

FINAL REPORT
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION
MORETT (SITE 2)
M7 HEATH MAYFIELD SCHEME
Co. LAOIS
03E0429
Ancient Road

NGR 253534E, 202152N

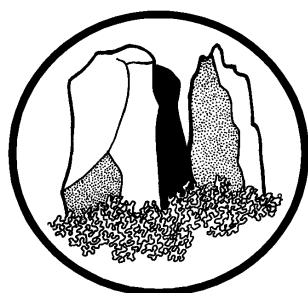


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Valerie J Keeley Ltd
Archaeological Consultancy
June 2007

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Project Director:
Site Director:

Valerie J. Keeley Ltd
Eoghan Moore

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INTRODUCTION

This report is concerned with the archaeological excavation undertaken at the site of the ‘Ancient Road’, Morett, County Laois during the period 25 March – 28 April 2003 [refer **figures 1-3**]. This archaeological excavation was undertaken subsequent to the test excavation of the site of the ‘Ancient Road’ (archaeological licence 03E0140) and in advance of the construction of the Heath-Mayfield Motorway and was carried out by Valerie J. Keeley Ltd.

THE EXCAVATION

Townland:	Morett
Parish:	Coolbanagher
Barony:	Portahinch
County:	Laois
O.S. County Laois:	8
Nat. Grid. Ref.:	253534E, 203152N
Chainage	25,000
Monument type:	‘Ancient (medieval) Road’
Record of Monuments and Places:	LA008-019
Ordnance Datum:	300-400
Date/duration:	25 March – 28 April 2003

Method Statement With Regard To The Excavation

The Method Statement proposed the full excavation of an area measuring 90 m in length (east/west axis) x 15 m in width (north/south axis) in the area occupied by the site of the ‘Ancient Road’, Morett, County Laois [refer **figures 1-3** and **plate 1**]. This area of excavation was itself divided into two specific areas of excavation each measuring approximately 45 m in length (east/west axis) x 15 m in width (north/south axis) [refer **figure 3**]. These two areas of excavation were called the Eastern excavation and the Western excavation respectively. The Western excavation was

archaeologically excavated by hand while the Eastern excavation was excavated by an earth-moving machine using a toothless bucket.

Western Excavation

The total area excavated by hand measured approximately 45 m in length (east/west axis) x 15 m in width (north/south axis) [refer **figure 3**]. The area was then divided into two distinct excavation areas termed - Area A and Area B respectively - which were separated by a baulk measuring 15 m in length (north/south axis) x 2 m in width (east/west axis) [refer **Plates 1 and 2**]. This baulk was retained (between Area A and Area B) in order to secure a section face [refer **figure 5**]. Area A measured approximately 14 m in length (east/west axis) x 15 m in width (north/south axis). Area B measured approximately 24 m in length (east/west axis) x 15 m in width (north/south axis).

Western Excavation: Area A

The excavation of the Western excavation: Area A was primarily concerned with the removal of all of the earthen deposits that lay upon the stone surface known as the 'Ancient Road' which had been uncovered during the archaeological testing of the site (archaeological licence 03E0140). In the extreme northwest Western excavation: Area A the stone surface was exposed once the topsod (**Context 1**) and the topsoil (**Context 2**) had been removed [refer **Plate 1**]. However, approximately 2 m from the north extremity of the Western excavation: Area A a peat layer (**Context 7**) was uncovered immediately beneath the topsoil (**Context 2**). The stone surface lay immediately beneath this peat layer. Moreover, approximately 3 m to the south of the northern extremity of the Western excavation: Area A a layer of red coloured compact clay (**Context 4**) was uncovered immediately beneath the topsoil (**Context 2**) and immediately on top of the peat layer (**Context 7**) [refer **Plate 1**]. In the southern area of the excavation this red coloured compact clay (**Context 4**) was also uncovered lying immediately above the natural grey glacial deposit (**Context 16**). Once the peat layer (**Context 7**) and the red coloured

compact clay layer (**Context 4**) had been removed the stone surface of the road, a section of which wheel ruts were preserved (**Context 14 and Feature 1**), was uncovered [refer **figure 4** and **Plates 3** and **4**]. The stone surface was then removed and it was found to be lying on top of a grey coloured natural glacial deposit (**Context 16**).

In addition to this, once the topsod (**Context 1**), the topsoil (**Context 2**), the peat layer (**Context 7**) and the red coloured compact clay layer (**Context 4**) had been removed a modern drain was uncovered (**Contexts 5/17**). This modern drain truncated the stone surface (and the area of the Western excavation: Area A). This modern drain was not excavated [refer **figure 4** and **plate 4**].

Western Excavation: Area B

The excavation of Western excavation: Area B (like Area A) was primarily concerned with the removal of all of the earthen deposits that lay upon the stone surface (**Context 3**) at the site of the 'Ancient Road'. This was a simple enough process as it was found that in most of Western excavation: Area B only the topsod (**Context 1**) and the topsoil (**Context 2**) covered the stone surface (**Context 3**). However, in the northwestern corner and in the southeastern corner of the Western excavation: Area B the stratigraphy became little more complex. In the northwestern area of Western excavation: Area B two deposits of soil (**Contexts 9** and **11**) were uncovered lying between the topsoil (**Context 1**) and the stone surface (**Context 3**).

In the southeast region of Western excavation: Area B the layer of peat, known in Western excavation: Area A as Context 7, was also uncovered immediately beneath the topsoil (**Context 2**). The stone surface (**Context 3**) and the preserved wheel ruts (**Feature 1**) were uncovered immediately beneath this peat layer [refer **figure 4** and **Plates 3** and **4**].

Furthermore, approximately 5 m distant from the southern extremity a layer of red coloured compact clay (known as Context 4 in the Western excavation: Area A) was also uncovered. This red coloured compact clay layer (**Context 4**) was uncovered immediately beneath the topsoil (**Context 1**) and immediately on top of the peat layer (**Context 7**).

Finally, once the red compact clay layer was removed the modern drain cut (**Contexts 5/17**) was uncovered in the extreme southeast corner of Western excavation: Area B.

Western Excavation: Area B: Southern Extension

During the excavation of the southern extension of the western area of the excavation a horizon of burnt soil (**Context 8**) was uncovered immediately beneath the topsoil (**Context 1**) and immediately on top of the stone surface (**Context 3**). On account of the presence of this burnt horizon (**Context 8**) it was recommended by the National Road Authority archaeologist (Mr. Noel Dunne) that an extension to the Western excavation: Area B should be excavated by machine to investigate the extent and nature of this burnt soil horizon. An area approximately 17 m (maximum) in length (east/west axis) x 11m (maximum) in width (east/west axis) was stripped and then excavated by machine. However, no archaeological features or artifacts/finds were uncovered during the excavation of this southern extension to the Western excavation: Area B at the site of the 'Ancient Road'. (The former owner of the site of the 'Ancient Road', Mr. Robert Young, suggested that the burnt soil horizon (**Context 8**) may be associated with modern agricultural - and specifically field clearance - activity.)

Eastern Excavation

As stated in the Method Statement the eastern excavation of the area of the 'Ancient Road', Morett, County Laois was to be excavated by an earthmoving machine utilising a toothless bucket [refer **figure 3**]. The stratigraphy in the eastern excavation was composed of topsod (**Context 1**), topsoil (**Context 2**) and a red coloured compact clay layer similar to the **Context 4** uncovered during the Western excavation of the 'Ancient Road'. Beneath this red coloured compact clay layer a natural deposit of glacial clay (known in the western excavation as **Context 16**) was uncovered. No archaeological features or artifacts/finds were uncovered during the excavation of the eastern excavation at the site of the 'Ancient Road', Morett, County Laois.

Acknowledgements

I would also like to thank the members of the excavation team – Eileen Kearney, Derek Weston, Jack McLoughney, Antonio Galvin, Ana Schleicher, Johann Andersson, Cedric Holleville, Deirdre McAlister, Sinead Dowling, Aoife Patterson, Denis Ryan, Conor Conroy, Neil Watts, Patrick Clinton, Malin Crona, Frederick Tholin, Henrick Johannsson, Mickael Bertheau, Kenneth Crotty, Patrick Flavin, Maria Golbe, Shane O'Connor and Robert Browne for their co-operation and diligence during the excavation of the 'Ancient Road', Morett, County Laois.

