-team; as such, it could not be accurately described or measured. Nonetheless this ring-ditch appears very clearly on satellite imagery and in an aerial photograph taken by Leo Swan (Fig. 47 (Upper)), and is depicted on the 1838 OS 6" map (Fig. 45 (Left)). From these it can be seen to be considerably larger than other nearby ring-ditches (Nos 35-40, 43-4), which have a tight range of diameter-measurements, and is exceeded in size only by the 'Bull-Ring' (No. 34) itself; also, unlike the smaller ring-ditches, it is more oval-shaped than circular, its long diameter running roughly N-S and slightly but noticeably longer than its E-W diameter.

43. PORTNASHANGAN (Corkaree By), POSSIBLE RING-DITCH (Figs 45-46)

SMR: —; **NGR:** 24145/25918; **Altitude:** 110-120m OD

Site not examined by the survey team due to time-constraints. Now visible as the crown of a tree along a field fence on satellite imagery (Fig. 46), this is shown on the 6" map (Fig. 45) identically in size and shape to many of the other ring-ditches (Nos 35-40, 44), which are all fairly uniform except for their varying degrees of slope, and is likely to be another example of the type.

44. PORTNASHANGAN (Corkaree By), POSSIBLE RING-DITCH (DESTROYED) (Figs 45, 47)

SMR: —; **NGR:** 24145/25905; **Altitude:** 110-120m OD

An additional site depicted in a similar way to other ring-ditches (Nos 35-40, 43) on the 1st ed. OS 6" map (1838) was apparently destroyed when the railway-line was constructed in early-mid 1850s (Compare the two images in Fig. 45). It may have been only half-removed, as is suggested by one of Leo Swan's aerial photographs (Fig. 47 (Upper)), where what appears to be half of a ring-ditch is visible immediately SE of the railway-line, which cuts through it, and apparently in the position marked on the 1838 map.

45. RATHBENNETT (Farbill By), RING-BARROW (Fig. 49) V

SMR: WM011-020 (RMP: 'Earthwork'); **NGR:** 23716/26221; **Altitude:** 100-110m OD

Enormous, markedly subcircular ring-barrow (Diam. 54.5m NS x 62m EW) comprising a broad, low, domed central mound of irregular oval-shaped appearance (Diam. 40m NS x 37.5m EW), surrounded by a wide, silted ditch and broad, low external bank, and fairly well-preserved with

possible exception of NE side, where there is no external bank or even—at NNE—more than one-half of a ditch (i.e. only as far as the base). This is partly on account of the monument abutting a sharp, 1m-high natural break in slope, or scarp, which runs through this field from NW-SE; to NE of this feature the ground is marshy with a dense growth of irises and other vegetation rendering the ground all but invisible, but aerial photographs show no clear evidence for an outer bank, which would in any case have necessitated a sudden steep drop of 1m at two points on its N side, uncharacteristic of ring-barrows. Barrow is positioned on ground sloping down from SSW-NNE to the marshy area, and as such faces the steep southern slope of a prominent hill in Leny townland, on the summit of which are further barrows (See below). Height of central mound above ditch ranges from 0.20m (SE) to 0.40m (W) to 0.95m (NNE). The broad ditch, vaguely defined in places, measures from 5m (SE) to 5.5m (SW) to 6.6m (NW), as taken from half-way up bank to half-way up mound; bank ranges in width from 6m (SW) to 6.6m (SE, NW) and rises from 0.54m (W) to 0.64m (SE) above base of ditch and up 0.48m above external ground level at WNW. Beyond bank at NW is a 26m-long arc of what may be a second ditch, also noted during ASI fieldwork on 30/3/1981 [SMR file], but this is not apparent elsewhere and could well be an effect of the natural topography.



Fig. 49: Satellite view of enormous Ring-Barrow (No. 45) on sloping ground adjoining a marshy area in Rathbennett townland, part of a diverse, loose-knit group of six barrows running c. 2.25km N from Rathbennett (2 sites) through Leny (3 sites) to Fulmort (1 site) (© Microsoft Bing).

Although simply listed as an 'Earthwork' in the RMP (1997), the site has more recently been classified as '*Ringfort-rath*' on the NMS website, presumably based on a statement in the ASI account of 30/3/81: 'The site appears to be a destroyed ringfort' [SMR file]. Nonetheless, both ASI accounts, from 15/10/80 and 30/3/81, make note of the internal ditch and external bank, which would be more consistent with identification as a ring-barrow, and that of 1981 notes that 'There is no trace of an entrance or of any internal features on the site such as traces of house platforms or traces of a souterrain' [SMR file]; in addition, its position on sloping ground, with the monument following the slope, is a widespread feature in the ring-barrow class.

In addition to the natural scarp referred to above—this might well be the original S bank of the Brosna before it went underground—there are other linear earthen features cross-crossing the field,

much clearer the air (Fig. 49) than on the ground; the irregular zig-zag of the most prominent of these may be suggestive of a natural origin.

Monument is part of a loose, linear cluster of six barrows just beyond NW end of Lough Owel, extending from the excavated Early Bronze Age mound-barrow at Rathbennett, about 0.5km to SSE of the present site but on the summit of a hill that rises immediately to the S, to a group of three barrows in Leny on top of a hill that rises immediately to N of the present site (two of them unusual in form c. 0.75km to N, the third another large ring-barrow on land sloping gently to S, only c. 0.5km to N), to a hilltop mound-barrow in Fulmort c. 1.75km to N. Directly S of this cluster are important groups of barrows around Frewin Hill c. 3km to S and at Slane More c. 3km farther S again (see McGuinness 2012).

