

Archaeology of the N18 Ennis Bypass and the N85 Western Relief Road, County Clare

Seandálaíocht Seachród Inis N18 agus an Bóthar
Faoisimh Thiar N85, Contae an Chláir



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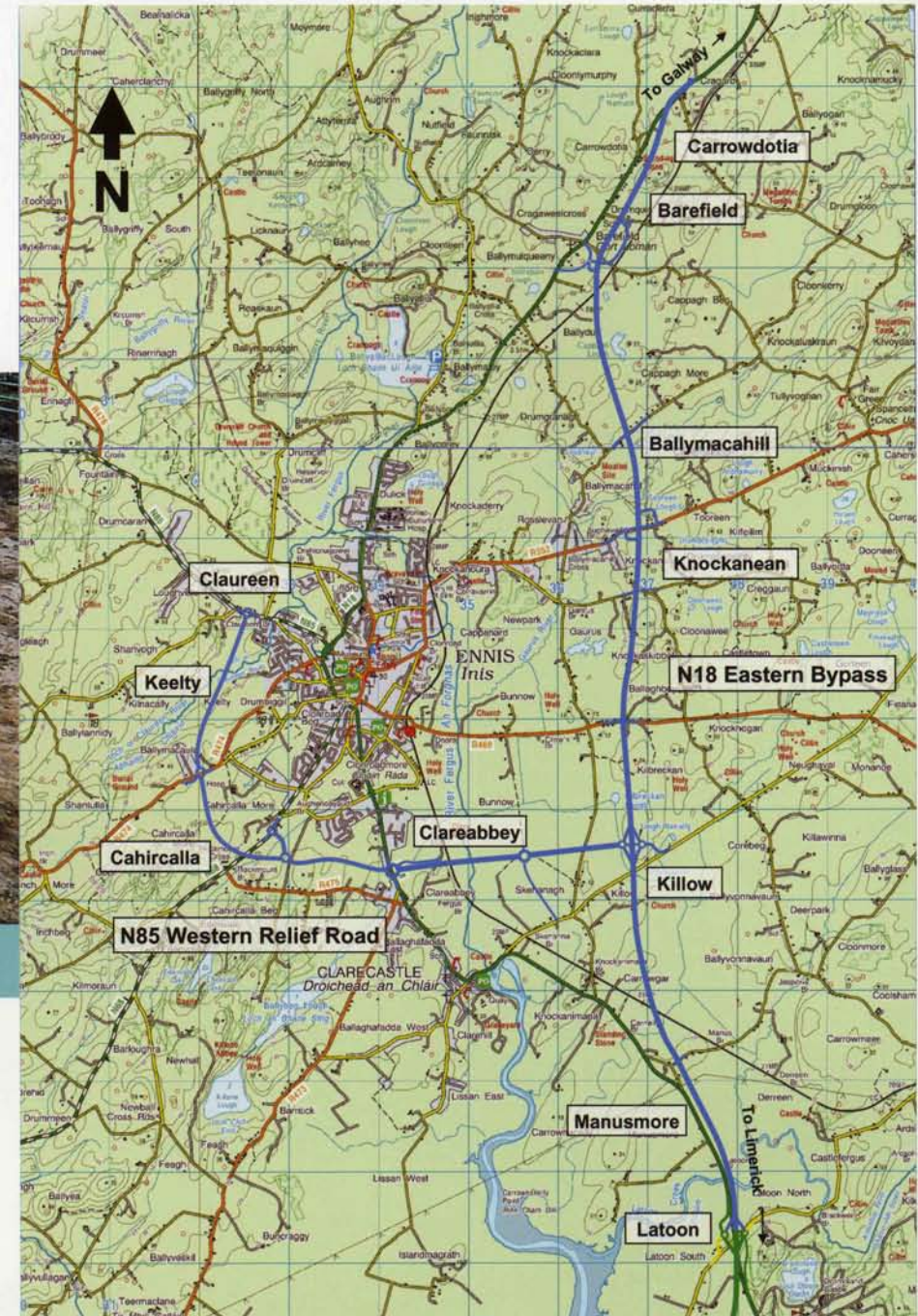
Text by Graham Hull, TVAS (Ireland) Ltd
Translation by Michael Quinlan