APPENDIX 1

DESCRIPTION OF CONTEXTS

Description of contexts

Context 1 Context 1 was composed of the topsod. Context 1 was uncovered in all of the area excavated. Context 1 measured approximately 0.05-0.10 m in depth. Context 1 was uncovered immediately above Context 2 (topsoil).

Context 2 Context 2 was composed of medium brown coloured topsoil that contained a few small stones. Context 2 was uncovered throughout the entire area of the excavation and was 0.20 m (maximum) in depth. Context 2 was uncovered immediately below Context 1.

Context 3 Context 3 constituted the stone material that made up the components of the road surface. Context 3 was uncovered immediately beneath Context 1, Context 2, Context 7 and Context 9. Three different components/strata of Context 3 were identified. The three components/strata of Context 3 were as follows:

Context 3a Context 3a was composed of a brown coloured mud/soil. Context 3a was uncovered immediately beneath Context 2 but immediately on top of, and abutting, Contexts 3b and 3c. Context 3a measured approximately 0.10 m (maximum) in depth. Context 3a was interpreted as mud/soil that accumulated between the stones of Context 3b.

Context 3b Context 3b was composed of small stones (that is, stones less than 0.10 m in length) and gravel. Context 3b was uncovered immediately beneath Context 3a. Context 3b was interpreted as stones and gravel that fell and/or were placed between the larger stones of Context 3a to create a level surface. It is unclear, however, whether Context 3b is a primarily the product of human activity or merely the result of natural deposition (or, most likely, both combined).

Context 3c Context 3c was composed of large stones (more than 0.10 m in length) which were uncovered immediately beneath Context 3a and 3b. Context 3b was interpreted as stones that constituted the foundation of the road surface. It can be debated, however, whether Context 3c should be primarily interpreted as the product of human activity or merely the result of natural deposition (or both combined).

Context 4 Context 4 was composed of an extremely compact grey/yellow coloured clay. The exposed extent of Context 4 measured approximately 20 m (maximum) in length (southwest/northeast axis) x 7 m (maximum) in width (north/south axis) x 0.15 m (maximum) in depth. Context 4 was uncovered immediately beneath Context 2 and

immediately above Contexts 3 and 7. Context 4 was interpreted as a clay deposit brought about by modern agricultural activity (land reclamation).

- Context 5** Context 5 constituted the cut for a modern drain. The exposed extent of Context 5 measured approximately 24 m in length (southwest/northeast axis) x 1.20 m (maximum) in width (northwest/southeast axis) x 0.70 m (minimum) in depth. Context 5 was uncovered immediately beneath Context 1. Context 5 truncated Contexts 2, 4, 7, 10, 15, and 16. Context 5 contained 4 fills – Context 6, Context 17, Context 18 and Context 19. Context 5 was first exposed during the test excavation at the site (archaeological licence 03E0140) and remained exposed in the eastern facing elevation of the baulk that separated Western excavation: Area A and Western excavation: Area B. However, during the current phase of archaeological excavation Context 5 was not excavated.
- Context 6** Context 6 constituted a fill of Context 5. Context 6 was composed of a sandy soil uncovered in the east facing section that separated Western excavation: Area A and Western excavation: Area B. The exposed extent of Context 6 measured approximately 0.55 m in width (north/south axis) and 0.25 m (maximum) in depth. Context 6 was uncovered immediately below Contexts 1, 18, 17 and 19 and abutted Context 7. Context 6 was dug into Context 16 (the natural glacial deposit).
- Context 7** Context 7 was composed of dark brown/black coloured natural peat formation. The exposed extent of Context 7 measured approximately 28 m (maximum) in length (northeast/southwest axis) x 8 m (maximum) in width (north/south axis) x 0.30 m (maximum) in depth. Context 7 was uncovered immediately beneath Contexts 1, 2, 4, 10, 13 and 15, and immediately above Contexts 3, 12 and 16. Context 7 was truncated by Contexts 5, 6 and 18.
- Context 8** Context 8 was composed of a black coloured burnt soil horizon that was uncovered in the extreme southwest of Western excavation: Area B. The exposed extent of Context 8 (prior to the excavation of the southern extension to the Western excavation: Area B) measured approximately 2.50 m in length (east/west axis) x 2 m in width (north/south axis) x 0.05 m in depth. Context 8 was uncovered immediately below Context 2 and immediately above Context 3a. Following the extension to Western excavation: Area B Context 8 was found to be derived from modern burning associated with modern agricultural activity (specifically field clearance).
- Context 9** Context 9 was composed of a dark brown coloured silty soil that was uncovered in the extreme northwest area of Western excavation: Area

B. The exposed extent of Context 9 measured approximately 12 m (maximum) in length (east/west axis) x 6 m (maximum) in width (north/south axis) x 0.30 m (maximum) in depth. Context 9 was uncovered immediately beneath Contexts 1 and 2 and immediately above Context 11. Context 9 was interpreted as a natural soil accumulation.

Context 10 Context 10 was composed of a light grey coloured gravel soil. Context 10 was uncovered only at the southern extremity of the eastern facing section of the baulk that separated Western excavation: Area A and Western excavation: Area B. The exposed extent of Context 10 measured approximately 4.70 m in length (north/south axis) x 0.15 m (maximum) in depth. Context 10 was uncovered immediately below Contexts 4 and 13 and immediately above Contexts 7, 12 and 15. Context 10 was truncated by Contexts 5 and 19. Context 10 was interpreted as a modern gravel deposit brought about by modern agricultural activity (specifically field clearance).

Context 11 Context 11 was composed of a dark brown coloured silt/sand deposit that was uncovered immediately beneath Context 9 in the extreme northwest of Area B. The exposed extent of Context 11 measured approximately 10 m in length (east/west axis) x 5 m in width (north/south axis) x 0.10 m (maximum) in depth. Context 11 was uncovered immediately beneath Context 9. Context 11 was uncovered immediately above Context 3b and may, therefore, be interpreted as the same as Context 3a.

Context 12 Context 12 was composed of a light grey coloured gravel/soil uncovered only at the southern extremity of the eastern facing section of the baulk that separated Western excavation: Area A and Western excavation: Area B. The exposed extent of Context 12 measured approximately 15 m in length (north/south axis) x 0.40 m (maximum) in depth. Context 12 was uncovered immediately below Context 7 and immediately above Context 16. Context 12 was interpreted as a deposit associated with agricultural activity (and specifically field clearance).

Context 13 Context 13 was composed of a light brown fine soil/gravel uncovered only at the southern extremity of the eastern facing section of the baulk that separated Western excavation: Area A and Western excavation: Area B. The exposed extent of Context 13 measured approximately 0.50 m in length (north/south axis) x 0.03 m (maximum) in depth. Context 12 was uncovered immediately below Context 4 and immediately above Context 7. Context 13 was interpreted as a deposit associated with agricultural activity (and specifically field clearance).

Context 14 Context 14 constituted the stones that made up that specific area of the road surface (Context 3) upon which the wheel ruts were uncovered. The exposed extent of Context 14 measured approximately 14 m in length (southwest/northeast axis) x 2.50 m in width

(northwest/southeast axis) and 0.10 m (maximum) in depth. Context 14 was uncovered immediately beneath Contexts 1, 2, 4 and 7 and immediately above Context 16.

