

**N18 Ennis Bypass  
and N85 Western Relief Road**

**Site AR130, Keelty, Co. Clare**

**Final Archaeological Excavation Report  
for Clare County Council**

**Licence No: 04E0030**

**by Kate Taylor**

**Job J04/02**

**(NGR 132084 177257)**

**14<sup>th</sup> August 2006**

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## Summary

**Site name:** N18 Ennis Bypass and N85 Western Relief Road, Site AR130, Keelty, Co. Clare

**Townland:** Keelty

**Parish:** Drumcliff

**Barony:** Islands

**County:** Clare

**SMR/RMP Number:** N/A

**Planning Ref. No:** N/A

**Client:** Clare County Council, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare

**Landowner:** Clare County Council, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare

**Grid reference:** 132084 177257 (OSI Discovery Series, 1:50,000, Sheet 58. OS 6" Clare Sheet 33)

**Naturally occurring geology:** Alluvial grey clay with manganese staining and small limestone inclusions

**TVAS Ireland Job No:** J04/02

**Licence No:** 04E0030

**Licence Holder:** Kate Taylor

**Report author:** Kate Taylor

**Site activity:** Excavation

**Site area:** 1830m<sup>2</sup>

**Sample percentage:** 100%

**Date of fieldwork:** 26<sup>th</sup> January 2004

**Date of report:** 14<sup>th</sup> August 2006

**Summary of results:** Heat cracked stones mixed with 19<sup>th</sup> century refuse was seen to stratigraphically post-date a stone lined field drain. The refuse most probably derived from nearby Hermitage House.

**Monuments identified:** 19<sup>th</sup> century refuse dump

**Location and reference of archive:** The primary records (written, drawn and photographic) are currently held at TVAS Ireland Ltd, Ahish, Ballinruan, Crusheen, Co. Clare.

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Report edited/checked by: Graham Hull ✓14.08.06
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Final Archaeological Excavation Report**

By Kate Taylor

**Report J04/0w**

**Introduction**

This report documents the final results of an archaeological excavation of a 19<sup>th</sup> century refuse dump (Site AR130) on the route of the N18 Ennis Bypass and N85 Western Relief Road at Keelty, Co. Clare (NGR 132084 177257) (Fig. 1). The excavation forms part of the Ennis Bypass Archaeological Contract 7.

A preliminary archaeological report for this site was produced in May 2004 (Taylor 2004).

The National Monuments Act 1930 (as amended) provides the legislative framework within which archaeological excavation can take place and the following government publications set out many of the procedures relating to planning/development and archaeology:

*Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage* (DAHGI 1999a)

*Policy and Guidelines on Archaeological Excavation* (DAHGI 1999b)

*Code of Practice between the National Roads Authority and the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands* (NRA/MAHGI 2001)

**The planning background**

As part of the National Roads Authority scheme for upgrading the N18 Limerick to Galway Road, Clare County Council, in consultation with NRA Project Archaeologist Sébastien Joubert, requested a series of archaeological investigations along the route of the proposed Ennis Bypass and a Western Relief Road. The proposed scheme has an overall length of 21km and involves the construction of a 13.8km eastern bypass of Ennis from Latoon, north of Newmarket-on-Fergus, to Cragard, north of Barefield. The Western Relief Road is 7.1km long and is to link Killow and Claureen (Fig. 1).

A number of sites of archaeological interest were known to lie on the route of the new roads and the mitigation strategy agreed by the Project Archaeologist and the national licensing authorities for these sites was preservation by record, i.e. full archaeological excavation. Further sites, without surface expression, were located as the result of intensive test trenching along the course of the road (03E1291 Hull 2003 and 03E1293 Roger 2004). As preservation *in situ* was not a reasonable option, the resolution strategy for these new sites was also preservation by record.

The archaeological excavation and post excavation work were funded by Clare County Council through the National Roads Authority and part-financed by the European Union under the National Development Plan 2000-2006.

**Location, topography and geology**

The site was located in the townland of Keelty, in the parish of Drumcliff, barony of Islands, approximately 1km west of Ennis town centre (the O'Connell Monument) and was centred on NGR 132084 177257 (Figs 1 and 2). The site was on a relatively level part of the flood plain of the Claureen

River, lying on very slightly higher ground than the surrounds at approximately 5m above Ordnance Datum (OD). The land use at the time of excavation was pasture.

The topsoil in the field was very rich and loamy, was typically 0.2m thick and overlay alluvial grey clay with occasional manganese staining and small limestone piece inclusions.

