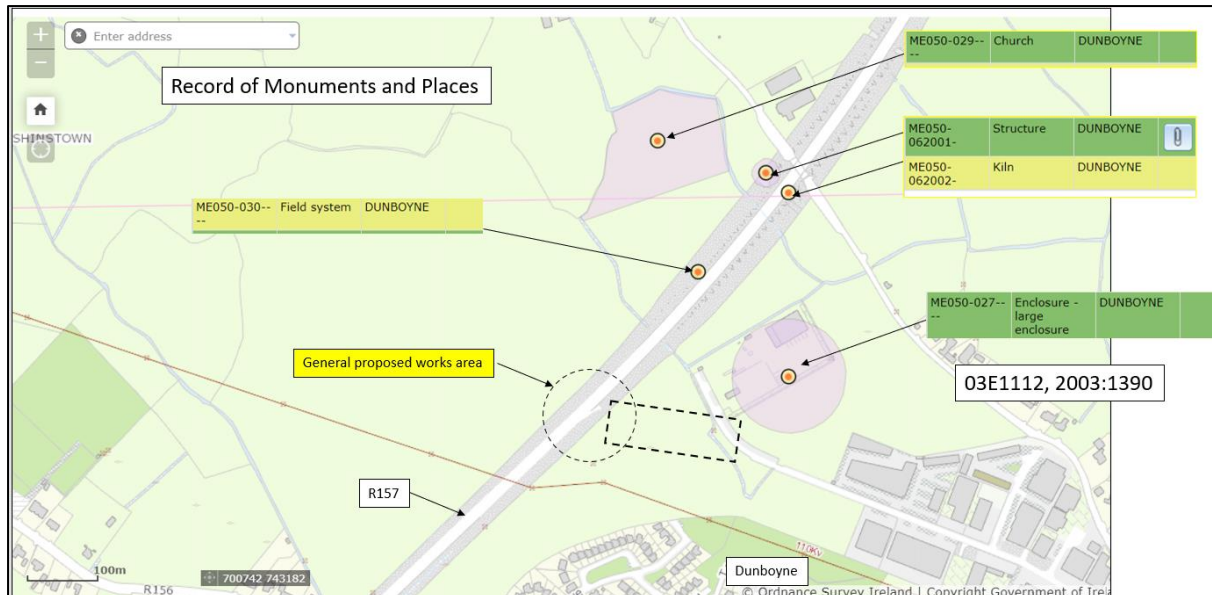


# Dunboyne Business Park to R157 Link: Heritage Assessment

Dunboyne Townland, ITM: 700898, 743021

Niall Roycroft, 17<sup>th</sup> October 2022

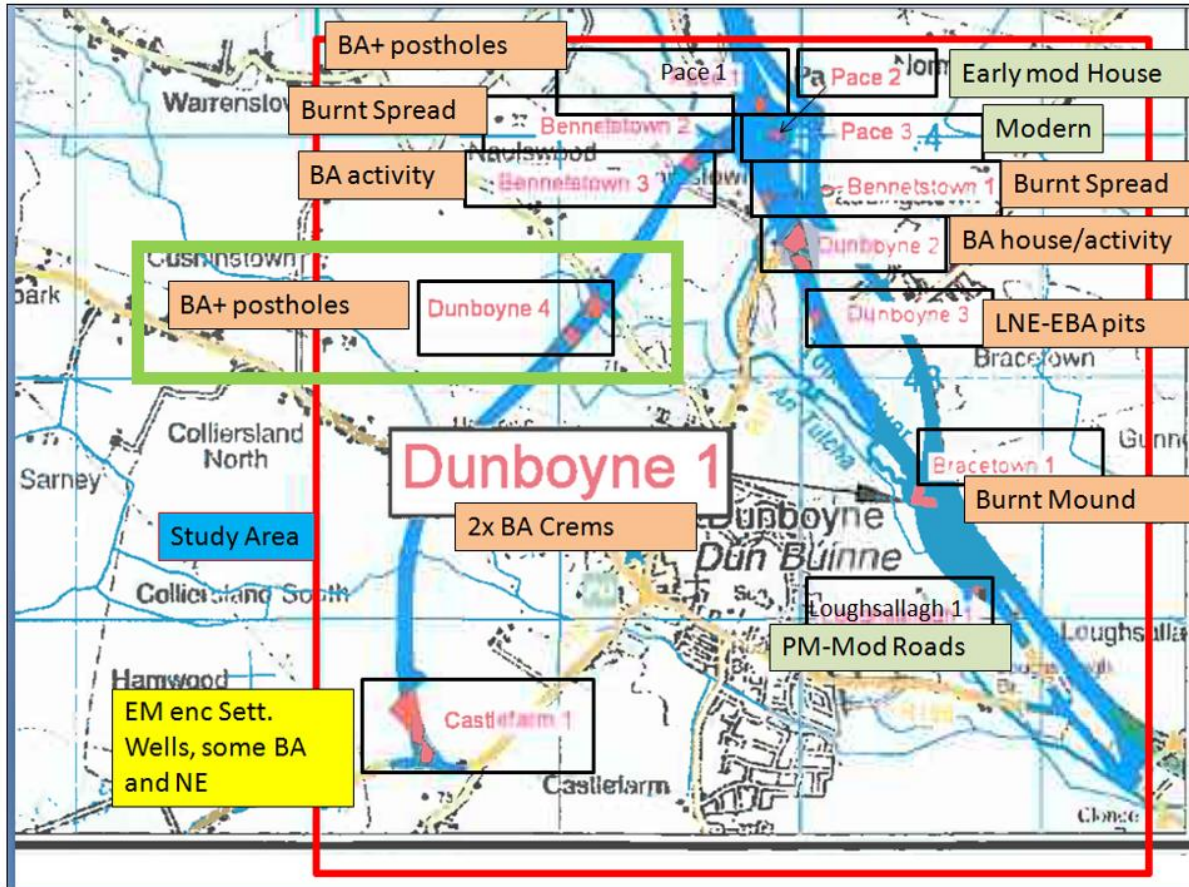
## 1 DISCUSSION



The area is green field, but in the zone surrounding the historical settlement of Dunboyne. The R157 was trial trenched to around 10% of the land area in 2003 as part of the M3 project and there were follow on excavations in 2004. The orange boxes above refer to ACS Ltd Excavation Dunboyne 4 A017/002 E3024. Similarly, there was advance archaeological works at the Thornton's Facility in

2003 and a large triple-ditched enclosure was discovered under Licence 03E1112. To the north is a medieval church and graveyard ME050-029 discovered by aerial photography.

On the M3 R157 testing works there was little in proximity of Dunboyne 4 (in green box) as seen in the image below. The general theme of the area was dispersed Bronze Age (BA) activity. The main M3 site in the area was Castlefarm 1 A017/001, E3023 located at the southern end of the R157 Dunboyne Bypass (in yellow below).



Given the proximity of archaeological remains in the area, it is recommended that the site is subject to advance archaeological trial trench testing to an area of approximately 12% of the site area. Should archaeological remains be found then they should be assessed for significance and then, if appropriate, subject to archaeological rescue excavation under Licence.

## 2 FURTHER DETAILS RECORD OF MONUMENTS AND PLACES

ME050-029----

[Scope note](#)

**Class:** Church

**Townland:** DUNBOYNE

**Scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the RMP:** Yes

**Description:** Situated on a fairly level landscape at the NW edge of Dunboyne townland in an area that was known as Kilbraynan. The barony of Dunboyne was granted by Hugh de Lacy to Willaim le Petit, whose caput or principal manor was at Mullingar (WM019-089001-), Co. Westmeath. In 1227 Ralph Petit, bishop of Meath, founded the Augustinian priory of the Blessed Virgin at Mullingar (WM019-089009-) and endowed it with the land of Kilbrena (Kilbraynan) and the ecclesiastical properties of Dunboyne parish, one of only two parishes in the barony, the other being Kilbride. At the dissolution of the monasteries the Augustinians of Mullingar still held the rectory of Dunboyne together with land at Kylbraynan that was let to a Thomas Lutterell and other property in the parish (White 1943, 288-9). According to the local folklore the walls of the monastery were standing until c. 1800 (IFC: Schools' Collection, vol. 0688, 068). (Cogan 1862, 188-9)