46. RATHGARRETT (*Fartullagh B^y*), **UNCLASSIFIED-BARROW**

SMR: WM039-005 (RMP: 'Barrow'); **NGR:** 24223/23691; **Altitude:** 100-110m OD **V**

Monument comprises a roughly circular mound (Diam. 13.80m NS x 13.80m EW) with flat upper surface (Diam. 8.70m NS x 8.70m EW), its height ranging from 1.50m at W up to 1.80m where highest at E; these differences in height are a result of the upper surface of the mound having been deliberately kept approximately level in spite of undulating topography around its perimeter. There has been extensive poaching of mound on all sides bar W, but mostly on S and E sides, showing it to be composed of earth with a large stone content comprising numerous small stones and some medium-sized boulders. There is no evidence for a surrounding ditch. Although simply listed as a 'Barrow' in the RMP, this monument has more recently been given as 'Barrow-unclassified' on the NMS website; and in view of its unusual-looking, broad, flat upper surface, it seems to the present writer best relegated to this unclassified group.

Barrow lies on low rise at end of long narrow field of pasture, with fair visibility to N. A nearby landowner told the survey-team that he remembered having seen several similar barrows in fields just S of this one when a boy, but there appears to be no surface evidence for these remaining.

47. RATHNARROW (*Farbill B^y*), **RING-BARROW** (Figs 50-52)

SMR: WM020-112 (RMP: 'Barrow'); **NGR:** 25480/25215; **Altitude:** 100-110m OD

Although the survey-team was refused permission to visit this site, this unusual earthwork was first recorded briefly in the early 1900s, and then described twice by the ASI in the early 1970s. Rev. William F. Falkiner of Killucan Rectory, Honorary Secretary of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland for South Westmeath, illustrated (Fig. 51 here) and very briefly described this and the adjacent No. 48 in that Society's *Journal*:

... I have never seen anything exactly like them.... The depressions [*i.e. the ditches*] arrest attention at once by their symmetrical appearance, being perfectly circular in form, about 50 feet in diameter, of section, ... the top of the round mound in the centre being level with the flat surface of the field. There is no trace of any enclosing or protecting mound, and the depressions are not quite the same in size, that in the foreground [*the present site*] being of larger diameter and deeper than the other [No. 48] (Falkiner 1906, 421-2).

The ASI account of 16/4/70:

A low circular mound surrounded by a deep U-shaped fosse. The top of the mound is only slightly above the level of the field but its height is exaggerated by the fosse. There is a very slight depression of uncertain significance in the top of (centre) the mound. WSW of this a small portion of a stone is visible in the upper edge of the mound. This may possibly be part of a cist but there is no definite indication that it is. Situated on the E side of a gentle rise on E. gently undulating land of good pasture. Views very restricted by surrounding land. There is a similar but smaller barrow a few metres W.... [SMR file]

Some further information in the account of 28/7/72 includes reference to a low outer bank, indicating that this is a ring-barrow:

Superficially it consists of a small circular almost flat-bottomed deep fosse with straight sloping sides and with slight remains of an earthen bank along its outer edge; the fosse encloses a small mound-like area which would be flat topped but for a slight depression (representing the site of a burial?) in the centre. Although the central area has the appearance of a mound it does not appear to be artificially raised. [SMR file]



Fig. 50: Swan's aerial views of barrows and surrounding glaciated landscape at Rathnarrow and Lisnabin (Nos 30, 47-49) (© Leo Swan Aerial Photography Collection). See Fig. 40 for labels.

Joseph McCabe, who wrote these accounts, went on to excavate the monument in 1973 and conclusively demonstrated the existence of a low but artificial mound. His interim report is given here as published on www.excavations.ie:

Six burial mounds have been located at Rathnarrow. Barrow III [*the present site*] is a low circular mound with a slight central depression surrounded by a round-bottomed ditch of varying width with a low broad earthen bank at its outer edge. The mound is 15m in diameter and 1.20m higher than the bottom of the ditch. The ditch is 7-8m broad, the bank 6m broad and about 20 cm high. The 1973 excavation was limited to a preliminary cutting in the N.E. quadrant. This revealed a portion of a pit under the centre of the mound which rises to a maximum height of 40 cm above the old ground surface. Limited excavation of the upper pit-fill produced many fragments of cremated human bone. The cutting exposed two

parallel arcs of irregularly weathered grey-white limestones resting on the old ground surface underneath the mound. The arcs, possibly parts of two concentric rings, are 1.20m and 3.80m from the centre. The stones which have small spaces between them average 30cm long x 25cm broad x 25cm high. Between the two arcs is a concentration of smaller stones. All save four were resting on the old ground surface. Between these stones and on the ancient soil were many fragments of charcoal. Where excavated the ditch was found to have been c. 2.60m deep originally. Traces of broad cultivation ridges were found crossing the bank. One of these yielded a 19th century clay pipe bowl. A thick layer of ancient soil with a clearly defined limit 3m outside the outer lip of the ditch was found beneath the bank. The ancient soil and ditch fill promise to yield considerable ecological data. Some waste flint flakes were found but no artifacts.

Although listed simply as a 'Barrow' in the RMP (1997), this site has more recently been given as '*Barrow-unclassified*' on the NMS website. Nonetheless, from its morphology as revealed in survey and excavation—with a low mound, ditch and external bank—it seems best classified as a ring-barrow, even if the ditch is uncharacteristically deep by comparison with the bank and mound.

Fig. 51: View and schematic profile of Ring-Barrows (Nos 47-48) at Rathnarrow (after Falkiner 1906, Figs 1-2).