The site was entirely underwater early in January 2004 but was dry enough to be excavated by the end of the month.

### **Archaeological background**

As part of the environmental assessment process for the road scheme, Clare County Council commissioned desk-based and walkover surveys that formed part of an Environmental Statement (Babbie Pettit 2000) and an archaeological study for the Environmental Impact Statement (Doyle 1999). A total of 36 sites of known or potential cultural heritage significance were identified along the entire route of the proposed Ennis Bypass and Western Relief Road.

Earthwork and geophysical survey were undertaken on potential archaeological sites and invasive testing and excavation took place in 2002 and 2003 on some of the above ground sites affected by the proposed road (Aegis 2002, IAC 2003, Geoquest 2002, Earthsound 2003).

A systematic programme of testing along the new road route, involving the mechanical excavation of a central linear trench with offsets, took place in Summer/Autumn 2003. Twenty-two previously unknown sites, including cremation cemeteries, burnt stone spreads, enclosures and brick clamps were found (03E1291 Hull 2003 and 03E1293 Roger 2004). Monuments dating from the Bronze Age to the modern period were found.

Earlier phases of archaeological intervention on newly constructed stretches of the N18 (Dromoland to Carrigoran), to the immediate south of this road project, have demonstrated that the locality has a rich range of prehistoric and later monuments (99E0350 Hull and Tarbett-Buckley 2001).

Recent archaeological work on the BGE Gas Pipeline to the West in the neighbourhood of the new road route has tended to support the picture of continuous human activity in Co. Clare from the Neolithic and even becoming intensive from the Bronze Age. A number of burnt stone spreads and burnt mounds were excavated near the route of the new road in the summer of 2002 (MGL 2002).

A spread of burnt stone was observed during testing (03E1291 Hull 2003) adjacent to a slightly higher (and drier) outcropping of the limestone bedrock. This spread of burnt stones was allocated the number AR130 and is the subject of this report.

A stone built limekiln was excavated 120m to the south-east as part of this road project (AR129, 04E0025, Hull 2006).

### **Historical background**

Cartographic and documentary evidence was examined at the Co. Clare Local Studies Library. The most significant structure in the neighbourhood of the site was a limekiln built between possibly 1855 and 1894. The kiln lay 120m to the south-east and was examined as part of this road project (AR129, 04E0025 Hull 2006).

The Ordnance Survey 1<sup>st</sup> Edition Map, surveyed in 1840 (Fig. 4) does not show any buildings at the location of the lime kiln. A roadway running from Ennis in the east, past the site of the kiln, to join the Kilmaley Road at the west is present. This roadway survives in part (as far as the limekiln) to the

present day. The 1840 map also illustrates that the fields around the limekiln on the flood plain of the Claureen were smaller than the larger consolidated post-famine landholdings.

The 1917 edition of the Ordnance Survey map (surveyed in 1894 – not illustrated) shows the limekiln and associated building and walls as they were at the time of excavation. The road shown on the earlier map terminates at the limekiln and the surrounding fields are large. Significantly the limekiln is shown as a ruin in 1894.

Griffiths Valuation (1855) notes that the sole occupier of the townland in which the rubbish dump and limekiln stood was Patrick Hickey. The land was held *in fee* (i.e. Hickey owned the land). Hickey had a 'Herd's house, offices and land' valued at £49, 10/-. No mention of a kiln is made in the valuation. It is unlikely that such a substantial structure would be overlooked. The corn kilns on Mill Street, Ennis are, for example, noted in the same valuation.

The valuation shows that Hickey's neighbour to the east in 1855 was Francis Keane. Francis was living in the 'Gentleman's residence' known as 'The Hermitage'. The Hermitage is located at the head of the roadway leading to the kiln and was the property of the powerful local Keane family. Directories and gazetteers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century show the property was in the Keane family throughout the century (Lucas 1788, Pigot 1824, Lewis 1837, Guy 1893, Burke 1912).

Marcus Keane, the notorious land agent (see for example Ó Murchadha 2000), was owner of his brother Francis' house in 1855. The limekiln was a substantial and well-built structure serviced by a road that ran past the door of a Keane house. It is very likely that the Keanes built and controlled the kiln during the last half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Significantly, by 1901 the Moroney family (farm servant) had replaced Patrick Hickey (landowner).

### **Excavation aims and methodology**

A licence to excavate was granted to Kate Taylor by the National Monuments Section of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, in consultation with the National Museum of Ireland, on behalf of the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. The licence number is 04E0030.