An Early Christian metalworking site at Cahircalla More
Láithreán miotalóireachta Luathré Chríostaí ag Cathair Ua Cealadh Mór

Seandálaíocht Seachród Inis N18 agus an Bóthar Faoisimh Thiar N85, Contae an Chláir

Téacs le Graham Hull, TVAS (Ireland) Ltd
Aistriúchán le Michéal Ó Caoinleáin



Background to the archaeology

The road project involves the construction of an eastern bypass of Ennis from Latoon, north of Newmarket-on-Fergus, to Cragard, north of Barefield and a Western Relief Road to link Killow and Clareen. As part of this National Roads Authority project, Clare County Council requested a series of archaeological investigations along the 21km route.

In accordance with national and international regulations protecting heritage, an Environmental Impact Statement was prepared in 2000. This report, supplemented by a

programme of trial trenching, architectural, underwater and geophysical surveys, indicated areas of archaeological potential along the course of the new road. As preservation *in situ* was not an option, the archaeological sites were preserved by record i.e. fully excavated and recorded.

The project is funded by the Irish government and part financed by the European Union under the Cohesion Fund of the National Development Plan 2000-2006.

Archaeological investigations were undertaken on behalf of Clare County Council by: Aegis Archaeology Ltd, Babbie Pettit

Ltd, Donal Boland, Earthsound Archaeological Geophysics, Geoquest Ltd, IAC Ltd, Moore Group and TVAS (Ireland) Ltd. All archaeological excavations were carried out by TVAS (Ireland) Ltd.