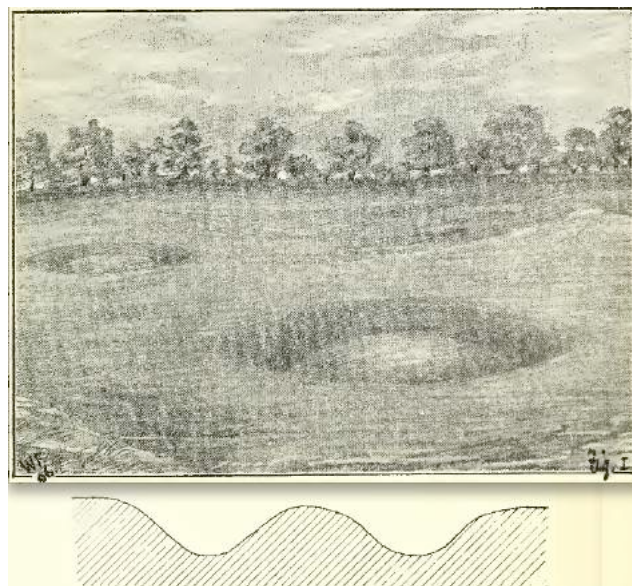


Fig. 52: Leo Swan's aerial view of Rathnarrow, showing Ring-Barrows or Embanked Ring-Ditches (Nos 47-48) at upper left, with nearby kettle-hole lakes and esker ridge (© Leo Swan Aerial Photography Collection).

Monument lies close to two other barrows (Nos 48-49) in a heavily glaciated landscape with nearby kettle-hole lakes, and close to a prominent esker ridge that is almost parallel to a line connecting Nos 47-48. No. 48 lies a short distance W of the present site, and No. 49 lies a short distance NNW of No. 48. Just S of a large kettle-hole lake less than 250m to NE of the present site in

this fluvioglacial landscape, is a large bell-disc-barrow (No. 30), to N of which – on the opposite side of the lake – is an enormous ringfort (WM020-108). Under the current landowners, satellite imagery indicates that parts of the landscape and monuments as seen in Leo Swan's old aerial photographs appear to have been altered.

References: Falkiner 1906, 421-2, Figs 1-2; J. McCabe, www.excavations.ie (Westmeath 1973:0037 Rathnarrow)

48. RATHNARROW (Farbill B^y), RING-BARROW OR EMBANKED RING-DITCH (Figs 50-52)

SMR: WM020-113 (RMP: 'Barrow'); **NGR:** 25475/25217; **Altitude:** 100-110m OD

Although the survey-team was refused permission to visit this site, this earthwork was described by Falkiner in 1906 (see No. 47) and twice by the ASI in the early 1970s, and has been identified simply as a 'Barrow' in the RMP (1997) and, more recently, as a 'Barrow-unclassified' on the NMS website. The ASI account of 16/4/70:

A small circular slight flat-topped mound surrounded by a slight fosse. Similar siting to Barrow 3 [*i.e.* No. 47] [SMR file]

The account of 28/7/72 is less inclined to identify a central mound, and also makes note of an external bank, effectively indicating that this monument is an embanked ring-ditch rather than a ring-barrow *sensu stricto*, at least in the absence of excavation:

Barrow. Superficially it consists of a circular wide shallow fosse. The 'mound' does not appear to be artificially raised, but to be merely the result of the digging of the fosse. Slight traces of a bank along the outer edge of the fosse. [SMR file]

Monument is located close to three other barrows (Nos 30, 47, 49) in a heavily glaciated landscape.

References: Falkiner 1906, 421-2, Figs 1-2

49. RATHNARROW (Farbill B^y), UNCLASSIFIED-BARROW

SMR: WM020-114 (RMP: 'Barrow'); **NGR:** 25477/25220; **Altitude:** 100-110m OD

Although the survey-team was refused permission to visit this site, this earthwork has been identified simply as a 'Barrow' in the RMP (1997) and, more recently, as a 'Barrow-unclassified' on the NMS website. It was described by the ASI on 28/7/72:

Barrow. Almost invisible on the surface now. About 14m N of Barrow 4 [*i.e.* No. 48]. A very vague approx circular 'mound' surrounded by a narrow shallow fosse. No visible trace of a bank. Diameters of mound proper = 5m N-S and 4.8m E-W. [SMR file]

In view of its low 'mound' and the apparent absence of an external bank, this monument cannot in its present state be described as either a bowl-barrow or a ring-barrow, and must remain unclassified; although, given this poor state of preservation, it seems probable that it originally had an external bank like the ring-barrows in its immediate proximity (Nos 47-48) and possibly a low but definite mound like No. 47.

Monument is located close to three other barrows (Nos 30, 47-48) in a heavily glaciated landscape.

50. ROCHFORD DEMESNE (Fartullagh B^y), POSSIBLE MOUND-BARROW (Fig. 53)

SMR: WM026-048 (RMP: 'Mound'); **NGR:** 24185/24706; **Altitude:** 90-100m OD

Well-preserved and elegantly shaped mound, roughly circular in plan (Diam. 12.50m NS x 13.00m EW) with a broad, flattened summit (Diam. 7.00m NS x 7.00m EW) and steep sides; on account of a large beech, 3.60m in circumference, growing at its centre, the diameter measurements given here should only be taken as approximations. The roots of this tree, which are visible across the mound, must help in consolidating it and preserving its shape. Although land on which mound is sited slopes down gently from E-W, the flat top of the barrow has been kept approximately level, such that its height above ground level on W side (1.70m) is significantly greater than on the E (1.01m), while the heights on N (1.32m) and S (1.05m) sides are less divergent. Although its position in the heart of a landscaped demesne (see below), and its centrally positioned beech – obviously planted – might suggest that this monument is some kind of landscape feature, its form, including the flat,

leveled top, can be matched in known barrows from this and other counties, so that it is here provisionally accepted as a mound-barrow.

Monument lies just beyond a modern property boundary in rough pasture, in the heart of Rochfort Demesne and c. 350m E of shore of Lough Ennell; the land is low-lying and visibility is poor all round.



Fig. 53: Mound-Barrow at Rochfort Demesne (No. 50) from the N (1m scales). Note the flat, almost level summit and steep sides.