- Context 15** Context 15 was composed of a light grey coloured gravel that contained large stones uncovered only at the southern extremity of the eastern facing section of the baulk that separated Western excavation: Area A and Western excavation: Area B. The exposed extent of Context 15 measured approximately 3.20 m in length (north/south axis) x 1.20 m (maximum) in depth. Context 15 was uncovered immediately beneath Context 10 and immediately above Context 7. Context 15 was abutted by Contexts 5 and 18. Context 15 was interpreted as a natural deposit.
- Context 16** Context 16 was composed of a grey coloured natural gravel. Context 16 was uncovered which was uncovered immediately beneath Contexts 3, 7, 12, 14 (the stone surface with preserved wheel ruts) and Context 12. Context 16 was truncated by Contexts 5 and 6. Context 16 was interpreted as the natural.
- Context 17** Context 17 constituted a fill of Context 5. Context 17 was composed of a grey coloured mixed clay and gravel fill uncovered only at the southern extremity of the eastern facing section of the baulk that separated Western excavation: Area A and Western excavation: Area B. The exposed extent of Context 17 measured approximately 24 m in length (southwest/northeast axis) x 0.80 m (maximum) in width (north/south axis) and 0.35 m in depth. Context 17 was uncovered immediately beneath Context 1 and immediately above Context 19. Context 17 abutted Contexts 2 and 4. Context 17 was interpreted as the modern fill for the modern drain cut (Context 5).
- Context 18** Context 18 constituted a fill of Context 5. Context 18 was composed of a grey/black coloured mixture of peat and gravel that was uncovered only at the southern extremity of the eastern facing section of the baulk that separated Western excavation: Area A and Western excavation: Area B. The exposed extent of Context 5 measured approximately 0.50 m in length (north/south axis) x 0.06 m in depth.
- Context 19** Context 19 constituted a fill of Context 5. Context 19 was composed of a grey/brown coloured mixture of soil and gravel that was uncovered only at the southern extremity of the eastern facing section of the baulk that separated Western excavation: Area A and Western excavation: Area B. The exposed extent of Context 19 measured approximately 0.60 m in length (north/south axis) x 0.12 m (maximum) in depth.

APPENDIX 2

DESCRIPTION OF FEATURES

Description of archaeological features

Feature 1: The stone surface

The major problem of the excavation was the identification of the actual extent of the stone road surface itself [refer **figure 4**]. Early in the excavation it was recognised that the stone surface of the ‘Ancient Road’ (**Context 3**) was made up of a (at minimum) two different stone sizes that were referred to within the definition of **Context 3**. The larger stones of **Context 3**, that is those with a length of more than 0.10 m, were called **Context 3c**. The stones that constituted **Context 3c** were interpreted as those stones that constituted the foundation of the road. The smaller stones, that is those stones that measured less than 0.10 m, were called **Context 3b**. The stones that constituted **Context 3b** were interpreted as those stones that were used as infill in order to level off any unevenness created by the larger stones of **Context 3c**. This procedure created a flat stone surface that would have facilitated ease of movement upon the stone surface of the ‘Ancient Road’.

However, in the aftermath of the uncovering of the preserved wheel ruts in only one area of the stone surface of **Context 3b** it was realised that the stones in this area of the road surface (upon which the wheel ruts were extant) were arranged in a much more compact manner than those of **Context 3b**. On account of this it was decided that a new context number – **Context 14** - be given to the area of the stone surface upon which the stones on which the wheel ruts were uncovered. The exposed extent of the preserved wheel ruts measured approximately 12.5 m (maximum) in length (southwest/northeast axis) x 0.20 m (maximum) in width (northwest/southeast axis) and 0.05 (maximum) in depth.

APPENDIX 3

CATALOGUE OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL ARTEFACTS/FINDS

Find No.	Description	Area	Context
03E0429: 1	Pottery sherd	BII	2
03E0429:2	Pottery sherd	BII	2
03E0429:3	Pottery sherd	BII	2
03E0429:4	Potter sherd	BII	2
03E0429:5a-b	Pottery sherds (2 fragments)	BII	2
03E0429:6	Pottery sherd	AI	2
03E0429:7	Pottery sherd	AI	2
03E0429:8	Pottery sherd	AI	2
03E0429:9	Pottery sherd	AI	2
03E0429:10	Bone fragment	AI	3a
03E0429:11	Pottery sherd	AI	3a
03E0429:12	Pottery sherds	AI	3a
03E0429:13	Bone fragment	AI	3a
03E0429:14	Animal tooth	AI	3a
03E0429:15	Pottery sherds	AI	3a
03E0429:16	Pottery sherd	AI	3a
03E0429:17	Iron object	BII	2/3a
03E0429:18	Bone fragment	AI	3a
03E0429:19	Pottery sherd	AI	2
03E0429:20	Iron object	AI	3
03E0429:21	Iron object/nail	AI	3
03E0429:22	Pottery sherd	BIII	3a
03E0429:23	Iron fragment	BIII	3a
03E0429:24	Clay pipe fragment	AI	3a
03E0429:25	Pottery sherd	AI	2
03E0429:26	Iron object	AI	4
03E0429:27	Iron nail	AI	2
03E0429:28	Bone fragment	AI	3

03E0429:29	Bone fragment	BIII	3a
03E0429:30	Pottery sherd	AI	3a
03E0429:31	Pottery sherd	AI	3a
03E0429:32	Pottery sherd	AI	3a
03E0429:33	Pottery sherd	AI	3a
03E0429:34	Iron nail	AI	2
03E0429:35	Pottery sherd	BII	2
03E0429:36a-c	Pottery sherds (3 pieces)	AI	3a
03E0429:37	Pottery sherd	AI	2
03E0429:38	Clay pipe	AI	2
03E0429:39	Bone fragment	AI	2
03E0429:40	Pottery sherd	AI	3b
03E0429:41	Bone fragment	BII	4
03E0429:42	Iron object	BIII	2
03E0429:43	Pottery sherd	BI	2
03E0429:44a-b	Pottery sherds	BII	2
03E0429:45	Animal tooth	BIII	9
03E0429:46	Animal teeth	BIII	3
03E0429:47	Pottery sherd	AI	4
03E0429:48	Animal tooth	AI	4
03E0429:49	Bone fragment	BIII	3a
03E0429:50	Bone fragment	BIII	9
03E0429:51	Metal button	BIII	2
03E0429:52	Iron object	BI	4/7
03E0429:53	Flint fragment	AII	4
03E0429:54	Animal tooth	AII	4
03E0429:55	Coin	AI	4
03E0429:56	Coin	BI	3

APPENDIX 4

COINS REPORT

Coins from Morett, Co. Laois. 03E0429.

03E0429:AI:C3:55:

English halfpenny. Victoria. Copper. 1860-1882. 'Bun head' issue. Obverse: Bust facing left; Legend (VICTORIA D:G: BRITT: REG: F: D) not visible. Reverse: Trace of Britannia seated facing right, holding trident; Legend (HALFPENNY) and date not visible. Badly worn. 25.3mm x 1.5mm.

030429:B1:C3:56:

Irish halfpenny: George III. Copper. 1774-1782, possibly 1776. 'London coinage' type 3. Obverse: Laureate bust with long hair facing right; (GEOR)GIVS III REX. Reverse: Crowned harp; HIBERNI(A) 17*6?. Badly worn. 26.6mm x 1.5mm.

J. Mac Dermott.

APPENDIX 5

MEDIEVAL POTTERY REPORT

**A note on the pottery
from Morrett, Co. Laois (03E0429)
(Heath-Mayfield)**

Clare McCutcheon MA MIAI

A total of thirteenth sherds of pottery from two contexts were presented for study. Of these three sherds (23%) are medieval in date. The detailed information is presented in Table 1.

This small assemblage is interesting because of the apparent continuity of material from medieval to late medieval and post-medieval glazed earthenwares.

Context	Fabric type	Finds number	Form	Date
2	Medieval local	1(B), 5, 35	Jug	13 th /14 th
	Late medieval local	6, 7	Jug	15 th /16 th
	Glazed red earthenware	5, 19, 27, 43	Bowl	18 th /19 th
3A	Late medieval local	12, 32	Jug	15 th /16 th
	Mottled ware	29(RS)	Bowl	18 th
	Glazed red earthenware	22	Bowl	18 th /19 th

Table 1: Pottery from Morrett, Co. Laois (03E0429).

The medieval sherds are typical of the period, the base sherd decorated with thumbing. All three sherds are in a red-firing clay with traces of glaze on the exterior. There is nothing particularly diagnostic about either the clay or the shape as many Anglo-Norman glazed wares in Ireland were very similar in form in the 13th and early 14th centuries.