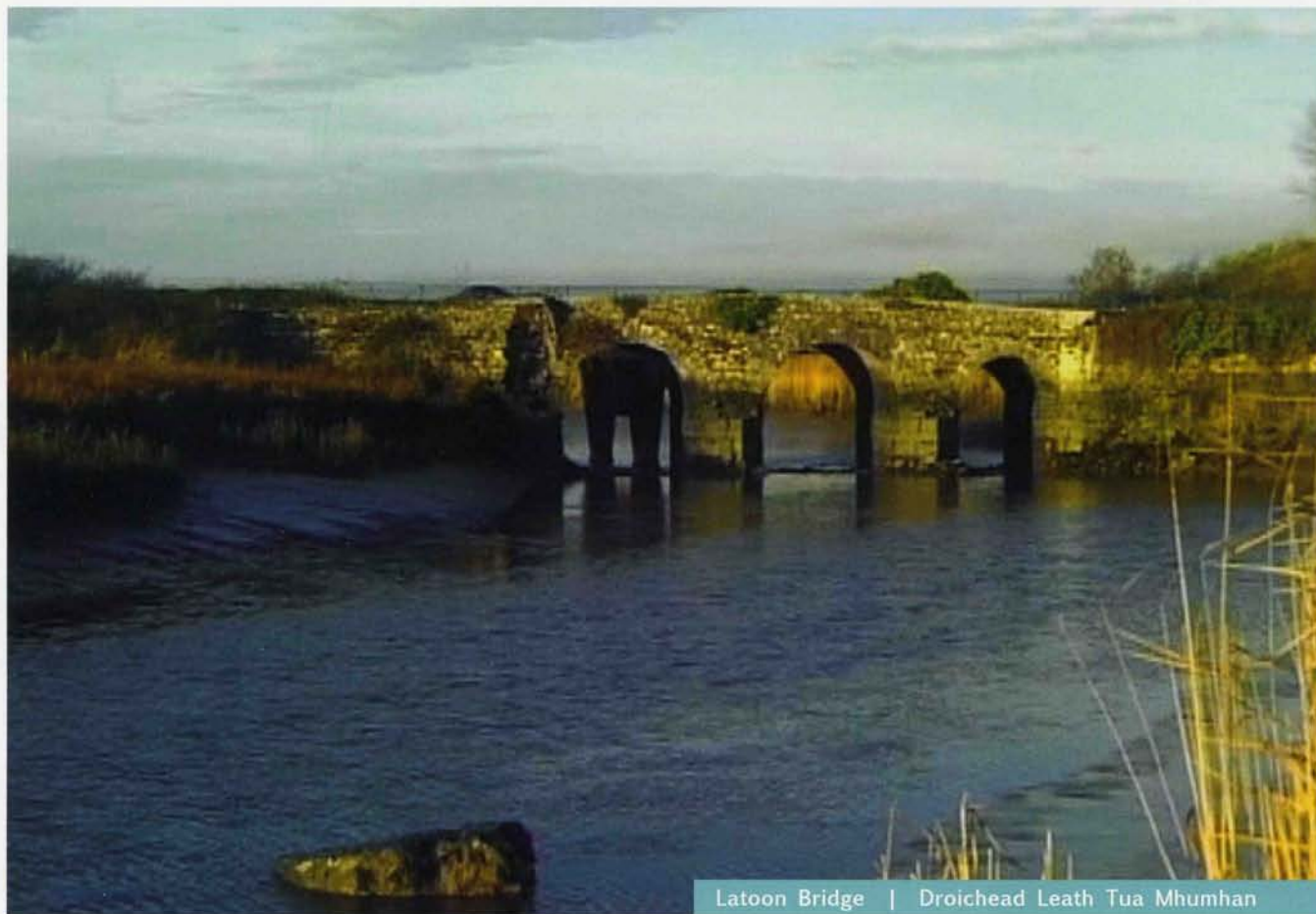
Cúlra don seandálaíocht

Is é a thugann an tógra bóthar seo i dtreis ná seachród oirthear Inis a thógáil ó Leath Tua Mhumhan, lastuaidh de Chora Caitlín, go Creag Árd, lastuaidh de Chort Lomán agus Bóthar Faoisimh Thiar chun Coill Eo agus Cláirín a nascadh le chéile. Mar cuid den tógra seo ag an Údarás um Bóithre Náisiúnta, d'iarr Comhairle Chontae an Chláir go ndéanfaí sraith scrúdaithe seandálaíochta ar an mbealach 21km seo.

De réir rialacha náisiúnta 's idirnáisiúnta faoi chosaint na h-oidhreacht, ullmhaíodh Ráiteas Tionchair Timpeallachta (RTT) sa bhliain 2000. Taobh leis an RTT rinneadh clár de thrinseail trialach mar aon le suirbhéanna ar ailtireacht agus ar thoscaí geofisiceacha agus foshruithacha a léirigh limistéirí acmhainní seandálaíochta ar shlí an bhóthair nua. Ós rud é nach raibh caomhnú *in situ* mar rogha ann déanadh caomhnú trí thairfeadh i.e. tochailt agus tairfeadh iomlán ar na láithreáin seandálaíochta ar fad.

Tá an tógra seo maonaithe ag Rialtas na h-Éireann le cúnaimh airgeadais ón Aontais Eorpaigh faoin gCiste Comhathaithe an bPlean Náisiúnta Forbartha 2000 - 2006.

Rinne na comhlachtaí seo leanas inscrúdaithe seandálaíochta ar son Chomhairle Chontae an Chláir: Aegis Archaeology Ltd., Babbie Pettit Ltd, Donal Boland, Earthsound Archaeological Geophysics, Geoquest Ltd, IAC Ltd, Moore Group, and TVAS (Ireland) Ltd. Rinne TVAS (Ireland) Ltd na tochailtí ar fad.



Latoon Bridge | Droichead Leath Tua Mhumhan



Testing near Clare Abbey | Tástáil taobh le Mainistir an Chláir

Testing the road route

Previously known, or suspected, archaeological sites were examined in 2001-2002 by a combination of trial trenching and survey. A sample of approximately 10% of the land that will be used for the scheme was tested in Summer 2003. This testing comprised a centreline trench with offset trenches every 25m on either side. Machines, under archaeological control, were used to remove topsoil and 19 new archaeological sites were found. Where archaeology was present, or thought to be present, the sampled percentage was increased. Hand-tools were used

to clean the deposits and reports were written, characterising and quantifying the archaeology and this allowed targeting of resources for the next phase of work - excavation.