The aims of the excavation were to:

- 1) Preserve by record all archaeological deposits and features within the excavation area
- 2) Produce a high quality report of the findings

The fieldwork took place on 26th of January 2004 and was undertaken by Graham Hull.

The excavation area was rectangular, centred on the burnt area seen during testing and examined 1830m<sup>2</sup>. Topsoil and overburden were removed by a 15 tonne, 360°, tracked machine, operated under direct and continuous archaeological supervision. The spoil was visually scanned for artefacts.

A full written, drawn and photographic record was made following procedures outlined in the TVAS Ireland Field Recording Manual (First Edition 2003).

The site was planned using a combination of digital and hand drawing methods. Digital plans were made using a Global Positioning System (GPS) unit, tied into the N18 surveying base station to provide millimetre accuracy.

### **Excavation results** (Fig. 3 and Plates 1 to 3)

Topsoil was removed by machine and immediately below the topsoil a burnt stone spread was revealed. The topsoil was very rich and loamy and was typically 0.2m thick.

The stone spread was seen to be on top of the natural geology. This geological deposit was alluvial grey clay with occasional manganese staining and small limestone piece inclusions.

The amorphous burnt stone spread measured 17m (north to south) by 10m and was 0.1m to 0.2m thick at the centre. The spread was of limestone only (no sandstone) and these pieces were typically less than 0.1m across. Some reddening of the surrounding natural clay suggested *in situ* burning.

The stone spread was observed to overlie a stone-lined field drain. At the interface of the topsoil and natural geology, modern artefacts in considerable numbers were recorded.

### **Finds**

A catalogue of finds is given as Appendix 1.

Artefacts dating to the later 19<sup>th</sup> /earlier 20<sup>th</sup> century were observed on the surface of, and adjacent to, the burnt stone spread. These artefacts include: china, glass, clay tobacco pipe, slate, coal and metal items.

The finds have been cleaned, numbered, labelled, properly packed and will be deposited with the National Museum of Ireland in accordance with *Advice Notes for Excavators* (NMI 1997).

### **Post-medieval pottery** by Graham Hull

Nineteen pieces of 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> century pottery were examined (Table 1). The assemblage represents domestic wares from a relatively wealthy household.

Of particular note is a piece of a brown and white glazed storage vessel that is stamped with the words *Murray & Fullerton Caledonian Pottery Glasgow*.

**Table 1: Catalogue of pottery**

Find No.	Deposit	Identification	Description	Date
04E0030:1	topsoil	? Potty. Cream fabric	Rim. Horizontal brown, cream & blue lines	20th
04E0030:2	topsoil	?Jug. Cream fabric. Two tone white & Blue	Body external blue lines	20th
04E0030:3	topsoil	Willow pattern plate	Rim. Brown decoration	19th / 20th
04E0030:4	topsoil	? Potty. Dark cream fabric. See 6	Rim. Brown & cream lines	20th
04E0030:5	topsoil	Bone China / Porcelaine Cup - see 7 & 9	Body	19th / 20th
04E0030:6	topsoil	? Potty. Dark cream fabric. See 4	Body Brown & cream lines	20th
04E0030:7	topsoil	Bone China / Porcelaine Cup - see 5 & 9	Rim. Cream fabric w. blue applied motif	19th / 20th
04E0030:8	topsoil	?Porcelaine plate Cream fabric	Rim. Applied blue flower motif	19th / 20th
04E0030:9	topsoil	Bone China / Porcelaine Cup - see 5 & 7	Handle fine cream fabric	19th / 20th
04E0030:10	topsoil	Willow pattern plate	Body. Blue decoration	19th / 20th
04E0030:11	topsoil	?Porcelain plate	Rim Red painted decoration	19th / 20th
04E0030:12	topsoil	TGEware platter	Rim. Blue painted pattern on top side	18th / 19th
04E0030:13	topsoil	Stoneware Jug Murray & Fullerton Glasgow	Body Caledonian Pottery	19th / 20th
04E0030:14	topsoil	Salt-glazed Stoneware. Potty	Base/body. Plain	19th / 20th
04E0030:15	topsoil	Willow pattern plate	Base/body. Blue decoration	19th / 20th
04E0030:16	topsoil	TGEware. ?cup	Rim, all-over ext. blue	18th 19th /
04E0030:17	topsoil	Creamware?	Body. Worn	19th / 20th
04E0030:18	topsoil	Black Buckley-type. Potty	Rim.	19th / 20th
04E0030:19	topsoil	Willow pattern plate	Body. Brown decoration	19th / 20th

**Glass by Graham Hull**

Two pieces of glass were recovered from the site (Finds 04E0030:20-21). One piece is a sherd of thin window glass, the other is a piece of bottle glass.