51. TRISTERNAGH (*Moygoish B^y*), POSSIBLE UNCLASSIFIED-BARROW (Fig. 54)

V

SMR: WM011-050 (RMP: 'Earthwork'); NGR: 23338/26059; Altitude: 70-80m OD

Intriguing earthwork, now partly overgrown, which comprises a deep, sharply-cut, flat-based circular ditch (Diam. (overall) 40.5m NS x 40.2m EW), surrounding a flat-topped platform raised above external ground level, at the centre of which is a circular mound (Diam. 17.10m NS x 17.50m EW). Around edge of platform, its outer face flush with the ditch, is a low, denuded bank, the diameter of the platform including the bank being 34m NS x 35.3m EW. Now completely eroded

away in places (e.g. NNW), where the height of this bank over the platform is ascertainable it ranges from 0.28m (SE) to 0.27m (W), and its width is 1.20m at E; its height over base of ditch, where this could be measured at the cardinal points, ranges from 1.37m (E) to 1.51m (W) to 1.54m (N). At the same points the depth of the ditch below external ground level is 0.56m (E), 0.78m (W) and 0.65m (N) respectively, and the width of its flat base is 1.60m (E), 1.60m (W) and 2.10m (N) respectively; the sides of the ditch are near-vertical in places, such that it appears to have been cut or at least re-cut in recent centuries. On N side of monument, platform slopes down to the partly in-filled ditch; this does not have the look of an ancient entrance and was very probably made for animals or for a horse-and-cart. The mound, the SW side and base of which are densely overgrown, is fairly centrally positioned on platform, the distance of its basal edge from edge of platform at the cardinal points being 9.50m (N), 7.90m (S), 8.00m (E) and 8.50m (W) respectively; where its height over the platform could be measured, this ranges from 2.25m (N) to 2.45m (E) to 2.71m (S). Mound appears stepped on all sides with a flattened summit (2.00m NS x 2.00m EW), but with the height of the steps varying around its circumference; in fact there is only a single step, which—as the landowner pointed out to the survey-team—spirals up the mound as a ramp from a point of origin on NE side of its base, stopping 0.89m below summit of mound on NNW side, although its line is obscured in places by vegetation. On E side, where profile of mound is clear, two broad steps are visible below the summit, the lower one being 2.20m in width and rising 0.64m from the raised platform on which it has been erected, and the upper step being 1.65m in width, rising 0.70m above the lower step, and falling 1.15m below the summit of the mound.

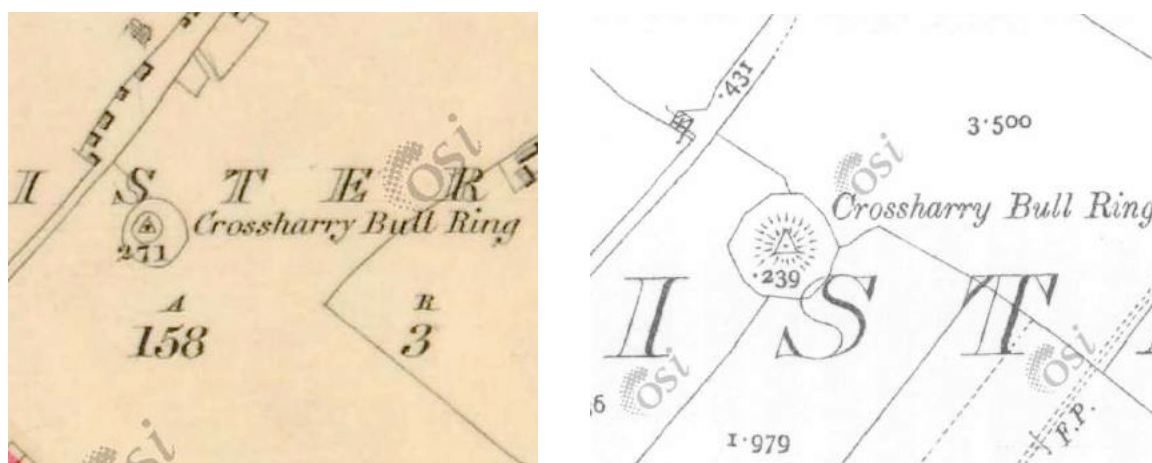


Fig. 54: Possible Unclassified-Barrow at Tristernagh (No. 51), known locally as 'Crossharry Bull-Ring', as depicted on [Left:] 1st ed. OS 6" map (1838) and [Right:] OS 25" map (1888-1913) (© OSi). Note its simplified stepped appearance on the 25" map, which does not accurately show its spiral ramp.

Marked as 'Crossharry Bull Ring' on OS 6" and OS 25" maps, monument is known locally as the 'Bull Ring' from bull-baiting having reputedly been practiced there in recent centuries. Its sharply-cut ditch, not unlike the flooded inner ditch of the Portnashangan Bull-Ring (No. 34), could indicate a recent date of origin, or at least a recent alteration for its use in bull-baiting. Some 20m to NW of monument is a sunken trackway running NE-SW and known locally as *Bothar na Marbh* ('Road of the Dead') and marked 'Bohereennamarve' on the OS 6" map (WM011-049); this leads towards Templecross Grave Yard, with a ruined chapel and cross-socket (WM011-051). Monument is located in a landscape of small fields of fairly good pasture.