Four sherds may be of a later medieval date, as, although glazed on the exterior in the manner of medieval wares, the glaze is much thicker than the typical medieval patchy glaze and the sherds appear to be in a finer, cleaner clay.

A single sherd of possible mottled ware, the thick pulled lip of a bowl rather than from a jug, was also identified. While not in the typical heavy treacle mottling, the pale clay suggests mottled ware rather than glazed red earthenware.

Five sherds of glazed red earthenware, also called brownware, complete the assemblage. These are generally identified from the interior glaze although some of the sherds are laminated and no glaze appears on any surface. In this case it is more appropriate to err on the side of caution and allocate them to the post-medieval period when this type of ware was commonly found. One of the sherds has a near stoneware type firing but the fabric is earthenware and the small size of the sherd makes more positive identification difficult.

APPENDIX 6

LITHICS REPORT

Morett, Co. Laois 03E0429: Lithic Report

Dr Nyree Finlay, department of Archaeology, University of Glasgow
8 July 2005

A single black chert rolled chunk was submitted for analysis from the excavation of a reported ancient road. This piece is heavily rolled with some fresh scalar removals along one edge. It is most probable that it is a naturally struck and rolled chert piece with subsequent natural edge damage as there is no conclusive evidence of deliberate reduction or modification.

Catalogue Description 03E0429:4:53

Black chert; rolled thick flake/chunk with some cortex and a removal at 90°. Length of bifacial steep scalar removals along one edge, probably post depositional edge damage given its fresh condition. L16mm; W 26mm; Th 10mm.

APPENDIX 7

POST MEDIEVAL POTTERY REPORT

POST-MEDIEVAL POTTERY REPORT

FOR HEATH/MAYFIELD

By Fiona White



Introduction:

The general cut off date used to separate the medieval from the post-medieval, is normally set at AD1500. This date is significant because it corresponds to a certain degree with the shift towards different centres of production and export, as exploitation and settlement of the Americas was developed (Meenan 1990). The date for this assemblage ranges from the late 17th century to the early 20th century. The majority of the sherds date from the 17th and 18th centuries. Due to the lack of rim sherds it was difficult to carry out minimum vessel counts. A description of the different wares and their origins is provided. Where post-medieval pottery is evident, it is possible to give a likely date, due to the circulation and rapid changes in styles, during this period, both of English and imported wares.

TINGLAZED EARTHENWARE

Tinglazed earthenware, earthenwares coated after firing with a moist powdered glaze (of tin-oxide, lead oxide and ground glass) and painted in a small range of high temperature colours before a second firing. Sometimes called delftware was first made in England in the early 16th century and the main centres of manufacture in the 17th were Southwark and Lambeth, London, Bristol. The technique of tinglazing was introduced to England from the Continent during the 16th. The smooth white glaze enabled potters to decorate their wares with a range of bright colours for the first time. The forms change as well, Mugs, bottles and posset pots were increasingly made of tinglazed earthenware from the 1630's often decorated in imitation of Chinese porcelain. Also see scenic decorations on dishes of Flemish influence i.e. great religious subjects or flowers or landscapes.

17th century lighter blues 18th century darker blues more sophisticated copies. Tinged was popular up to the end of the 18th century but from the 1750's came under increasing competition from soft paste porcelain and from creamware. New types of teawares were made and new decorative styles evolved. Main centres Lambeth Bristol Liverpool and Glasgow and Ireland.

STONEWARE

Highly fired vitrified earthenwares known as stonewares were imported in quantity from Germany as stoneware was first made commercially in England in 1670's by John Dwight of Fulham. You see its manufacture and spread to London Nottingham and Staffordshire and elsewhere by 1700. Various types of clay became vitrified at a temperature of around 1300 degrees and pots fired in this way known as stonewares are impervious to liquids and are very strong. A good deal of stoneware was imported from Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries. The ware spread very quickly from Fulham to Nottingham and Staffordshire. Early English Stoneware was variously glazed and decorated and was grey brown and red in fabric colour. Slide of ware

From 1730's Staffordshire potters were able to heighten the colour of their stoneware body by adding Devonshire clay and calcite flints that also made it easier to turn and mould. These wares are invariably salt-glazed and have sometimes been painted in enamels and refined or have been gilded. They were gradually superseded by creamware some jugs have silver mounts.

CREAMWARE

The manufacture of porcelain well established by 1760 but these were essentially luxury objects being expensive and none too practical. The middle class market for teawares and dinner services was mostly satisfied by the earthenware potters of Staffordshire which developed rapidly in the 18th century local clays being whitened and strengthened by the addition of calcified flints and pipe clay. This mixture which vitrifies at a high temperature was first used for saltglaze stoneware. Fired at a lower temperature and with an almost colourless lead glaze it made a whitish earthenware which came to be known as creamware.

In the 1740's this clay was often combined with other darker clays producing marbled wares. From about 1750 creamware began to be painted in enamels. Through out the 1760's Wedgwood was improving his creamware and by 1768 he had made it paler and stonger largely by introducing the porcelain materials of china clay and having received the patronage of Queen Charlotte he called it Queensware and it achieved almost a monopoly of the tableware trade. Wedgwood was also responsible for the development of a new class of highly fired porcellaneous biscuit stonewares known as Jaspers which were in production from 1774 ideally suited fashionable demand for decorative objects in the style of Graeco-Roman antiquities The Grand Tour.

BLACKWARE

Traditional blackwares were transformed into Black Basalt a superlative black stoneware Wedgewoods success led his competitors to develop similar wares and by the end of the 18th century durable earthenwares and stonewares were gaining new mass markets. Black ware production centres in Buckley in Wales and in Lancashire. From Irish contexts North Devon wares which outnumber all other groups but blackware from Buckley in Wales and Lancashire was exported to Ireland in vast quantities and English tinglazed earthenware and stoneware has also been discovered.

SLIPWARE

A major characteristic of the new developments in England was the use of applied slip on earthenwares. The fast effective and versatile decorative techniques of slip-trailing and incising designs on to a slipped surface enabled potters to develop a range of attractive and marketable items. During the early to mid-seventeenth century a number of distinctive regional slipware styles emerged across the south-east and south-west and in the Midlands.

NORTH DEVON

According to Meenan imports to Ireland increased dramatically from the middle of the seventeenth century. This can be partly explained by a close interconnection between North Devon merchants, the pottery industry there, the production of butter and its export from Ireland particularly the south. Very coarse highly fired glaze grey and green occur frequently at Waterford, Dublin Cork. Waterford imported a lot of ND due to the butter importation.

WESTERWALD

Produced from the mid eighteenth century onwards. The ware is very specialized, principally forms produced for the tavern, kitchen and cellar. The sherds from this group seem to be body sherds of tankards. The main body is a grey/blue colour and the outlines are filled with cobalt-blue, mainly incised foliage and scrolls. In the 16th century potters were banished from the centre of the city of Cologne, because the poisonous chlorine fumes emitted by the kilns during the salting process.

Local and Native Wares from Urban Contexts in Ireland

It is important to differentiate between native and local wares. Irish fine ceramics (excluding finer local earthenwares) are considered to be native wares as their production was concentrated in certain centres like Dublin and Belfast (Dunlevy, 1988), where the resources and capital were available. They were then exported abroad or sold to the elite Irish clientele. It is difficult to class earthenwares as similar in fabric and form from all centres. They were almost certainly locally made and then transported around the country. The ware is heavy and bulky and created for domestic use and therefore uneconomical for transport over long distances (Meenan, 1997).

The discovery of kiln furniture, saggers and wasters from some excavations like Red Abbey Yard, Cork (McCutcheon, 1995), supports the notion that the wares are local. Earthenware sherds represent domestic vessels, glazed and unglazed, like storage jars, chamber pots, cooking vessels and jugs. The decorated local earthenwares, in comparison to the finer native wares are limited in their style and production. The earthenware collection also includes an Irish version of blackware (Meenan, 1997). Irish blackware and glazed red earthenware were discovered together from a number of excavations, and most significantly the post-medieval kiln discovered from Tuam Co. Galway, where potters were producing both blackware and earthenware simultaneously (Meenan, 1996).