An oblique aerial photograph by L. Swan from the early 1970s shows a complex of earthwork banks, but at the centre is a rectangular enclosure (dims c. 40m N-S; c. 35m E-W) defined by what are probably low earthen banks. This could be overlying a circular enclosure (diam. c. 50m) defined by slighter features. All these are within a larger subcircular enclosure (dims c. 100m N-S; c. 90m E-W), and elements of a field system overlies all the features. The visible profiles of these features were removed in 1972 as further photographs by L. Swan demonstrate. Human remains and a bronze-coated iron hand-bell from Dunboyne were acquired by the National Museum of Ireland at this time, possibly from this location. The area was subject to partial magnetic gradiometer and earth resistance surveys (00R0014) by I. Elliot (2000) where the features recorded in the aerial photograph were confirmed. This could be the site of an early church with an ecclesiastical enclosure, although no known saint is associated with it.

Compiled by: Michael Moore

Date of upload: 1 November 2021

### References:

- 1. Cogan, Rev. A. 1862-70 Ecclesiastical history of the diocese of Meath: ancient and modern. (3 vols) Dublin: John Fowler, Joseph Dollard
- 2. White, N.B. 1943 Extents of Irish monastic possessions, 1540-1541. Dublin. Irish Manuscripts Commission.

- 3. IFC Schools' MSS: Irish Folklore Commission Schools' Manuscripts. Department of Folklore. University College, Dublin.
- 4. Elliott, I. 2000 Geophysical Survey, Dunboyne, Co. Meath. Licence: 00R0014. Summary unpublished report. Author

**ME050-027----**

[Scope note](#)

**Class:** Enclosure - large enclosure

**Townland:** DUNBOYNE

**Scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the RMP:** Yes

**Description:** Situated on a fairly level landscape. A large D-shaped enclosure (dims c. 120m NNE-SSW; c. 100m WNW-ESE) with the straight side at S where it is aligned with a mapped field bank to its E was recorded by L. Swan in oblique aerial photographs c. 1970 (<http://lswanaerial.locloudhosting.net/items/show/40165>). It appears to be defined by the remains of a wide earthen bank and an external fosse. A partial magnetic gradiometer and earth resistance survey (00R0014) by I. Elliott (2000) confirmed the presence of the ditch and Elliott's research highlighted the fact that it is represented as a boundary on the Down Survey (1656-8) parish map of Dunboyne.

Archaeological monitoring (03E1112) by D. J. O'Connor identified the V-shaped fosse (Wth 2.75m; D 1.3m) in two sample trenches (excavations.ie 2003:1389), but the monument had no visible profile. Further excavation was continued by F. O'Carroll (excavations.ie 2003:1390) under the same licence. This uncovered evidence of at least one re-cut of the fosse in the post-medieval period, along with modern field boundaries and drains, some of the latter within the original fill of the ditch. The ceramic finds were usually in mixed contexts and dated from the thirteenth to the nineteenth centuries, but the excavator concluded that the enclosure was established in the thirteenth to fourteenth century. The original V-shaped ditch had an inner bank, although the bank does not survive, and the ditch held standing water. After silting over centuries, it was re-cut as slightly larger in the post-medieval period when smaller drains from the external area fed into the fosse. Although the fosse and its bank were substantial, no evidence of any settlement or habitation was uncovered, and its purpose is likely to have been agricultural.

Compiled by: Michael Moore

Date of upload: 29 October 2021

**References:**

- 1. Elliott, I. 2000 Geophysical Survey, Dunboyne, Co. Meath. Licence: 00R0014. Summary unpublished report. Author

**ME050-062001-**

[Scope note](#)

**Class:** Structure

**Townland:** DUNBOYNE

**Scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the RMP:** Yes

**Description:** Situated on a slight rise in a generally level landscape. Archaeological testing (04E0487) by R. O'Hara on the link-road (R157) for Dunboyne set aside this area for resolution as Dunboyne 4 (excavations. ie 2004:1229). Archaeological excavation (E003024) by R. Elliott (excavations.ie 2004:1554) recorded elements of the field system (ME050-030----) as well as this prehistoric structure and the possible kiln (ME050-062002-). Nineteenth century quarrying, the importation of soils and subsequent ploughing severely truncated most of the archaeological features.