Tástáil an bhealaigh

Scrúdaíodh sna blianta 2001-2002, le trinseáil trialach agus suirbhéarach, láithreáin seandálaíochta a raibh eolas orthu cheana nó a ceapadh a bheith ann. Rinneadh tástáil i Samhradh na bliana 2003 ar shampla timpeall 10% de thalamh na mbóthar nua. Tocháilíodh trinse láir agus claonstrapaí gach 25m ar dheis 's

ar chlé. Úsáideadh innill tochaite, rialaithe ag seandálaithe, chun bárr-ithir a bhaint den mbealach agus nochtadh 19 láithreáin seandálaíochta nua. Áit ar cinntíodh nó ar ceapadh ábhar seandálaíochta mhéadaigh ar an gcéatadán sampla ins na h-áiteanna sin. Baineadh úsáid as úirlisí láimhe chun na sil-leaganacha a ghlanadh agus scríobhadh tuairiscí a léirigh agus a chainníochtaigh an tseandálaíocht agus cheadaigh sin acmhainní a spriocadh don chéad chéim eile - tochait.



Test trenching. Topsoil is removed with a toothless bucket. Archaeology is often found just beneath the surface. Two Iron Age cremation cemeteries were found here in Manusmore townland

Trinseáil trialach. Baintear barr-ithir le buicéad mantach. Is minic a faightear seandálaíocht faoin dromchla. Aimsíodh dhá reilig larnaoise i mbaile fearainn Mainis Mór



Hand-cleaning a cremation burial pit in Manusmore
Lámh-ghlanadh clais adhlachadh créamaithe i Mainis Mór



Burnt stone in Cahircalla More | Clocha dóite i gCathair Ua Cealadh Mór

Excavation of archaeological sites

The 19 newly discovered sites and six previously known sites were excavated between Autumn 2003 and Spring 2004. Archaeological sites and artefacts were examined, dating from the Bronze Age (2300-700BC), the Iron Age (700BC - AD450), the Early Christian period (AD450 - 1167/70) and also from the last few centuries. The archaeology included -

A *fulacht fiadh* found east of the N68 Kilrush Road at the margin of a boggy field (Cahircalla Beg). In plan, the burnt stone mound was crescent-shaped with the 'horns' closing to the wetter (west) side. The monument measured 13.5m by 17.5m, had a maximum height of 1.6m and is estimated

to have been made from 400 tonnes of burnt stone. A rectangular trough, edged with six large limestone slabs, was found between the two horns of the mound. The trough measured 1.8m by 0.9m and was 0.45m deep with a volume of approximately 0.75m³. It is thought that these monuments may have served as gathering places for local community feasting or may have been used as saunas or for textile manufacturing. This example was seemingly in use for 1600 years between c. 2500 BC and c. 900 BC.

Smaller deposits of heat-cracked and burnt stone were found in wet environments (Killow, Cahircalla More, Clareabbey). These ill-defined spreads of stone ranged in size from 1m to 15m across and were typically less than 0.1m thick. It is not clear what specific activity the spreads represent, but it is likely



A ring-gully in Claureen | Clasán ciorclach i gCláirín

that the stone was used to heat water in a similar manner to *fulachta fiadh* with the lack of a trough perhaps indicating that the water was held in a portable container. The shallow stone spreads may perhaps be thought of as 'baby' *fulachta fiadh* at which

the process of repeated deposition of burnt stone across many years was not continued long enough for the full-blown mound to develop. Radiocarbon dating has produced dates for these spreads ranging from 2330 BC to 1700 BC.