**Clay tobacco pipe by Graham Hull**

Four pieces of clay tobacco pipe were recovered from the site (Finds 04E0030:22-25). These items comprise two stem fragments and two bowl fragments. All the pieces appear to be 19<sup>th</sup> century in date.

**Stone by Graham Hull**

Six pieces of stone were recovered from the site (Finds 04E0030:26-31). Three of these pieces are coal and two are fragments of roof slate (one piece has a peg hole).

The final stone artefact (04E0030:26) is a lined and inscribed piece of writing slate that appears to have the numbers 2/3 inscribed on the reverse.

**Metal by Graham Hull**

Three metal items (Finds 04E0030:32-34) are all corroded pieces of iron. One piece may be a nail or pin, one is flat and the other is wedge-shaped.

**Samples**

No bulk soil samples were taken given the relative modernity of the archaeological deposits.



## **Discussion**

The excavation of Site AR130, Keelty, Co. Clare, has found a later 19<sup>th</sup> century/earlier 20<sup>th</sup> century refuse dump. The dumped material may have been burnt on site and this caused underlying stones to crack and clay to oxidise. The fact that the stones *overlay* a field drain demonstrates that the burnt stone deposit was modern and certainly could not have had a prehistoric origin as was suspected at the time of the testing. The deposit was in a field that was liable to flood and it is therefore very likely that if the burning was of any great antiquity it would have been sealed by alluvium.

The relatively high status of the refuse (fine china, writing slate, window glass) might suggest rubbish from a wealthy household. A prime candidate for the source of the dumped material would be the Hermitage – home of the land agent Keane family in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Excavation and historical research of the nearby lime kiln at Keelty (AR129, 04E0025, Hull 2006) has demonstrated that the structure was built after 1840 (and probably after 1855) and was a ruin by 1894.

## **Archaeological potential off the road CPO**

The archaeological deposits were excavated in their entirety within the road CPO. Further archaeology off the CPO in this area cannot be ruled out.

## **Publication plan**

A summary of the findings of the excavation has been submitted to *Excavations 2004*.

Copies of this final excavation report will be deposited with the Clare County Museum and the Local Studies Library, Ennis, Co. Clare

A summary article, describing the findings of this road project has been published in the local journal *The Other Clare* (Hull and Taylor 2005).

An illustrated information brochure describing the findings of this road project has been published by Clare County Council.

The stated aim of the National Roads Authority with regard to archaeological publication is clear, (O'Sullivan 2003) and it is anticipated that the results of this excavation will be disseminated as a component of a monograph dedicated to the archaeology of the Ennis Bypass. Publication is expected to take place in 2006/7 at the latest.

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Kate Taylor MIAI MIFA  
TVAS Ireland Ltd  
14<sup>th</sup> August 2006