Thirty one stake and post-holes were recorded in one area, and twenty three of these create a long narrow structure (dims 13m plus ENE-WSW; 3.5m NNW-SSE) extending outside the road-take to the WSW. A strictly regular pattern is not discernible but two post-holes just outside the S line towards the E end have ramps from the S, and a C14 date of 2117-1779 cal. BC was returned from one of these. A large post-hole at the E edge also has a ramp at the E edge. This produced two sherds of Middle-Late Bronze Age pottery together with cremated bone, from which a C14 date of 971-804 cal. BC was returned. A sample of charcoal from another post-hole yielded a date of 1115-853 cal. BC. The nature of this structure is uncertain, but it has neither slot-trenches nor a hearth, and the fairly even distribution of the post-holes suggests that it could be a post-alignment, except that its scale is reduced.

See the attached plan from Elliott (2008, fig. 8)

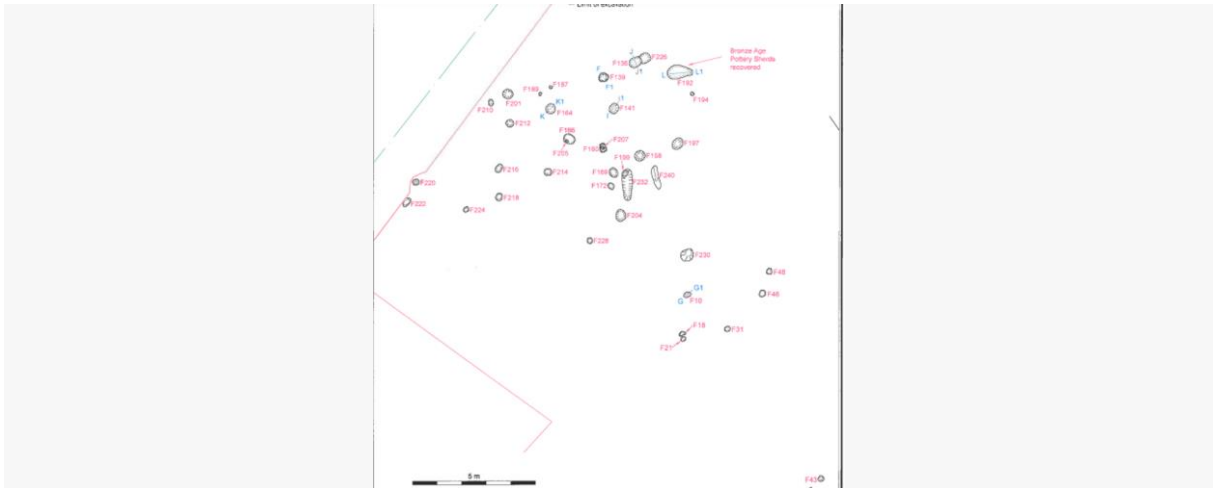
Compiled by: Michael Moore

Date of upload: 3 November 2021

**References:**

- 1. Elliott, R. 2008 M3 Clonee - North of Kells, Contract 1 Clonee – Dunshaughlin. Final Report on the Archaeological Excavation of Dunboyne 4, Co. Meath. Licence: E003024. Unpublished report, Archaeological Consultancy Services