Typical trench pattern in Clareabbey and Skehanagh

Gréasán trinseach i Mainistir an Chláir agus Sgeachanagh

Human cremation burials were found at Manusmore and Claureen. The Manusmore sites were characterised by small pits often with a token deposit of cremated bone sometimes accompanied by pieces of prehistoric pottery or stone tools. As many as 30 individuals were buried in two locations on the hillside overlooking the Latoon River in the Middle to Late Iron Age. One site was dated 500 - 380 BC and the other was AD 60 - 240. The burials at Claureen were in a circular gully (diameter 6m, 0.5m - 1m wide and 0.15m



*Fulacht fiadh at Cahircalla Beg. Half-sectioned
Fulacht fiadh I gCathair Ua Cealadh Beag. Leathghearradh*

- 0.2m deep). Within the gully were isolated charcoal rich patches, in some cases with cremated human bone. Three tiny glass beads were found in the sieved soil from the ring-gully. The beads did not seem affected by heat and were most likely placed in the ground with the ashes of the dead. The low weight of the bone in each deposit indicated that they may have been representative memorial burials. The Claureen ring-gully was used for burial sometime between 100 BC and AD 70.

At Killow, a well-preserved wooden bowl was found beneath peat. The bowl was made from a single piece of ash. A radiocarbon date from a sample of the wood shows it to be Early to Middle Iron Age and it is one of only a handful of similar prehistoric vessels found in Ireland. The tree that the bowl was

made from died between 777 BC and 407 BC.

A ditched oval enclosure 38m across was excavated in Cahircalla More. The enclosure was defined by a ditch 0.75 to 1.53m wide and up to 0.8m deep. Artefacts found within the enclosure and in the ditch included a piece of rotary quern, fragments of iron slag, animal bone and an iron tool, possibly a chisel. The enclosure was part of a rectangular field system that was defined by ditches. Finds from these field ditches included a copper alloy ring pin, whetstones, a pin-sharpening stone, a small quantity of iron slag, animal bone fragments and struck chert pieces.

A small building, indicated by three short lengths of curving gully, was also found in the enclosure and high concentrations of iron slag and charcoal suggest that iron working took place here between the 10th and the 12th Centuries AD.



Stone trough of Cahircalla Beg fulacht fiadh. This will be displayed outside the Clare Museum, Ennis

*Umar cloiche den ffulacht fiadh
ó Chathair Ua Cealadh Beag.
Taispeáinfeair é lasmuigh de Mhusaem
na h-Inse*

A cashel (or stone-built ringfort) was examined just to the north of Barefield National School in Carrowdotia townland. Approximately one third of the circular fort was on the road route and therefore only this part was excavated. The monument had a diameter of 26m and was covered by hazel and whitethorn. Very few archaeological deposits were found in the examined portion of the cashel but a piece of a stone rotary quern found in the topsoil near the cashel suggests domestic activity at the site.

More recent sites were also examined and these included brick-making kilns on the clay-rich banks of the River Fergus in Clareabbey townland and a 19th century limekiln in Keelty townland.



Stone enclosure at Knockanean | Imfhalú cloch ag Cnoc an Éin

Tochailt na láithreán seandálaíochta

Rinneadh tochailt ar na láithreáin nuachtaíthe (19) agus ar na sé láithreáin a raibh eolas orthu cheana idir Fómhar 2003 agus Earrach 2004. Iniúchadh láithreáin agus déantáin ón gCré-umhaois (2300-700BC), an Iarnaois (700BC-AD450), an Luathré Chríostaí (AD450-1167/70) agus ón gcúpla céad deireannach anuas. Mar sheandálaíocht an áirítear:

Áimsíodh fulacht fiadha taobh thoir den N68 Bóthar Cill Rois ar imeall páirce móintiúla,