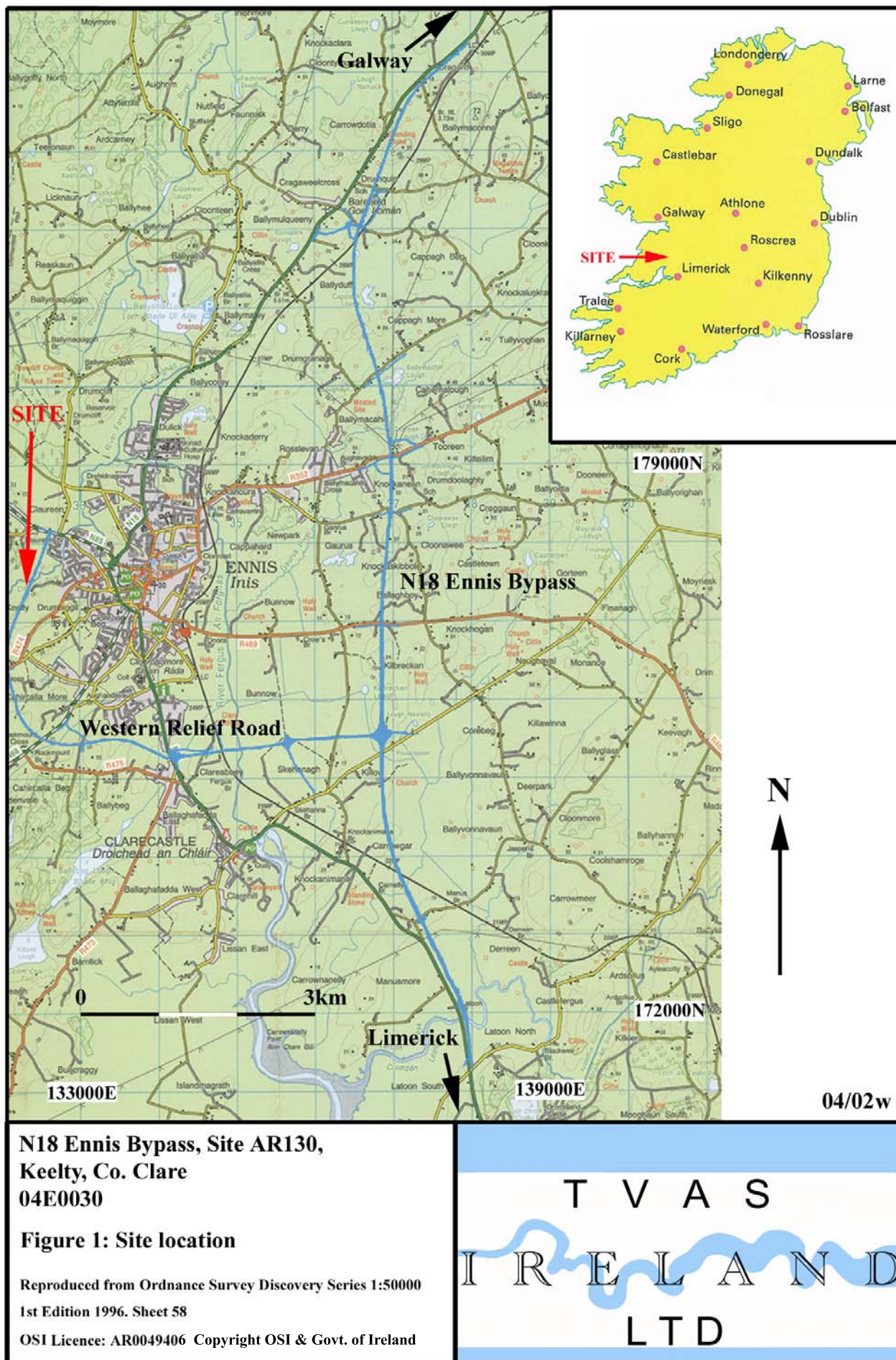
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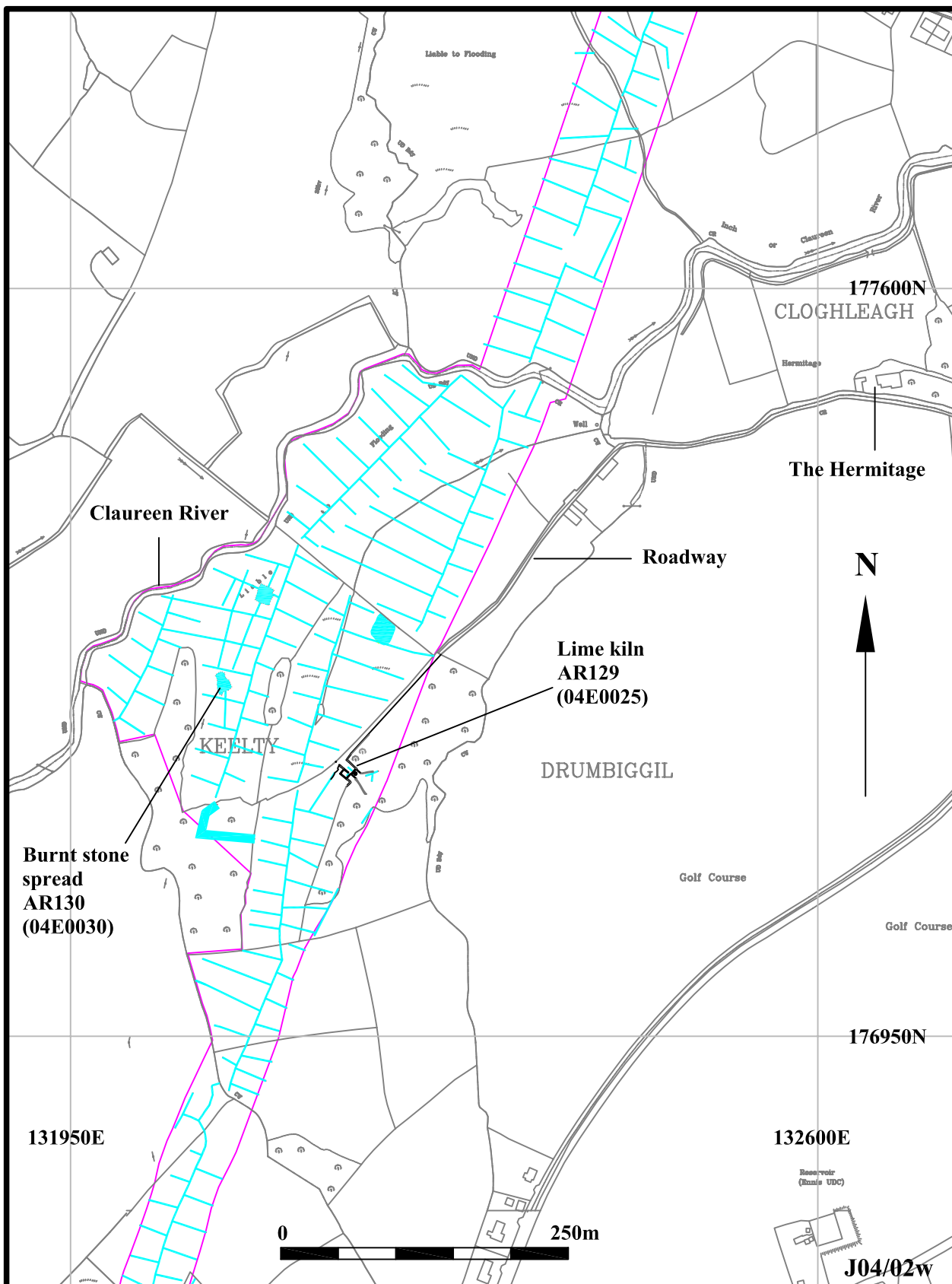
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**Appendix 1: Catalogue of Finds**