CONCLUSION

The greatest source of imported pottery comes from England. This can be explained by market trends and popular fashions. The date for the majority of the finds falls into the late 17th century to late 18th century.

CATALOGUE:

03E0635 Kill Monasteravin f10 fn 88-102
Find no. 88 local ware base sherd plate? Brown glaze
Find no. 92 earthenware sherd no glaze
Find no. 93 English brownware 1 sherd
Find no. 102 body sherd brown glaze English
Find no 101 body sherd brown glaze
Find no. 90 body sherd brown glaze
Find no. 89 body sherd brown glaze
Find no. 98 body sherd brown glaze
Find no. 91 body sherd brown glaze
Find no. 95 body sherd brown glaze
Find no. 100 body sherd brown glaze
Find no. 97 body sherd brown glaze
Find no. 96 Buckley blackware
Find no. 99 local green glaze
Find no. 94 local green glaze
03E635 f.30 kill find no 175 mottled ware
03E0635 174 staffordshire slipware/sgraffitto

03E0429 Morrett Co. Laois. B2 C2 find no. 3 earthenware sherd
03E0461 Morrett site D Stray find find no. 44 gravel-tempered north Devon, find no.
45 earthenware English brownware glazed
03E0429 Morret Co. Laois A1 C3a brownware
03E0429 Morrett Co. Laois A1 C3 find no. 31 brown sherd

Kill 03E0635 f16B find 113-115: one tinglazed earthenware, possibly pearlware plate,
one blackware sherd, one local ware sherd
03E0635 F44 Trench 6 find no. 149-158: mottledware sherds
03E0635 Trench 6 f48 162-172: find no. 162 base sherd of stoneware ink
bottle/whiskey jar, find no. 165: 2 tinglazed earthenware plate, find no. 169:
mottledware, find no. 168: blackware sherd likely Buckley, find no. 164: local ware
rim sherd of bowl brown glaze, find no. 166: Staffordshire Blackware, find no. 163
English stoneware base sherd of jar, find no. 170 mottled ware sherd, find no. 172
earthenware tile, find no. 171 mottled ware, find no. 167 mottled ware sherd.

Morrett Co. Laois A1 C3 find no. 36: Buckley blackware 3 sherds.
Fulachta Fiadh Morrett Co. Laois C3 find no. 2: North Devon gravel-tempered rim
sherds. Find no. 1: Blackware one sherd probably Staffordshire.

03E0635 Kill Monasteravin June 2003 Find no 64 28 sherds: of a local? Earthenware
brown glazed milk pan with a pouring lip.
03E0635 Kill Monasteravin Clean Back/topsoil mixture of local light brown glazed
earthenware of domestic storage jars and Blackware milk pans

Bally davis site 2 03E0966 area 1 trench 1 Co33 pottery find no. 8 clay?

03E0461 Morrett area 11/12 C13 find no. 60 blackware body sherd

03E0429 Morrett Co. Laois A1 C3 Pottery find no. 15 blackware

BallyDavis site B 03E0966 area 1 Trench 2 C005 find no. 5: North Devon rim sherd
Bowl

03E0635 Kill f21 trench A finds 122-124: Dark green glaze North Devon gravel free
base and body sherds of bowl.

03E0429 Morrett Co. Laois A1 C2 find no. 8: brown glazed earthenware
03E0429 find no. 30 brown glazed earthenware
03E0429 Morrett Co. Laois B2 C2 Pottery find no. 44 2 sherds earthenware
03E0429 Morrett Co. Laois C4 find 47 slipware Staffordshire
03E0429 Morrett Co. Laois A1 C2 find 9 tinglazed earthenware
03E0429 Morrett Co. Laois A1 C3 find no. 16 Blackware Staffordshire
03E0429 Morrett Co. Laois A1 C3B find 40 brown glazed earthenware
03E0429 Morrett Co. Laois B2 C2 Pottery find no. 2 blackware Staffordshire
03E0429 Morrett Co. Laois B2 C2 find 4 blackware Staffordshire
03E0429 Morrett Co. Laois A1 C2 find 25 earthenware
03E0429 Morrett Co. Laois A1 C3 find 11 North Devon gravel-free

Heath/Mayfield 03E00350 site 20 cillin fl finds 60-141

60 local ware/light brown glaze
61 blackwar/Staffordshire
62 brown glaze/ earthenware
63 brown glaze earthenware
64 blackware local?
65 earthenware/brown glaze
66 staffordshire slipwar/bowl
67 blackwar/Buckley
68 earthenware/ brown glaze
69 local ware/light brown glaze
70 Blackware/ Staffordshire
71 local ware
72 local ware/brown glaze
73 slipware/Staffordshire
74 North Devon brown glaze
75 North Devon brown glaze
76 earthenware no glaze
77 Blackware/Buckley
78 stoneware
79 earthenware/brown glaze
80 earthen ware no glaze
81 earthenware/ brown glaze
82 blackware/ Staffordshire
83 earthenware/ brown glaze
84 Staffordshire blackware
85 earthenware no glaze
86 Staffordshire blackware

- 87 earthenware brown glaze
- 88 Staffordshire blackware
- 89 brown glazed earthenware
- 90 brown glazed earthenware
- 91 Staffordshire blackware
- 92 Buckley blackware
- 93 Staffordshire blackware
- 94 mottled ware
- 95 medieval?
- 96 mottle ware
- 97 blackware/local
- 98 Stoneware/English
- 99 Blackware/Buckley
- 100 blackware/local
- 101 earthenware/ no glaze
- 102 earthenware brown/Staffordshire
- 103 earthenware/ clear lead glaze
- 104 blackware/ Buckley
- 105 local ware/clear glaze
- 106 earthenware no glaze
- 107 earthenware brown glaze
- 108 earthenware brown glaze
- 109 blackware/buckley
- 110 local ware brown glaze
- 111 blackware Staffordshire
- 112 brown glaze/earthenware
- 113 brown glaze earthenware
- 114 brown glaze earthenware
- 115 brown glaze earthenware
- 116 Buckley blackware
- 117 earthenware brown glaze
- 118 blackware/Staffordshire
- 119 local ware/ light brown glaze
- 120 blackware/local
- 121 mottled ware
- 122 earthenware local
- 123 earthenware/ green glaze
- 124 brown glazed earthenware
- 125 North Devon
- 126 Blackware/Staffordshire
- 127 blackware/Staffordshire
- 128 local
- 129 blackware/Staffordshire
- 130 local ware light brown glaze
- 131 local/brown glaze
- 132 blackware Buckley
- 133 North Devon
- 134 no glaze earthenware
- 135 Buckley blackware

136 blackware with slip Staffordshire
137 North Devon gravel free
138 earthenware brown glaze
139 brown glazed earthenware
140 North Devon gravel free
141 earthenware brown glaze

03E00350 Heath/Mayfield site 20 cillin f28
find no. 186-189: tinglazed plate
03E00350 same as above cut B 351-352 tinglazed earthenware
03E00350 site 20 find 385-401 creamware
03E00350 site 20 find 465 – 476 blackware from Staffordshire
03E00350 site 20 find 94- 108 North Devon green gravel-free, find no. 85 North
Devon green gravel-free, find no. 367-377 sherds comprised of pearlware tinglazed/
blue design, local ware brown glaze, North Devon brown glaze, modern, blackware/
Staffordshire and North Devon gravel-tempered.
Find no. 142-185:tinglazed cobalt blue, pearlware, printed creamware and modern
stoneware.
Find no. 183 green glazed earthenware
Find no. 327-342: brown glazed earthenware and Staffordshire blackware.
Find no. 402-408 English Staffordshire tankard of blackware
Find no. 447- 462 stoneware, creamware, tinglazed cobalt blue
Find no. 22 blackware
Find no. 89 creamware
Find no. 271-284 Westerwald and creamware
Find no. 34 Buckley blackware
Find no. 285-300 Buckley blackware
Find no. 196 buckley blackware
Find no. 317-326 Buckley blackware
Find no. 363-364 earthenware and stoneware
Find no. 378-384 Buckley blackware
Find no. 192-193 Buckley blackware
Find no. 194 tinglazed earthenware

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APPENDIX 8

METAL REPORT

Report on the Metal Artefacts
(Ferrous & Non-Ferrous)
From Heath Mayfield, Co. Laois
For Valerie J. Keeley Ltd



By Órla Scully, MA MIAI

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Introduction.