(Cathair Ua Cealadh Beag). Bhí cuma corráin ar an gcarr agus na 'h-adharca' ag dúnadh ar an dtaobh ba fhliche (thiar). B'iad na tomhaiseanna ná 13.5m X 17.5m, le áirde uasmhéid 1.6m agus meastar go raibh suas le 400 tonna de chloch dóite ann. Aimsíodh umar dronuilleogach, le 6 leaca móra ina gcorr, idir adharca an chairn. B'iad tomhaiseanna an umair ná 1.8m X 0.9m is 0.45m i ndoimhneacht, le toirt c.0.75m³. Tá tuairim ann b'fhéidir gur áiteanna cruinnithe iad i gcómhair féastaí áitiúla nó b'fhéidir go n-úsáidí iad mar thithe allais nó i ndéantúsáíocht teicstíle. Bhí an fulacht seo

in úsáid, dereir dealraimh idir na blianta c.2500BC agus c.900BC, 'sé sin timpeall 1600 de bhlianta.

Áimsíodh in áiteanna fluicha (Coill Eo, Cathair Ua Cealadh Mór, Mainistir an Chláir) sil-leaganacha ní ba lú de chlocha teas-scoilte 's dóite. Mar gnás, bhí na scaipigh éagsúla seo cloch idir 1m go 15m trasna agus níos lú ná 0.1m doimhin. Níl sé soiléar cé'n ghníomhaíocht ba chúis leis na scaipigh seo, ach baineann sé le dealramh go n-úsáidí na clocha chun uisce a théamh cosúil leis na fulachta fiadha; easpa

umair ann ag léiriú gur baineadh úsáid as soitheach iniompraithe. B'fhéidir gur fulachta fiadha 'óg' a bhí ins na scaipigh eadoimhne seo ach níor leanadh leo fad go leor chun cairn iomlána a shaothrú. Taispeánann dátáil radacarbóin gur idir na blianta 2330 agus 1700BC na scaipigh seo.

Áimsíodh adhlachtaí créamaithe daonna ag Mainis Mór agus Cláirín. Ba claiseanna beaga iad ag Mainis Mór, go minic le comhartha de shil-leagan cnáimhe créamaithe agus píosáí potaireachta réamhstairiúla nó úirlisí cloiche uaireannta. Adhlachadh suas le 30 duine i ndá láithreán ar chnoc os cionn Abhann Leath Tua Mhumhan idir meán go deireadh na h-Iarhaoise. B'é 500 - 380BC an



Sampling peat at Killow
Sampláil móna ag Coill Eo



A bronze palstave dating to the Middle Bronze Age (c.1500 to c.1350 BC) was found in the topsoil at Ballymacahill during testing. The artefact may have been used for wood-working or may have been exchanged as a form of currency.

D'aimsíodh an palstave cré-umha seo sa bharr-ithir i mBaile Mac Cathail. Bainneann se leis an Cré-umhaois Meán (c.1500-1350BC). B'fhéidir go n-úsáideadh é don nó mar ábhar airgeadais.

dáta radacarbóin do láithrián amháin agus AD60-240 don cheann eile. Ag Cláirín bhí na h-adhlachtaí i gclasán ciorclach (6m trasna, 0.5-1.0m i leithead is 0.15m-0.2m doimhin). Sa chlasán bhí paistí leithlisithe saibhir le ghualach agus i gcásanna áirithe cnámha daonna créamaithe. Aimsíodh trí choirnín gloine sa chré a criathraíodh ón gclasán. Ós rud é nach raibh rian teasa ar na gcoirníní is léir gur cuireadh sa chré iad le luathrigh na marbh. De bharr meáchan íseal cnámhche i ngach sil-leagan b'fhéidir gur adhlachtaí cuimhnitheacha ionadóchta iad. Úsáideadh clasán ciorclach Cláirín d'achlachtaí am éigin idir na blianta 100BC agus AD70.

Ag Coill Eo aimsíodh babhla adhmaid dea-leasaithe faoi mhóin. Rinneadh an babhla as píosa amháin fuinseóige. De réir dátála

radacarbóin baineann sé leis an Iarnaos Luath go Meán agus is ceann é den uimhir bheag de shoithigh réamhstairiúla faighte in Éirinn. Idir 777BC agus 407BC a ghearradh an crann as a rinneadh é.