**ME050-062001-\_1.gif**



## ME050-062002-

### [Scope note](#)

**Class:** Kiln

**Townland:** DUNBOYNE

**Scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the RMP:** No

**Description:** Situated on a slight rise in a generally level landscape. Archaeological testing (04E0487) by R. O'Hara on the link-road (R157) for Dunboyne set aside this area for resolution as Dunboyne 4 (excavations. ie 2004:1229). Archaeological excavation (E003024) by R. Elliott (excavations.ie 2004:1554) recorded elements of the field system (ME050-030----) as well as this structure that is interpreted as a kiln and the prehistoric structure (ME050-062001-). This consists of a large sub-oval pit (max. dims 3.35m N-S; 1.3m E-W; D 0.43m) with a clay lining. It has two bowls with a connecting flue but many of the fills contained burnt stone. Some uncharred grain was recovered, but a sample of hazel charcoal from a basal fill yielded a C14 determination of 2117-1779 cal. BC. This sample must have been contaminated somehow. A subrectangular cut (dims 1.9m x 1.35m; D 0.17m) for a bellows was connected to the S bowl by a narrow channel, but much of the bellows pit was damaged by a large modern quarry to its S. (Elliott 2008, 3-4)

Compiled by: Michael Moore

Date of upload: 3 November 2021

### References:

- 1. Elliott, R. 2008 M3 Clonee - North of Kells, Contract 1 Clonee – Dunshaughlin. Final Report on the Archaeological Excavation of Dunboyne 4, Co. Meath. Licence: E003024. Unpublished report, Archaeological Consultancy Services

**ME050-030----**[Scope note](#)**Class:** Field system**Townland:** DUNBOYNE**Scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the RMP:** No

**Description:** Situated on a fairly level landscape. Aerial photographs by L. Swan (LS\_AS\_67BWN\_00132) from the early 1970s record elements of a rectangular field system covering an extensive area (dims c. 220m NW-SE; c. 220m NE-SW) between the large enclosure (ME050-027-- --) to the SE and the possible church site (ME050-029----) to the NW, but not connected directly with either and different in character to both. The fields are large and rectangular (dims c. 60-120m x c. 30-50m), and appear to be defined by single ditches that correspond closely to features represented on the Down Survey (1656-8) barony and parish maps. They also run generally parallel with the current boundaries but are probably medieval in date.

The area was subject to a partial magnetic gradiometer and earth resistance survey (00R0014) by I. Elliott (2000) where the features recorded in the aerial photographs are confirmed. Elliott's results suggest that the enclosing elements consisted primarily of hedges. The NE-SW by-pass road (R157) for Dunboyne cut through the area, and centre-line testing (04E0487) by R. O'Hara (2004, 10-11) noted four of these ditches of uniform character (Wth c. 1.2m; D 0.5m) with homogenous fills from which nothing was recovered except some snail shells (excavations.ie 2004:1229). Further excavation (E003024) by R. Elliott (excavations.ie 2004:1554) of Dunboyne 4 recorded the drain features in detail and recovered post-medieval and modern ceramics from them. The long structure (ME050-062001-) and its associated possible kiln (ME050-062002-) were also identified and excavated but they are unrelated to the fields (Elliott 2008).

Compiled by: Michael Moore

Date of upload: 3 November, 2021

**References:**

- 1. Elliott, R. 2008 M3 Clonee - North of Kells, Contract 1 Clonee – Dunshaughlin. Final Report on the Archaeological Excavation of Dunboyne 4, Co. Meath. Licence: E003024. Unpublished report, Archaeological Consultancy Services

### 3 EXCAVATIONS SUMMARIES

#### 2003:1390 - Dunboyne, Meath

**County:** Meath **Site name:** Dunboyne

**Sites and Monuments Record No.:** N/A **Licence number:** 03E1112 ext.

**Author:** Finola O'Carroll

**Site type:** D-shaped enclosure

**ITM:** E 701309m, N 742099m

**Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees):** 53.419271, -6.475887

Following initial monitoring of preparatory groundworks, the remains of a substantial enclosure were uncovered. Excavation of the site was subsequently undertaken. This showed the enclosure ditch surviving to at least 1m in depth throughout the site. Evidence for a substantial recut of the ditch was also uncovered, along with a modern stone drain and numerous field boundaries. During the excavation a number of additional features were uncovered. These included a modern field drain, running parallel and sometimes within the enclosure ditch, as well as a field boundary ditch running from one of the corners of the enclosure.