<b>Find No</b>	<b>Deposit</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>No pieces</b>	<b>Weight</b>
1	Topsoil/natural interface	Pottery	?19th century	1	55
2	Topsoil/natural interface	Pottery	?19th century	1	98
3	Topsoil/natural interface	Pottery	?19th century	1	47
4	Topsoil/natural interface	Pottery	?19th century	1	13
5	Topsoil/natural interface	Pottery	?19th century	1	9
6	Topsoil/natural interface	Pottery	?19th century	1	4
7	Topsoil/natural interface	Pottery	?19th century	1	3
8	Topsoil/natural interface	Pottery	?19th century	1	20
9	Topsoil/natural interface	Pottery	?19th century	1	8
10	Topsoil/natural interface	Pottery	?19th century	1	7
11	Topsoil/natural interface	Pottery	?19th century	1	11
12	Topsoil/natural interface	Pottery	?19th century	1	44
13	Topsoil/natural interface	Pottery	?19th century	1	128
14	Topsoil/natural interface	Pottery	?19th century	1	127
15	Topsoil/natural interface	Pottery	?19th century	1	3
16	Topsoil/natural interface	Pottery	?19th century	1	5
17	Topsoil/natural interface	Pottery	?19th century	1	2
18	Topsoil/natural interface	Pottery	?19th century	1	22
19	Topsoil/natural interface	Pottery	?19th century	1	2
20	Topsoil/natural interface	Glass	Window glass	1	11
21	Topsoil/natural interface	Glass	Window glass	1	2
22	Topsoil/natural interface	Clay tobacco pipe	Stem fragment?19th century	1	4
23	Topsoil/natural interface	Clay tobacco pipe	Stem fragment?19th century	1	2
24	Topsoil/natural interface	Clay tobacco pipe	Bowl fragment?19th century	1	2
25	Topsoil/natural interface	Clay tobacco pipe	Bowl fragment?19th century	1	2
26	Topsoil/natural interface	Stone	Inscribed slate, pieces co-joining	2	48
27	Topsoil/natural interface	Stone	Roof slate fragment	1	33
28	Topsoil/natural interface	Stone	Roof slate fragment	1	41
29	Topsoil	Stone	Coal	1	26
30	Topsoil	Stone	Coal	1	7
31	Topsoil	Stone	Coal	1	23
32	Topsoil/natural interface	Metal	Iron nail/pin?	1	2
33	Topsoil/natural interface	Metal	Iron object- flat	1	40
34	Topsoil/natural interface	Metal	Iron object- wedge-shaped	1	54