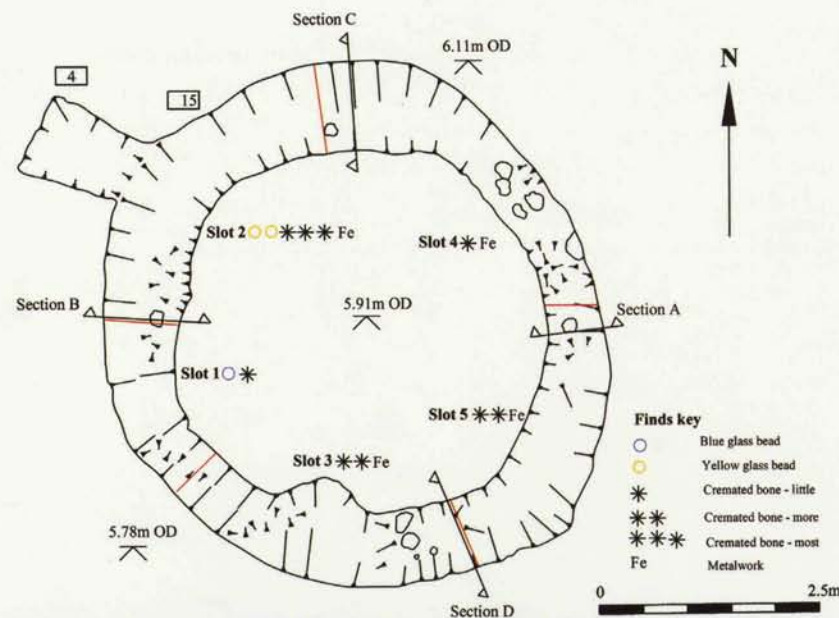
Rinneadh tochairt ar imfhálú díogtha ubhchruthach 38m trasna i gCathair Ua Cealadh Mór. Marcáileadh an imfhálú le díog 0.75m go 1.53m ar leithead agus suas le 0.8m doimhin. San imfhálú agus sa díog fuarthas mar dhéantáin píosa de bhró rothlach, bloganna de chnámhóga iarainn, cnámha ainmhithe agus úirlis iarainn, siséal b'fhéidir. Cuid de chóras páirceanna dronuilleógacha ab ea an imfhálú imlínte le díoganna. As na díoganna fuairéadh biorán fáinneach cóimhíotal copar, faobhar-chlocha agus fiú amháin ceann chun faobhair a chur ar bhiorán, roinnt beag de chnámhóg iarainn,

cnámha ainmhithe agus píosaí seirte oibrithe. Bhí foirgneamh beag ann léirithe le trí ghar-taobh de chlasán ciorclach agus ón méad mór de chnámhóg iarainn agus gualach is léir go raibh obair iarainn ar siúl anseo idir an 10ú agus an 12ú aois AD.

Aimsíodh caiseal (lios clocach) beagán lastuaidh de Scoil Náisiúnta Gort Lomáin i mbaile fearainn Ceathrú Doitaidh. Bhí suas le trian de ar shlí an bhóthair nua agus níor tocloídh ach an chuid sin de. Bhí trastomhas 26m ar an gcaiseal agus é clúdaithe le sceach gheal agus le coll. Is beag na sil-leaganacha seandálaíochta a fuairéadh sa chuid a iniúchadh ach aimsíodh píosa de bhró rothlach sa bharr-ithir



Wooden bowl as found at Killow Babhla adhmaid ag Coill Eo



Plan of prehistoric ring-gully at Cláirín
Plean de chlasán-ciorclach réamhstairiúil ag Cláirín



Brick-making site at Clareabbey | Láithreán tógála-brící ag Mainistir an Chláir

taobh leis an gcaiseal a léiríonn go raibh gníomhaíocht daonna ar siúl ann.

Iniúchadh roinnt eile láithreán atá níos déanaí agus ina measc tá tornóga tógáil brící sa chré saibhir ar bhruach an Fhorghasa i mbaile fearainn Mainistir an Chláir agus aoltornóg de chuid na 19ú aoise i mbaile fearainn Coillte.