In general, the monitoring and excavation of the enclosure ditch and associated areas did not reveal a significant amount of finds. Among them were medieval pottery, numerous metal objects that were severely corroded, some leather (including the remains of a shoe) and animal bone. In total 128 finds were recovered. They date to between the 12th and 19th centuries. Most of the finds are associated with one another, being mixed together at some point in the past. This secondary context makes dating difficult.

The enclosure at Dunboyne, while displaying all the characteristics of other similar sites dating to the early medieval period, has only yielded evidence of a 13th-14th-century construction date. Nothing other than the ditch remained of this monument. Evidence was uncovered of a substantial recut of the ditch some time in the post-medieval period. This is evidenced in the mixed range of finds recovered from the same contexts (i.e. medieval pottery mixed with post-medieval glass). This recut was only detected in three sections of the enclosure ditch and may not have extended the full extent of the monument. A relative chronology of activity on the site follows.

Phase 1: Construction of the enclosure, involving the excavation of a V-shaped ditch with the spoil thrown up on the inside to form an internal bank. When completed, the distance from the bottom of the ditch to the top of the bank must have exceeded 3m, with the ditch holding water.

Phase 2: The ditch, having gradually silted up over a considerable period, is recut substantially, making it wider and slightly deeper. The enclosure would still have retained its imposing stature. It is uncertain if this phase represents a resettlement of the monument or if it was just maintenance. The ditch would still have held water, and gradual silting started all over again.



Phase 3: This phase sees a change of use for the enclosure, where additional ditches were constructed as field boundaries (feeding into the enclosure), dividing up the open land into fields. Presumably this phase represents an abandonment of any settlement and a utilisation of the surrounding areas (possibly originally left open for defensive purposes).

Phase 4: This is a destruction phase. It appears that an internal bank was pushed down, backfilling the ditch.

Phase 5: The entire site is reported to have been bulldozed some time in the late 1960s/early 1970s (some reports say it was reduced by as much as 2m).

**CRDS Ltd, Unit 4, Dundrum Business Park, Dundrum, Dublin 14.**

### 2006:1554 - Dunboyne 4, Meath

**County:** Meath **Site name:** Dunboyne 4

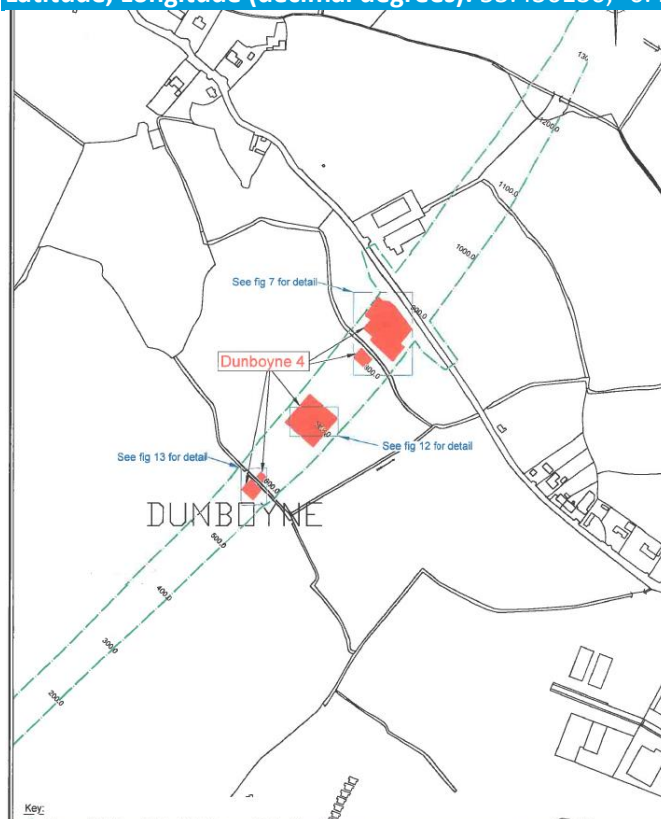
**Sites and Monuments Record No.:** - **Licence number:** A017/002, E3024

**Author:** Ruth Elliott, for Archaeological Consultancy Services Limited, Unit 21, Boyne Business Park, Greenhills, Drogheda, Co. Louth.