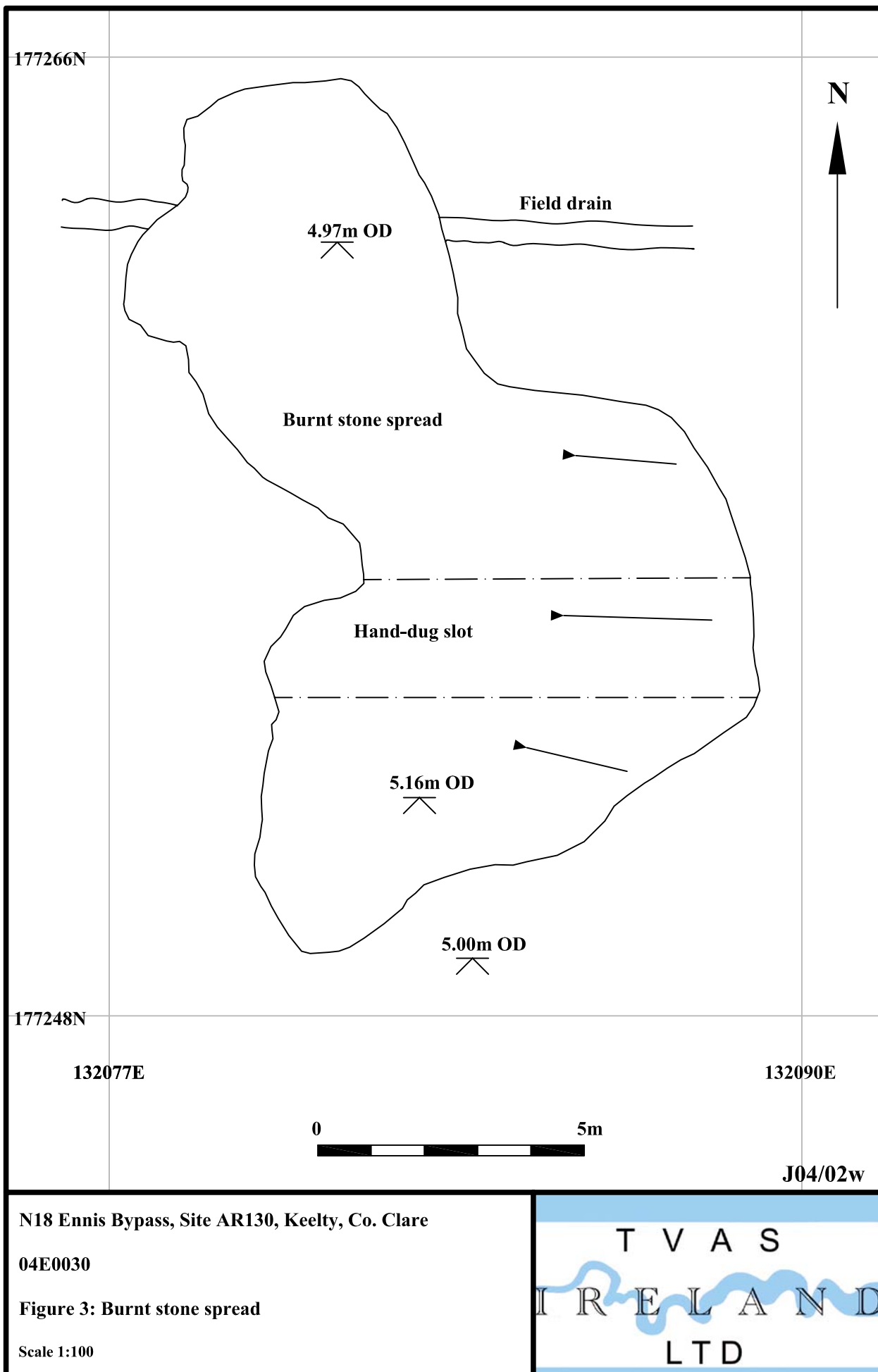
N18 Ennis Bypass, Site AR130, Keelty, Co. Clare