52. TULLANISKY (*Fartullagh Bv*), RING-BARROW

V

SMR: WM026-026 (RMP: 'Barrow'); **NGR:** 24423/24894; **Altitude:** 120-130m OD

Partly well-preserved bivallate ring-barrow, now half obscured by vegetation, comprising an irregular but approximately round central mound (Diam. 6.00m NE/SW x 5.00m NW/SE), surrounded by two ditches with external banks, the eroded outer one appearing in places more as a scarp on its outer edge; the diameter of the monument from outer edge of inner bank is 17.50m NE/SW, and its overall diameter is 28.50m NE/SW. Central mound appears to be of very stony composition, and perhaps is a grassed-over cairn; its irregular upper surface slopes down gently but

noticeably to SW. Where highest at ENE, mound rises 0.75m above inner ditch, and at NE rises 0.50m above inner bank and 0.70m above outer bank. Also at NE, inner bank rises 0.26m above inner ditch and 0.45m above outer ditch, and outer bank rises 0.27m above outer ditch. Width of inner bank is 2.60m at NE and SSW; and width of outer bank varies from 3.10m (SSW) to 3.40m (NE). Width of inner ditch varies from 2.20m (NE) to 2.90m (SSW), and width of outer ditch varies from 2.60m (NE) to 2.70m (SSW). Boulders are visible at various locations around the monument: on SE side, two massive boulders (*a*: Width: 1.70m; H. 0.85m; *b*: Width: 1.10m; H. 0.82m), and a third smaller example (*c*) 1.30m to S of these, lie on line of outer bank; a fourth (*d*: Width: 1.25m; H. 0.55m) lies directly S of mound in outer ditch; a fifth smallish one (*e*) lies on line of outer bank at NNE, immediately SE of which is a gap in the outer bank 1.90m across; another large boulder and two smaller ones (*f*, *g*, *h*) lie beyond the site to N, the largest just 5.20 from the outer bank; a ninth boulder (*i*) lies on outer edge of outer bank beside the only large ash tree on this bank; there appear to be further examples associated with the outer bank, and, while site is too overgrown to inspect these, the overall impression is that boulders were used in the construction of the outer bank. Although central mound of this monument is clearly higher than outer banks, it has more the appearance of a ring-barrow than a bowl-barrow and is here accepted as such. Listed simply as a 'Barrow' in the RMP (1997), this monument has more recently been identified as an unclassified-barrow on the NMS website.

Monument is located in rough pasture. Although prominently positioned on a local height, visibility of the surrounding terrain is quite poor.

53. VILANSTOWN (*Fartullagh B̄y*), BELL-BARROW (DESTROYED)

SMR: WM026-075 (RMP: '*Barrow Site*'); **NGR:** 24775/24704; **Altitude:** 120-130m OD

This monument was apparently removed between 1971 and 1976 when it was visited by separate ASI fieldworkers. The account of 5/5/71:

Barrow. Much denuded and its profile is not very clear. So far as can be seen it consists of a slight circular mound surrounded by a berm and a fosse. There are slight indications of earthen bank on the outer edge of the fosse on the W. No trace of a formal entrance way. There is a large quarry-hole at the edge of the site on the NW. The site is a small natural rise on gently undulating land of good pasture. Good views to the SE. N-S diameter from outer edge of fosse = 35.10m E-W diameter from outer edge of fosse = 33.40m. Average width of fosse = 9.60m (at top). Average depth of fosse = 30cm. Average width of berm = 3m. Diameter of mound = 9.60m average. [SMR file]

This account includes a W-E sketch-profile. By the time of a second visit on 25/6/76, the site was no longer visible and the field given over to hay. From this description, the monument seems best classified as a bell-barrow with outer bank, although it is unclear from this description how tall and imposing the central mound was.

According to SMR file, on OS Fair Plan 2049 monument is depicted as 'a small circular earthwork delimited by a double scarp or a bank, fosse and outer bank?' and is marked as a fort. Given this account it may have been a bivallate bell-barrow [SMR file].

54. WATERSTOWN (*Kilkenny West B̄y*), BOWL-BARROW WITH OUTER BANK (Fig. 55)

V

SMR: WM022-035 (RMP: '*Barrow*'); **NGR:** 21042/24688; **Altitude:** 90-100m OD

This badly damaged monument (Diam. (overall) *c.* 22.3m NW/SE x 21m EW) comprises a slightly subcircular domed mound (Diam. 16.8m NW/SE x 15m EW) surrounded by the faintest traces of a ditch and a vague, barely discernible external bank, apparently better defined when the ASI saw it in the 1970s (see below); the mound rises 2.21m over the ditch on SE side and 1.53m over ditch on SW side. The monument is in poor condition: a large chunk of the mound, 5.50m across, 4.30m in depth and up to 2.20m in height, has been removed right down to the base on NNE side, where the land around the barrow has also been disturbed; the ditch and particularly the external bank are barely discernible, the ditch being most noticeable clockwise from SE to SW where it ranges in width from 2.50m (SW) to 3.00m (SE). A large, low boulder is embedded in the ground at SSW side, either on or just outside the line of the bank. Although listed simply as a 'Barrow' in the RMP, this monument is more confidently identified as a 'Bowl Barrow' in the SMR file and on the NMS website. The appearance of the site, including the damage to the mound, appears to have changed little since its

examination by the ASI on 10/04/1978, with the exception that there appears to have been no cause to doubt the existence of an outer bank back then:

Bowl-barrow (overall diam. 26m NW-SE) consisting of a small circular round-topped mound (diam. 8m; H 2m) enclosed by a shallow poorly preserved fosse with remains of a low outer bank. Some disturbance has been caused to the site by digging on the NE side of the mound, old trees growing along top of bank which has been almost totally levelled on W side. A post medieval field fence intersects the base of the mound at W [NMS website, based on SMR file]



Fig. 55: Bowl-Barrow at Waterstown (No. 54), from the E (*Upper*) with 1m scales showing how part of the mound has been removed, and from the S (*Lower*).

Monument lies near the edge of a field in pastureland and is very prominently located at the E edge of a hilltop with spectacular views from NNW clockwise to SW; higher ground to the W obscures visibility in this direction.