Post-excavation processing and dissemination

The material collected during the fieldwork has been cleaned and catalogued. Specialists have prepared reports on the different artefacts and some of the objects are being conserved. Written reports have been submitted to the National Monuments Section of the Department of Environment,

Heritage and Local Government and to the National Museum of Ireland.

Archaeologists have an obligation to communicate their findings to the wider public and this road project has provided significant new information about County Clare's past. An article was published in "The Other Clare" (Vol. 29, 2005) and further publication is envisaged. Public displays and seminars will take place in 2005 - 2006.

Further information may be found at www.nra.ie/archaeology www.ennisbypass.ie and tvas@eircom.net



Early Christian enclosure at Cahircalla More
Lios Luathré Chríostaí ag Cathair Ua Cealadh Mór



Cashel in Carrowdotia
Caiseal i gCeathrú Doitaidh



A mid 19th century limekiln in Keelty | Aoltornóg 19ú aois meán i gCoillte

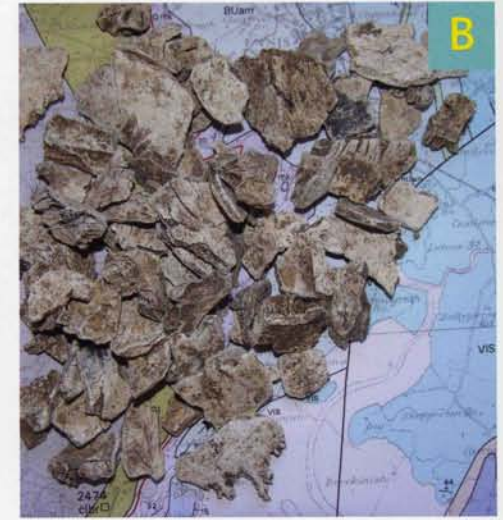
Próiseáil iar-thochailt agus craobhscaoileadh

An t-ábhar seandálaíochta a bailíodh le linn na h-oibre allmhuigh, tá sé glanta agus cláraithe. Tá tuairiscí déanta ag saineolaithe ar na déantáin agus tá caomhnú á dhéanamh ar chuid acu. Tá tuairiscí scríofa curtha chuig Roinn na Séadchómhartaí Náisiúnta, An Roinn Comhshaoil, Oidhreachta agus Rialtais Áitiúil agus chuig Ard-Mhusaem na h-Éireann.

Tá sé de dhualgas ar seandálaithe a gcuid fríotha a scaipeadh i measc an phobail agus mhéadaigh an t-eolas ón tógra bóthair seo go mór ar thuiscint oidhreachta an Chláir. Bhí alt foilsithe san iris "The Other Clare"

(Vol. 29, 2005) agus tá foilseacháin eile beartaithe. Beidh tairpéantais poiblí agus cruinnithe ar siúl trí 2005-2006.

Tuilleadh eolais ar www.nra.ie/archaeology www.ennisbypass.ie agus tvas@eircom.net





C



D



E



H

Artefacts

- A Flint and chert tools -gravegoods (Manusmore)
Úirlisí breocloch is seirt-earraí uaighe (Mainis Mór)
- B Cremated human bone (Manusmore)
Cnámh créamaithe daonna (Mainis Mór)
- C Prehistoric pottery - gravegoods (Manusmore)
Potaireacht réamhstairiúil-earraí uaighe (Mainis Mór)
- D Conserved Iron Age wooden bowl (Killow)
Babhla admaid Iarnaois caomhnaithe (Coill Eo)
- E Microslag (Cahircalla More)
Micricnámhóg (Cathair Ua Cealadh Mór)
- F Animal bone (Killow)
Cnámh ainmhíoch (Coill Eo)
- G Iron Age glass beads - gravegoods (Claureen)
Coirníní gloine Iarnaoise – earraí uaighe (Cláirín)
- H Early Christian ring-pin (Cahircalla More)
Biorán fáinneach – Luathré Chríostaí (Cathair Ua Cealadh Mór)



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