**Site type:** Various

**ITM:** E 700995m, N 741789m

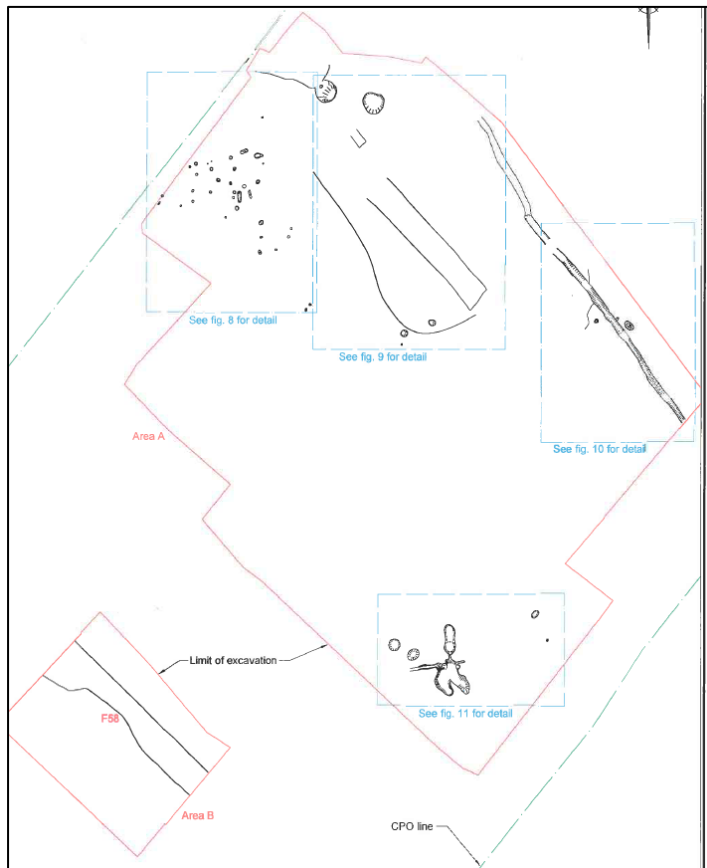
**Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees):** 53.436130, -6.469220



The site was excavated between 30 March and 23 May 2006 as part of the M3 Clonee to north of Kells motorway scheme. On the western side of a small hill, it was situated in a locality formerly known as Kilbraynan, the location of extensive monastic ruins dating from at least the 13th century. The ruins were demolished in the early 19th century but had probably been centred on a D-shaped enclosure and multivallate ringfort lying just outside the CPO line to the north and south of the site respectively. These were identified through aerial photography carried out by Leo Swan, which also picked up traces of rectilinear features considered to be a possibly contemporary field system. The latter lay within the land-take for the proposed route and linear features picked up during testing appeared to correlate with them. The assessment also identified a large double-oval shape in the landscape, defined by the existing field boundaries and potentially enclosing both the monuments and rectilinear features.

One cutting was opened near the top of the hill and central to the inner (possible) oval enclosure (Cutting 1). Another was opened in the location of the rectilinear features to examine the possibility that they may be contemporary with the two enclosures (Cutting 3). Three small cuttings were opened to examine the possible double-oval enclosure (Cuttings 2, 4 and 5).

### Cutting 1



A gravel pit had been located here in the 19th century and large quantities of quarry waste sealed disused quarry features and, in the eastern part of the area, the remains of a rectangular post-built house.

### Rectangular house

The house had been 4m in width and over 12m long. It was orientated north-west to south-east,

with the entrance at the south-east. There was a possible entrance portico and beyond this a large gable support, from which two sherds of possibly Late Bronze Age pottery were retrieved. The outer wall foundations were comprised of large post-holes and the roof was supported by pairs of large posts set within the interior. An annexe was built on to the exterior of the south-west wall and an ancillary structure to the south-east may also have originally adjoined the house. There appeared to be an episode of extensive rebuilding, which probably involved complete replacement of the roof. When the structure had ultimately fallen into disrepair, it appeared the major structural elements were deliberately dismantled. There was no evidence for a hearth and no in situ floor-level features survived. Two large pits, almost 10m east of the house, may have been used for food storage.