ADDENDA

(Added when catalogue was otherwise complete)

55. BALRATH (*Corkaree B^y*), **POSSIBLE UNCLASSIFIED-BARROW** **V**
SMR: –; **NGR:** c. 23720, 25930; **Altitude:** 100-110m OD

Tiny, very roughly circular mound (Diam. 5m NS x 5m EW) surrounded by faint traces of a possible ditch, 1.6m across where least eroded but very difficult to discern in places. Mound rises up to only 0.31m above this 'ditch' on E side.

Monument, first noticed by Peter Wallace of the project survey-team in 2015, lies in pastureland on the summit of a prominent esker-like ridge known locally as 'Cruach Bawn' in Balrath townland, where there are also two very large ring-barrows described in the first season (McGuinness 2012, 25-6), one of these being clearly visible in profile c. 0.5km SE of the present site.

56. BARRETTSTOWN (*Rathconrath B^y*), **MOUND-BARROW (DESTROYED)**

SMR: –; **NGR:** na; **Altitude:** na

Excavated and apparently removed in 1857, this stone and earthen 'tumulus' later formed the subject of a short paper by William Wilde, mostly concerning the human remains found in it which were exhibited in the year of its excavation to the Ethnological Section of the British Association for the Advancement of Science at its Dublin Meeting. Having visited the locality of the discovery some years after the excavation, and also drawing on information furnished by Dr. Kelly of Mullingar to *The Westmeath Guardian* on 6th and 20th August 1857, Wilde writes:

... The tumulus in which these remains were found presented a small oval nipple upon the rise of some sloping ground in [a] place called Carawn, the property of Mr. Nugent.... The surrounding mould and some cart-loads of small stones having been removed from the surface of the heap, two large flags, laid horizontally, were exposed, each about 3 feet 6 inches in length, 2 feet 6 inches in breadth, and 4 inches thick; one of these is said to have shown marks of fire, and on it were found some remnants of charcoal. Underneath these were found two small chambers, lying east and west, divided by an upright flag, and floored with stones similar to those on top. The largest of these chambers, which was of a pentagonal form, was but 2 feet 3 inches deep, and about 3 feet 6 inches in its greatest diagonal. Both chambers, but particularly the western, were nearly filled with 'an umber-coloured, fine flour-like mould, evidently the deposition of ages, from the surrounding mould, which forced its way through the chinks of the kistvaen.' Each contained a human skeleton, a sufficient number of the bones composing which were collected to lead to the belief that when interred they were quite perfect; but in what position the bodies were placed, or whether they were denuded of the flesh before interment, were questions which the furnished accounts do not enable us to determine....

The eastern chamber contained portions of the skeleton of a middle-aged man, with fragments of a skull of a globular form.... The only other object found in this chamber was a large boar's tusk.

All the bones which we have received of both skeletons, – consisting of those of the head already described, the long bones of the legs and arms of one, and those of the arms of another skeleton, – are exceedingly light and friable....

The western chamber contained a skeleton in somewhat better preservation, and with it the remains of the skull of one of the long-headed... race, evidently belonging to a younger individual....

In this chamber, between the leg bones, was placed the cinerary urn herewith presented to the Academy ... [he describes it].... It is now numbered 46 in the addition to the collection of such vessels already enumerated in the printed Catalogue. It did not contain any incinerated bones, but was said to be found filled with the fine clay which occupied a great portion of the kist....

... Outside, and in close contiguity with the western chamber, were found some fragments of human bones, and portions of the upper and lower jaw of an individual who had probably not exceeded twelve years of age (Wilde 1862, 89-91).

The bones and 'cinerary urn' – in fact a Bowl Food Vessel – were donated to the Academy's museum by the landowner, Mr. Arthur A. Nugent, and by Mr. Richard Murray of Mullingar.

References: Wilde 1862; Waddell 1990, 148



Fig. 56: Possible Pond-Barrow at Noughaval (Addenda No. 57): (*Upper:*) Barrow from the south-east, showing dished interior (with 1m scales) with surrounding penannular bank and part-flooded external ditch; in the background is a graveyard marking an early medieval ecclesiastical site; (*Lower:*) D^o. from the west with the bank indicated; the moist ditch appears as a bright green strip just outside the bank.

57. NOUGHAVAL (*Kilkenny West B^y*), **POSSIBLE POND-BARROW WITH EXTERNAL DITCH** (Fig. 56) V
SMR: WM016-012004 (NMS: 'Ring-Barrow'); **NGR:** 21473/25272; **Altitude:** 50-60m OD

First documented by the NMS in 2014, and unusual in form and location, this low-relief earthwork comprises a shallow dished area (Diam. *c.* 14.3m NS x 12.0m EW) delimited by a low, horseshoe-shaped penannular bank (Diam. inc. bank: 19.4m NS x 19.1m EW), outside which is a shallow ditch (Diam. inc. ditch: *c.* 24m NS x 24.5m EW) that the summary account published on NMS website does not mention. Gap in bank is at NNW and runs for a straight distance of 9m; it is unclear if this is original, but, perhaps significantly, it is on the side facing the adjacent cemetery (see below); the wall of the latter lies roughly 6.5m to NNW of projected line of bank on this side, and would be even closer if external ditch also continued around this end. Width of bank ranges from 2.4m (SW) to 3m (NE) to 3.6m (SE); height of bank over interior ranges from 0.35m (NE) to 0.39m (SW) to 0.48m (SE), and height of bank over ditch ranges from 0.06m (NE) to 0.11m (SE) to 0.12m (SW). On SW side, ground just inside bank is raised slightly above rest of interior. Width of ditch ranges from 2m (SE) to 3m (SW); and depth of ditch below external ground level reaches up to 0.20m where well-preserved at N. Central area of barrow is now marshy, as is the ditch clockwise from SE to W. Immediately SE of the barrow, and running right up to its outer ditch, is a roughly U-shaped depression which slopes down gradually from SE to NW, i.e. in the direction of the barrow; this depression is 11m in length, 8m in width where it abuts the barrow, and reaches a depth of 0.61m below ground level where clearest on ENE side. Except for the open-ended horseshoe plan and the unusual sunken U-shaped extension at SE, this monument could be termed a pond-barrow on the basis of surface inspection; but these exceptions are hardly insignificant, and we may be looking at something else altogether, although its location in very close proximity to an early medieval ecclesiastical site (see below) can be matched among other Westmeath barrows.