There are five sites from the area of Heath Mayfield from which metal artefacts have been found. These are Ballydavis, (03E0151); Kill, (03E0350); Morett 1(03E0429); Morett 2 (03E0461) and Cappakeel (03E0633).

The objects have been examined, measured and placed in a tabular catalogue. Some of the objects have been conserved. If this is the case, the finds number is accompanied by an asterisk in the 'finds no.' column in the catalogue. The finds from each site are grouped separately, and discussed according to the function of the object. The function categories include Dress, Domestic, Horse, Miscellaneous, Personal, Structural, Tools and Weaponry. Three C₁₄ dates were obtained from the sites. Ballydavis 2 yielded a date of 1690 +/- 35 BP, that is c. 260 A.D, from a pit containing a female burial, placing this group of features in the Iron Age. Two C₁₄ dates from Morett 2 ranged from 2045 to 1540 BP a range from 100 BC to 400 AD, also Iron Age.

Ballydavis, 03E0151

The finds from this site were very prestigious and reflect its posited interpretation as a royal or ceremonial site, (preliminary report page 9). Two objects indicated habitation. These are classed under the category of **domestic objects** in the accompanying catalogue. The first is a possible handle, (c.948:83). It is a circular-sectioned curved iron bar, which is incomplete. This object may possibly have functioned as a handle, but it is a tentative identification, and a parallel as yet has not been found. The second item in this category is a probable needle, (402:1007). It is an

incomplete iron shaft, with a mainly circular section, flattened at one end, where it is broken. At this terminal, the beginnings of a bifurcation can be seen. This may represent the remains of the eye of the needle, punched into the flattened end. The point is incomplete. Its present length is over 6cms. It is almost identical to an example found at Freestone Hill in an Iron Age hillfort. That example was associated with another complete iron needle, thought by the excavator to have been used in leather working.¹

In the category of **dress** belongs a small circular copper alloy disc, (905:80) with a symmetrical floral motif; with radiating lines between the petals has an incomplete attachment, part of a loop, at the rear. This is a button. Its provenance is from over a cobbled trackway north of a field boundary evident on the earliest ordnance survey map. It is likely to date to an early modern time. Buttons ‘probably came into the repertoire of everyday dress in England and continental Europe in the early 13th century’.² The tapered end of a copper alloy pin (199:5) is not in itself diagnostic. It most probably represents the pin of a fibula rather than the tip of a dress pin. The disc-headed form of Irish dress pin and the swan’s neck pin predate ringed pins, which originated in Ireland ‘sometime during the late fourth or early fifth century A.D.’³

Under the heading of **horse equipment** is a likely nail (905:76). This example with the head intact has a flattened triangular head and a narrow shaft. The find is a late one, as ‘the introduction of horseshoes may to some extent parallel the increasing use of metallised streets in 9th-11th century settlements’.⁴ The find was retrieved from the deposit over a cobbled trackway.

A copper alloy mount, (402:17) is incomplete and thus catalogued with **miscellaneous** objects. It consists of sheet metal, sub-rectangular with a rounded end, through which two small flat rivets are driven, securing the scant remains of a second sheet. It may be part of a vessel. The same feature produced a strap of iron, (402:1008) in a poor state of preservation, possibly perforated, but this may be as a result of the corrosion process. That feature (402), the upper fill of a circular ditch,

¹ Raftery, B (1969, 72-3)

² Egan and Pritchard, (1991), 272

³ Fanning, T. (1994) 52

⁴ Ottaway, P. (1992) 707

also yielded a copper alloy fibula, see below. A possible whittle tang of an iron knife, (454:87) is also included in this category, as its incomplete nature makes the identification a hesitant one. Other unidentified objects include the curved iron bar, (157:1009) and the iron lozenge-shaped disc (160:1010), which may have served as a mount. Another piece of roughly shaped iron (310:81) has the suggestion of an original perforation.

In the category of **personal** objects are the most prizes pieces of the assemblage. A copper alloy fibula (402:48) is well preserved, though not complete. The name comes from the thin pointed leg bone, (of birds?), which served from early times as a pin. The object consists of a rectangular-sectioned bar, tapered at one end and flattened, with a central groove a bifurcated to an uneven sided V. The other end of the short bar (46mm on straight side), is angled downwards (18mm) and terminates in a coiled spring. Adhesion on the spring may represent the remains of the pin. The outer side is decorated along its length with two grooves, forming a ridge, decorated by raised rectangles in relief. Inside the end where the spring is, a barely visible circular stamped design, with what may be a pattern of interlace inside. The conservator detected traces of silver here. Of the three classes of Irish fibulae, or safety pin brooches described by Raftery, it most closely resembles the rod-bow type. Its lines most closely resemble that found at Lecarrow, Co. Sligo, a type thought to owe their genesis to contacts with the Wessex region of England in the 3rd century BC.⁵ Another piece of personal jewellery is the piece of bracelet made from copper alloy, (197: (?8)4). This crescent-shaped piece is circular in section (3mm), with one broken end and the other terminal is flat-ended. The circumference would have been in the region of the surviving length - which is 45mm. That is quite small, and presumably would have been worn by a young woman or young child.

A very artistically curved strip of flattened copper alloy (402:48), came from the same context as the fibula. One terminus is broken. There are four loops in the object which may have adorned a neck or wrist. Note the strip is not twisted, as in a ribbon torc, but created on the flat. To date I have not seen a direct parallel.

⁵ Waddell, (1998), 311

Objects categorised as structural elements include two rivet heads, with some wood still adhering to the partial remains of the shaft; two nail shafts fragments, a piece of strap with wood adhering to one side which may have been attached to a casket. Several nails from an Iron Age context were found at Freestone Hill.⁶ One of the rivet heads and the strap came from the same burial pit, (036). A short complete tack, with a domed head may have attached leather to a shield. 'Composite shields of leather and wood shields may have been common and of different shapes, with metal attachments of various sorts, as a series of miniature hide-shaped shields from Britain demonstrates'.⁷ Finally, the iron object categorised as a tool is very likely to have functioned as an awl, like that found at Maiden Castle, a middle Iron Age site in Britain, where smithing 'was undertaken at the household level to improve the longevity of all basic tools'.⁸

Kill, 03E0350, Co. Kildare, (M7 Heath Mayfield).

This site was the location of a *cillin*, a burial place for children who died before they were baptised. A Catholic burial practice, thankfully no longer practised, thought these un-baptised children not to be in a state of grace and thus not fit to be buried in hallowed ground until they had served a period of time in the nether world of Limbo, awaiting a suitable time to get to heaven. In the case of Kill, 'Local tradition recalls an infant inhumation on the site in the first half of the nineteenth century'.⁹ The 1939 edition of the Ordnance Survey depicts the site as 'Children's Burial Ground (Disused)'. All but one of the pins recovered were associated with infant burials, the exception was associated with a bone scatter. The catalogue details the dimensions of each fragment. The pins were all made from copper alloy and were retrieved from thirteen separate contexts (all related to burials). There were forty two fragments in all, twenty nine of which are fragments of shafts. Six of the pins; Find no. 17 in F41, no. 18 in F49, no. 24 in F53, no. 25 in F52, no. 41 in F83 and no. 50 in F67 had textile attached - despatched at the time of writing for further analysis. In thirteen cases, the head of the pin survived. In all cases, the head was formed with wire. The only

⁶ Raftery, 1969, 74.

⁷ Waddell, 1998, 310

⁸ Sharples, N, 1991, 107.

⁹ VJK Ltd, Unpublished Preliminary Report Archaeological Excavation, Kill, Co. Kildare.

complete example (F41:17) was 24mm long with a shaft diameter of 1.5mm. The head diameter was 2mm. The majority of pin shafts were only 1mm in diameter.