### Keyhole kiln

A keyhole kiln was located in the south-west and may have been used to produce lime. It was a clay-lined construct with an aboveground clay superstructure defining two bowl-shaped terminals and a central channel. A clay-lined bellows cut adjoined the kiln at the south-west. This latter was badly truncated by the root activity surrounding a tree bole. Two pits to the north-west appeared to contain waste material from the kiln.

### Cutting 2

A gravel embankment was revealed parallel to the field boundary, but this had been formed during excavation of the boundary ditch and was probably post-medieval in date. No archaeological features were revealed and no evidence to suggest that a medieval (or earlier) enclosure existed in the location.

### Cutting 3

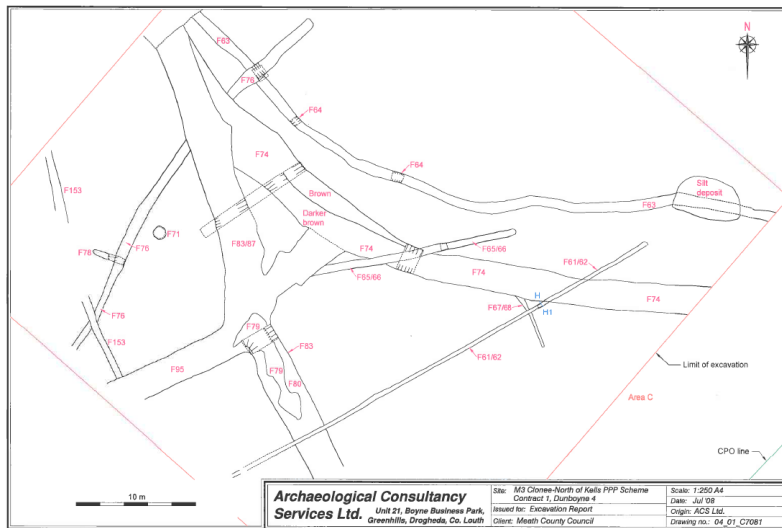


Figure 12: Post-excavation plan of Area C

With the exception of one isolated pit, the only features uncovered were drainage ditches. The earliest three had silted up naturally and no datable evidence was retrieved from them. The remainder comprised a series of very large late post-medieval and modern field drains. The latter corresponded to the rectilinear enclosures picked up by aerial photography and conclusively proved that they did not represent an archaeological field system contemporary to the D-shaped and multivallate enclosure.

## Cuttings 4 and 5

Cuttings 4 and 5 were placed on either side of the suggested outer oval enclosure and were designed to test that hypothesis. No archaeological features were found within either cutting and no archaeological enclosure was found to exist in the location.



Plate 17: Silver 'long penny' of Edward I c. 1280 minted in Lincoln, England (A017/002:20:1)

#### 4 References

[www.excavations.ie](http://www.excavations.ie) – Summary of archaeological excavation from 1970–2009.

[www.archaeology.ie](http://www.archaeology.ie) – National Monuments Service website listing all SMR sites with aerial photographs.

[www.osi.ie](http://www.osi.ie) – Ordnance Survey aerial photographs (1995, 2000 & 2005) and historic OS mapping (first edition 6" and 25"). <http://map.geohive.ie/mapviewer.html>

<http://www.logainm.ie/> - Placename index

<http://www.buildingsofireland.ie/> -National Inventory of Architectural Heritage

<http://countydevelopmentplan.meath.ie/adoptedplan/>

<http://downsurvey.tcd.ie/down-survey-maps.php> Down Survey mapping

[http://digitalcollections.tcd.ie/home/index.php?DRIS\\_ID=LCN14679989\\_001](http://digitalcollections.tcd.ie/home/index.php?DRIS_ID=LCN14679989_001)

Taylor & Skinner 1777-85 Maps of the Roads of Ireland

Google Maps

Bing Maps