Monument is located in average pasture, in a natural depression with poor visibility all around. It is located just outside a cemetery containing a ruined late medieval church, around which Leo Swan documented a large oval enclosure indicative of early medieval date (Swan 1988, 19). About 18.50m to SW of external ditch of barrow is a half-dry streambed running SE-NW, its NW end joining a drain running along the wall of the cemetery.

58. RATHCREEVAGH (*Fore B^y*), **POSSIBLE MOUND-BARROW (DESTROYED)**

SMR: WM003-064; **NGR:** 24548/27303; **Altitude:** 80-90m OD

According to the ASI account of 26/10/73, this monument is marked 'as a small mound in SE corner of townland on 1914 OS 6" map. The mound is not visible now and the site is occupied by a ... modern dwelling' [SMR file]. A tributary of the River Gloire flows only a short distance to E of the site.

Appendix 1: Ringfort with relationships to nearby barrows and ring-ditches

KILLUA (*Delvin B^y*), **RINGFORT WITH BARROW-LIKE FEATURES** (Fig. 29)

V

SMR: —; **NGR:** 26590/26775; **Altitude:** 90-100m OD

Fairly well-preserved, markedly subcircular earthwork, its perimeter now heavily overgrown in places and difficult to measure, comprising an irregular oval- or almost eye-shaped shaped space with a pronounced long axis (Diam. 26.5m NS x 20m EW), which is delimited by a low, very insubstantial internal bank, beyond which are a deep, sharply cut ditch and a low, fairly insubstantial counterscarp bank; the depth of the ditch seems disproportionate to the banks, particularly the eroded inner one, which is barely perceptible in places, giving the interior the appearance of a slightly dished platform. On E side, where vegetation allows for unimpeded measurement, inner bank is 2.80m in width, rises 0.31m above interior and 0.73m above ditch; counterscarp bank is 1.90m in width, rises 0.66m above ditch and 0.21m above external ground level; and, at its upper edge, ditch is 4m in width. This monument, sited on a knoll on the same esker and fairly close to a much smaller barrow with very faint inner bank (No. 22; See Fig. 29), is, like that earthwork, also positioned on a marked slope: sited just NW of the summit of the knoll, the whole monument slopes down from SE-NW, the height on opposing crests of the low inner bank falling no less than 2.05m over 23.5m.

Although not previously recorded, this monument is found only c. 120m to S of a second, unusual ringfort that has been documented by the ASI (WM009-010), and close to a range of barrows and ring-ditches (Nos 21-27), most of them placed on the sloping surfaces of eskers or other fluvio-glacial landforms. The monument closest to it (No. 22), also on the steeply sloping face of the same esker, is an unclassified-barrow comprising a shallow ring-ditch with low, barely perceptible inner bank; as with the other monuments taken as barrows here, the general sense is that this very low visibility earthwork is more streamlined through erosion and, as such, more ancient than both the monument under discussion here and the other ringfort. The second ringfort has been moulded from a fluvio-glacial landform and is itself partly on markedly sloping ground, making the interior in places apparently unsuitable as a living area.

Appendix 2: The Earthwork known as ‘Rathconrath’

RATHTRIM (*Rathconrath B^y*), **FLAT-TOPPED MOUND WITH TRIPLE RAMPARTS** (Figs 56-57)

V

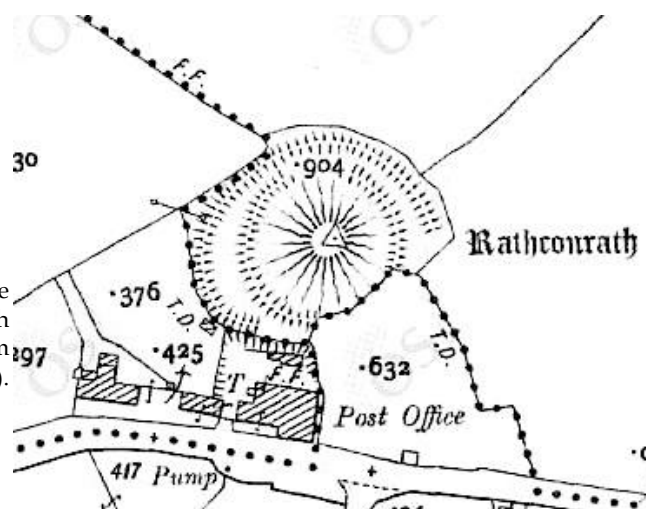
SMR: WM018-093 (RMP: ‘Motte’); **NGR:** 23191/25351; **Altitude:** 130-140m OD