Brass pins with spiral wound heads are known from as early as the 13th century. There was a pinners' guild in York in the fourteenth century. The term sewing pin is usually used to differentiate between them and larger, sometimes decorated, 'dress pins'. They are very often retrieved from post-medieval graves, from whence the term 'shroud pins'. 'The pins were produced from sheets brass, strips of which were drawn by hand through steel draw plates...to form thin wire. This was then cut on a grinding wheel to form the shank, which was then pointed by filing. More wire, wound on a mandrel of corresponding diameter, was cut into sections long enough for two or two and a half spirals, annealed, and then attached to the shank. Usually a drop-stamp was used to achieve the double purpose of attaching the head and setting the spiral in a globular shape. Such methods remained in use essentially unchanged until the early nineteenth century'¹⁰. Manufacture became more mechanised by the end of the eighteenth century, and by the end of the 19th century a machine method was introduced which made the head from the shank itself, producing a solid head. This method was 'not perfected until 1880. Until then the solid heads tended to be rather soft and the older spiral-wound variety continued to be used'¹¹. It would appear that this older method of production used by the source of the pins used in the cillín in Kill.

Morett 1,03E0429, (Heath Mayfield)

All finds from this site were iron. A possible hook for **domestic** purposes consisted of a spike at one end, with the other end turned in a U-shape. Alternatively, it could be an incomplete staple. Other **structural** items from this site included a partial head of a round-headed nail with rectangular shaft, part of a nail shaft, a rectangular headed nail fragment which may have been a horse shoe nail. A curved short bar may have been a part of a rivet. From the same context, (002), came two horse shoe nails. A possible buckle pin is tentatively identified as such, as it is incomplete and unattached. Finally, a part of a scissors consisted of one arm of the handle complete with loop which fits three fingers. Scissors are far less common than shears in medieval contexts. Three scissors from the catalogue of medieval finds from London 'are probably of late

¹⁰ Biddle and Barclay, (1990) 560

¹¹ Op cit 565

thirteenth-or-fourteenth century date, the period when they generally came into more common use'.¹²

Morett 2, 03E0461 (Heath Mayfield)

The iron rim of a vessel is curved which may have belonged to a vessel some 120mm in diameter. A body sherd of the same vessel was recovered from the same context. In Garryfuff, Co. Cork, O Kelly found several iron vessel escutcheons, from an early Christian ringfort where, like Morett, evidence for metal working was plentiful.¹³ Also found on that site were two iron ladles, with diameters of c. 100mm.

The only evidence for horse was a single nail, with a flat rectangular head. An incomplete knife consisted of a whittle tang and part of the blade surviving. The blade back is on line with the tang. Such a design is recognised from 9th to 11th century in York.¹⁴ Several miscellaneous scraps of metal are too small or incomplete to identify. Structural evidence was provided by seven nail fragments and the eye of a strap hinge. A large wood-cutters axe, from a context which most probably post dates the ring ditch feature in which it was found is likely to be late medieval. 'As a general rule it would seem that the medieval axe is a larger tool than its predecessors, and that it normally had a simple socket.....in another form the axe hammer is a known medieval tool'.¹⁵ The butt-end of the axe from Morett shows signs of having been used for hammering.

Cappakeel, 03E0633, Co. Laois, (Heath Mayfield)

The site comprised a complex of pits, almost all containing a greater or lesser amount charcoal, a ring ditch, a linear ditch and possible evidence of a pond. Several pits had post holes in the vicinity, which may have functioned in shielding the fires from the elements. "In the past it was believed that the shallow depressions in the ground were the remains of simple, open 'bowl' furnaces. However, it is now recognised that a superstructure would have been essential for efficient functioning"¹⁶. The excavations yielded seven iron objects, (detail catalogued below). Of these, five were nails which all came from the same context (F63), the fill of what is interpreted as a possible

¹² de Neergaard, 1987, 60

¹³ O Kelly, 1962, 63

¹⁴ Ottaway, 1992, 568

¹⁵ Ward Perkins, 1940, 56

¹⁶ Edwards, N., (2005), 284

secondary cut within the ring ditch (F20). Some of the nails retain traces of wood in the corrosion products. The context also yielded cremated bone.

Another object, (F15:1) is tentatively identified as a projectile, possibly a spear head, and there is also what may have functioned as an awl (F236:65).

The nails are roughly square in section with flat heads of sub-round shape, which survive in four out of five cases. There are no available comparisons to these nails in the Irish Iron Age literature. The Irish archaeological record is shortly to expand greatly in information from the recent road schemes, which will greatly augment a rather sparse survival of securely-dated Iron Age artefacts. Some of the Nails found in York thought to be residual from the Roman period were flat-headed. The basic form did not greatly alter. The Anglo-Scandinavian examples were predominantly flat-headed with a square or near square cross-section. This is also the case in most medieval assemblages from Irish contexts in this writer's experience. 'The nail heads would have been formed by striking the top of the tapered shank, which would have either been held in a hole in the upper face of the anvil or in special nailing irons'¹⁷.

The possible spear is a crude form, a conical head square-sectioned blade with an open socket, damaged at the point of overlap. It is not typical of the leaf-shaped types known from Iron Ages sites such as those from Lisnacrogher, Co. Antrim or Corrofin, Co. Clare¹⁸. The object appears to be fashioned from a single piece of iron, solid at the top third, and beaten flat and wrapped around to form a socket. It shares some characteristics of another from York, unstratified but thought to part of a spearhead blade of Anglo-Scandinavian date¹⁹. This is quite like a bodkin bladed arrowhead in some respects, which would be anomalous in the context from whence it came. In general, a broad or winged blade is used for hunting, to maximize bleeding, 'in war, however, an arrowhead does not need to make such a wide cut but must be able to pierce deeply through armour or protective clothing. This requires an arrowhead with a slimmer blade with a rectangular cross-section.'²⁰ The object is square sectioned at the upper half, tapered to a blunt point. Less than mid-way down its length is a slight waist, at which point the object flares out to form the socket. Two relatively small

¹⁷ Ottaway, 1992, 609

¹⁸ Waddell, 1998, fig 150, 1 & 2

¹⁹ Ottaway, 1992, 715

²⁰ Op cit, 710

spear-heads from Ballinderry crannog bear resemblance to the Cappokeel object, assigned by Hencken to an Early Christian horizon²¹. A more recent re-evaluation of the Ballinderry site re-assigns the assemblage from the layers post-dating the Bronze Age horizon as dating to the early medieval period²². ‘The basic weapon of the rank and file warrior was probably the spear. We suspect that spears were much less expensive to produce than swords (they used up far less metal and were technologically much easier to make)...Several hundred years later [than the Iron Age] during the Early Christian period the Old Irish name for a warrior was a *gaisced*. This word is a compound of the Irish word for spear *gai* and shield *sciath*,[yet] the number of spearheads demonstrated to date to the Iron Age is extremely few. Perhaps this is because so many were made of iron and they have rusted away or else because it is very difficult to distinguish between a spearhead made in the Iron Age and one made at a later period’²³. In other words, ‘The simple socketed iron spear is a weapon which remained essentially unchanged over many centuries and cannot be easily dated unless clearly associated with other material or decorated in some distinctive way’²⁴. A point concerning the longer, more aesthetic basal looped examples of the middle Bronze Age is made by Ramsey, that is that they were ‘prestige objects rather than practical weapons’²⁵. Perhaps more functional, cruder iron spears were used in later periods in defence. It is also a possibility that it was used as a crossbow bolthead. It is similar to an example from Winchester, which may be residual in the context in which they were found, possibly of Roman origin. That example, like the object from Cappakeel, has a four-sided blade of square section and a flaring socket. ‘The crossbow was known in the classical world from the beginning of the fourth century B.C. and was used both for warfare and in the hunt’²⁶. The bow, however, ‘unpopular throughout La Tène Europe, is not present in the contemporary archaeological record of Ireland; it is unlikely to have been used [in the Iron Age]’²⁷.