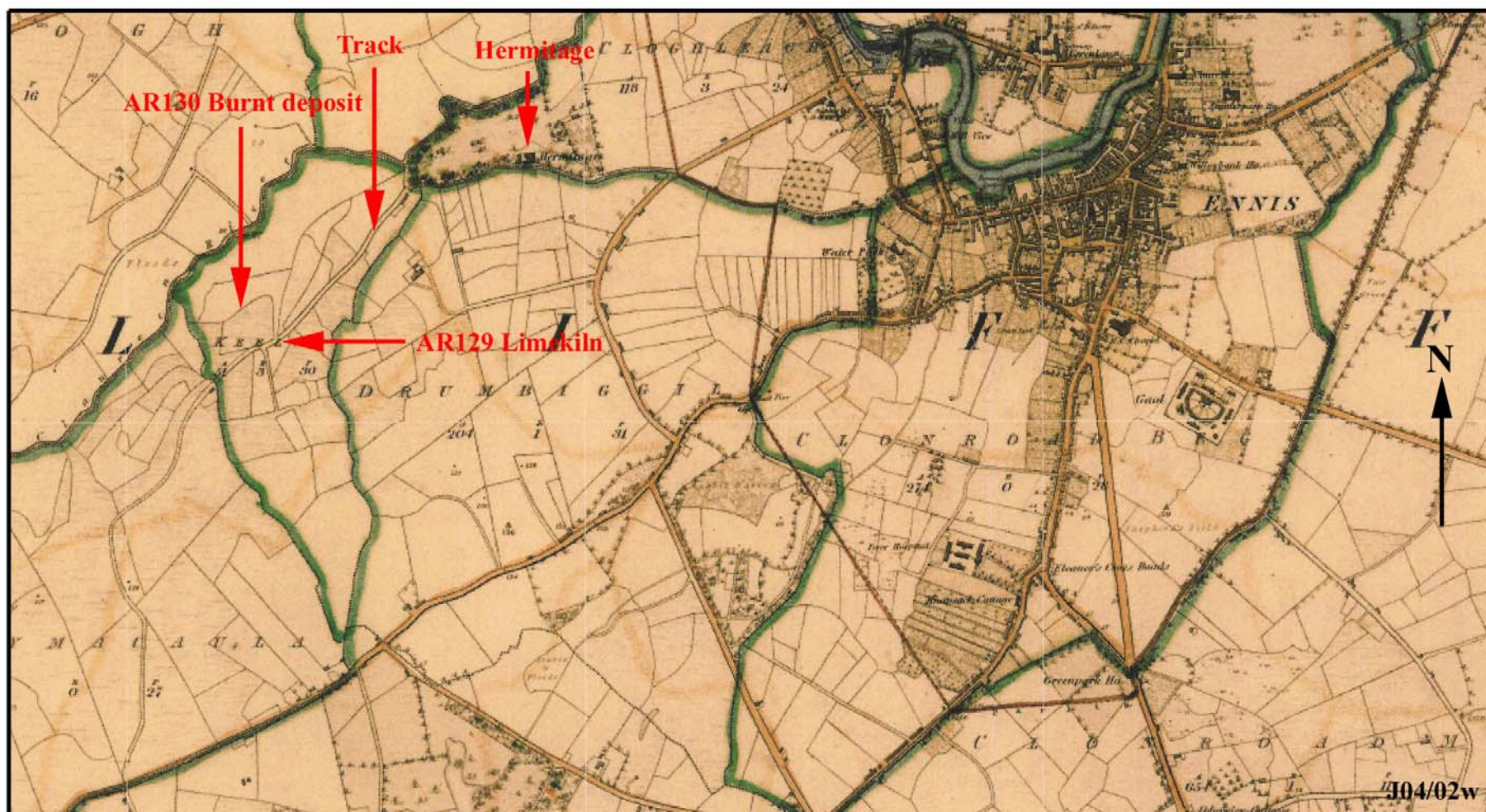
04E0025

**Figure 2: Site in local landscape.  
Showing test trenches (03E1291)**

Scale 1:5000. OSI Licence: AR0049406 Copyright OSI & Govt. of Ireland

T V A S  
I R E L A N D  
L T D





N18 Ennis Bypass, Site AR130, Keelty, Co. Clare, 04E0030

Figure 4: 1840 Ordnance Survey 1st Edition

Based on OS 6" to mile. Digital copy from Clare Library  
Not to Scale

T V A S  
I R E L A N D  
L T D





**Plate 1: Site AR130. Looking south-east. Scale 1m**



**Plate 2: Site AR130. Slot across burnt spread. Scale 0.15m**



**Plate 3. Site AR130 at testing phase. Looking west**