Although it has only been visited a single time by the survey-team so far, and could only be examined fairly briefly and in part, the remarkable character of this enormous, tree- and scrub-covered earthwork—this overgrowth renders it very difficult to measure in places—clearly justifies an interim account. This is a tall, flat-topped, subcircular mound surrounded by three ditches with external banks, the innermost bank being higher and much more substantial than the outer two, and the middle one, where best preserved, higher than the outer one; in line with this, the innermost ditch is very deep and substantial compared to the outer two, which are in places shallow and indistinct, although at W side middle ditch is markedly deeper than outer ditch. Bar a gap which cuts through all three banks at ESE, where wheel-ruts indicate the movement of modern farm vehicles, inner bank is mostly intact all around, and better preserved than the other two; the outer two are clearly traceable for most of their circuits, though they are very poorly preserved in places, especially from S clockwise to NNW, and have been removed altogether at SE, mostly equating with a small field on the OS 25” map. It is noteworthy that this map, as with the OS 6” map, shows only two of the three banks (Fig. 56). Banks are very stony, with several large boulders or rows of neatly placed boulders along top of inner bank, like part of a severely denuded and fragmented wall; heavy erosion to the bank, however, might suggest that these were internal structural features of the bank, originally hidden from view. Also clearly visible in various places are remains of what appear to be facing-blocks, sometimes in neat courses, on the inner and outer faces of the inner bank. Traces of a collapsed boulder revetment, including a large boulder and many smaller stones, are also visible on the upper part of the middle rampart on E side. A pile of large, loose boulders in the ditch between the middle and outer banks, if not field clearance, may be collapsed walling from one or both of the banks. All of the masonry visible appears to be unmortared. Monument appears to have been constructed, like many mottes, from an esker, now partly removed by quarrying to SW. Although now somewhat obscured by vegetation, visibility would originally have been excellent from top of

central mound. This monument bears a striking resemblance to the triple-ramparted Moat of Kilfinnane in the barrow-rich east of Co. Limerick (Lynch 1911).

Monument lies in a barrow-rich part of Westmeath, with numerous examples in nearby townlands including Balgarrett, Ballinlug, Ballyglass and Kilpatrick (See McGuinness 2013). Only a stone's throw to SSE is the site of an early medieval monastery, now marked by a graveyard with ruined modern church surrounded by half of the original vallum (Swan 1988, 23).

Fig. 56: 'Rathconrath', after which the village is named, a flat-topped mound with surrounding triple ramparts in Rathtrim townland, as depicted on OS 25" map (© OSi).



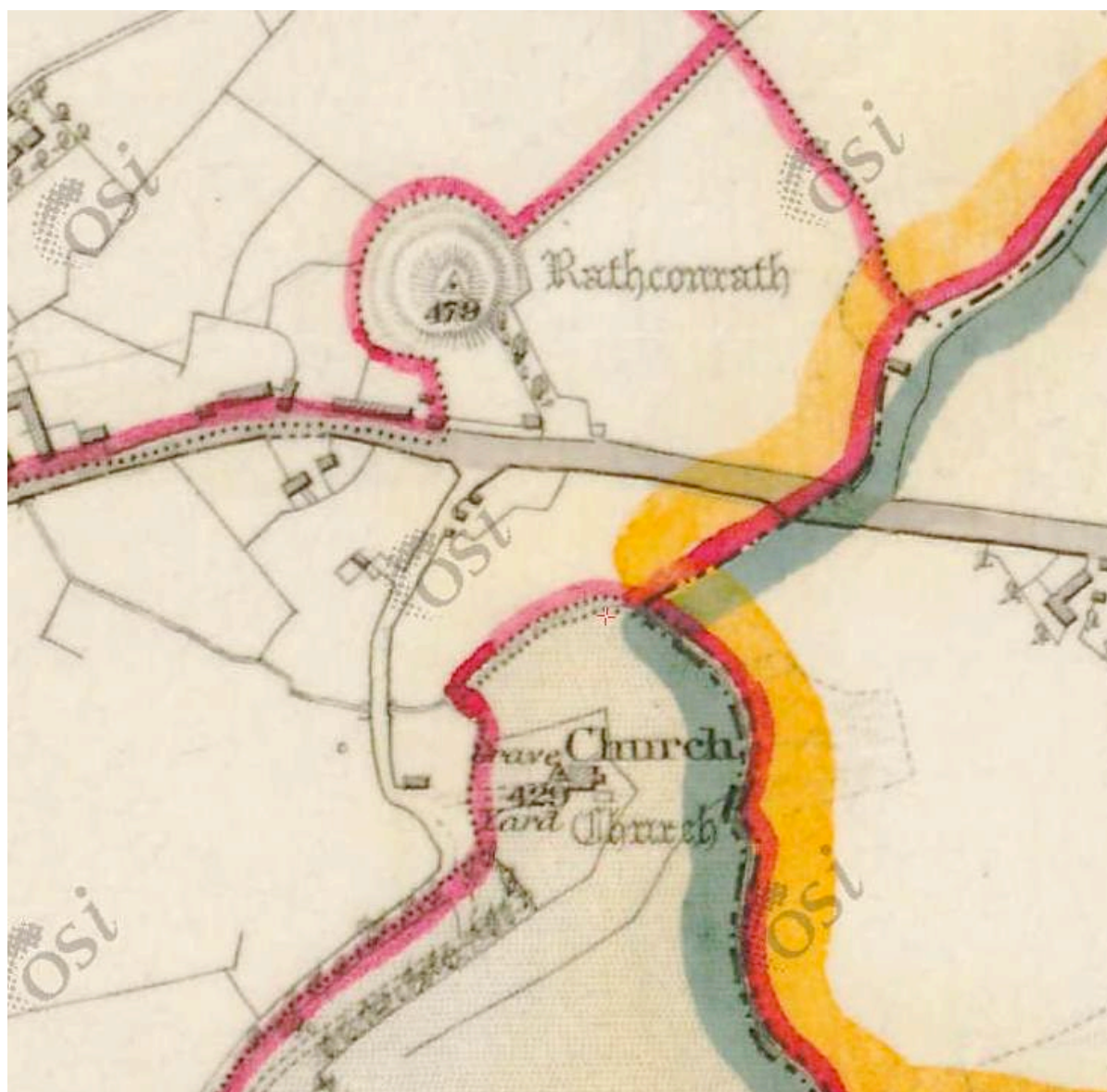


Fig. 57: 'Rathconrath', after which the village is named, a flat-topped mound with surrounding triple ramparts in Rathtrim townland, and early medieval monastic site of Killahugh to SSE, as depicted on First Edition OS 6" map of 1838 (© OSi).

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