Lastly, a tapered iron object may have functioned as an awl. It is a long slender object, tapered at both ends. It has suffered immense corrosion, and though conserved,

²¹ Hencken, H. O’N. 1942, 47

²² Newman, 2002, 99

²³ Mallory, 1991, 156/7

²⁴ Waddell, 1998, 308

²⁵ Ramsey, 1995, 16

²⁶ Biddle, 1990, 1076, fig 346 and plate LXVa

²⁷ Raftery, (2005), 146

bears the effect of flaking. Tools such as these were used in leatherworking, in making the holes to facilitate stitching.

Ó. Scully 2006.

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Catalogue of metal artefacts from Heath Mayfield Excavations

(Arranged by order of site)

1. Ballydavis, (03E0151).

2. Kill, (03E0350).

3. Morett 1(03E0429).

4. Morett 2 (03E0461).

5. Cappakeel (03E0633).

Final Report, Archaeological Excavation
Morett (Site 2) M7 Heath-Mayfield Scheme,
Co. Laois, 03E0429

mus reg	site	Feature	find no	Metal	object	Function	Dimensions mm	Description
03E0151	Ballydavis	402	1007	Fe	needle	Domestic	62x7x5	circular-sectioned shank beaten flat at one end where bi-furcation is suggested at break. (Some ferric oxide weeping, needs conservation)
03E0151	Ballydavis	948	83	Fe	handle?	Domestic	96x6	circular-sectioned curved bar, incomplete, possible part of pot handle, tentative identification
03E0151	Ballydavis	905	80*	Cu alloy	button	Dress	12x4.5	flower in centre of face with 6 lines radiating from interstices of petals creating star pattern, reverse has incomplete loop for attachment
03E0151	Ballydavis	199	5*	Cu alloy	pin	Dress	17x1.5	Tapered end of pin, rather thin to be part of dress pin, possibly from brooch
03E0151	Ballydavis	905	76	Fe	nail	Horse	24x11x9	short curved broken shaft, expanded triangular head with flat top, possible horseshoe nail
03E0151	Ballydavis	402	17*	Cu alloy	mount	Misc	24x15x2	sheet metal, round-ended rectangular with 2 small flat rivets in situ, securing remains of 2nd sheet
03E0151	Ballydavis	157	1009	Fe	unident	misc	72x32x6	tapered flat bar, slightly curved, with emphasis on curve at outer edge. Corroded.
03E0151	Ballydavis	160	1010	Fe	mount?	Misc	45x35x4	outline sub-lozenge shape, incomplete, may have adorned a casket, no rivet holes evident
03E0151	Ballydavis	454	87	Fe	bar	Misc	50x7x9	slightly tapered rectangular-sectioned bar, possible whittle tang of knife
03E0151	Ballydavis	402	1008	Fe	strap	Misc	63x20x2	flat straight-edged rectangular strap, corroded and flaking, small hole may be trace of rivet hole, or may be result of advanced corrosion
03E0151	Ballydavis	310	81	Fe	unident	Misc	25x13x6	irregularly-shaped small piece, suggestion of original aperture, poss fragment of rove
03E0151	Ballydavis	197	84*	Cu alloy	bracelet?	Personal	45x3	Crescent-shaped bar with circular section, one terminal flat-ended, other end broken
03E0151	Ballydavis	402	46*	Cu alloy	coiled wire	Personal	65x31x2	square-sectioned bar or wire looped artistically into four curves. Broken at one end
03E0151	Ballydavis	402	48*	Cu alloy	fibula	Personal	55x21x10	coiled spring forms terminus of rectangular sectioned angled bar, the other end bi-furcated, adhesion on spring may be pin, Outer side decorated with 2 grooves forming a central ridge
03E0151	Ballydavis	426	23*	Cu alloy	link?	Personal	11.5x6x1.5	semi-circular ring, circular in section, outer side segmented by transverse incisions, very small size, possibly part of a larger object, reminiscent of chain mail link
03E0151	Ballydavis	478	54*	Cu alloy	bead	Personal	16x14	open tapered tube, aperture at one end 8mm, 6mm at opposite opening, uneven thickness, ie bore off-centre, it is slightly curved
03E0151	Ballydavis	036	1	Fe	rivet	Structural	27x27x23	head of rivet, sub circular with partial square shaft remaining. Traces of wood on underside of head
03E0151	Ballydavis	403	51	Fe	tack	structural	15x9x2.5	dome-headed short tack, like those used in upholstery. Short straight shaft pointed at end, complete
03E0151	Ballydavis	161	44	Fe	nail	Structural	37x7x6	tapered rectangular shaft, head missing
03E0151	Ballydavis	830	66	Fe	unident	structural	35x6x5	narrow shaft with corroded thead, incomplete.
03E0151	Ballydavis	036	3	Fe	rivet	Structural	23x18x8	round head of rivet with rectangular stump of shaft to which has traces of wood adhering
03E0151	Ballydavis	036	2	Fe	strap	Structural	24x14x8	part of strap, adhesions of wood at one side, possible casket mount or hinge
03E0151	Ballydavis	310	82	Fe	nail	Structural	21x7x6	partial shaft of rectangular-sectioned nail
03E0151	Ballydavis	038	4*	Fe	awl	Tools	86x7x6	rectangular section, tapered unevenly, one shorter end, truncated, possible haft

mus reg	site	Feature	find no	Metal	object	Function	Dimensions mm	Description
03E0350	Kill	041	17	Cu alloy	pin	Dress	24x2 x1.5	textile attached, wire head and shaft complete,
03E0350	Kill	042	15b	Cu alloy	pin	Dress	2.5x1	fragment of pin shaft
03E0350	Kill	042	15a	Cu alloy	pin	Dress	3x1	fragment of pin shaft
03E0350	Kill	047	21b	Cu alloy	pin	Dress	8x0.8	fragment of pin shaft
03E0350	Kill	047	21a	Cu alloy	pin	Dress	5x1.5x0.8	fragment of pin with partial head consisting of a single wrap of wire
03E0350	Kill	049	18	Cu alloy	pin	Dress	19x0.9	head indistinct, wrapped in textile, green corrosion covers object
03E0350	Kill	052	25c	Cu alloy	pin	Dress	na	decimated fragments of corrosion with sand
03E0350	Kill	052	25a	Cu alloy	pin	Dress	21x 1.5	shaft only, with textile attached.
03E0350	Kill	052	25b	Cu alloy	pin	Dress	6x 1	pointed fragment
03E0350	Kill	053	24	Cu alloy	pin	Dress	13.2x1	shaft without head
03E0350	Kill	053	24	Cu alloy	pin	Dress	11.5x1	pointed shaft
03E0350	Kill	053	24	Cu alloy	pin	Dress	16x1	pointed shaft
03E0350	Kill	053	24	Cu alloy	pin	Dress	12.5.1	partial shaft
03E0350	Kill	053	24	Cu alloy	pin	Dress	20x2x1	wire head with incomplete shaft
03E0350	Kill	053	24	Cu alloy	pin	Dress	16x1.8x0.9	wire head with incomplete shaft
03E0350	Kill	053	24	Cu alloy	pin	Dress	24x2.5x1.8	wire head and shaft with textile attached
03E0350	Kill	053	24	Cu alloy	pin	Dress	8x1.5	partial shaft
03E0350	Kill	053	24	Cu alloy	pin	Dress	13.3x1.5	incomplete shaft
03E0350	Kill	053	24	Cu alloy	pin	Dress	11x1	pointed shaft
03E0350	Kill	053	24	Cu alloy	pin	Dress	10xx2x1.2	wire head with partial shaft
03E0350	Kill	058	28c	Cu alloy	pin	Dress	5.1	fragment of shaft
03E0350	Kill	058	28d	Cu alloy	pin	Dress	7x1	point of shaft, note fragments 28 a-d may form part of single pin within feature
03E0350	Kill	058	28a	Cu alloy	pin	Dress	10x2x1	wirehead pin, partial shaft
03E0350	Kill	058	28b	Cu alloy	pin	Dress	9x1	fragment of shaft
03E0350	Kill	067	50	Cu alloy	pin	Dress	8x2x1	head and shaft, detail of head obscured by textile.
03E0350	Kill	075	32	Cu alloy	pin	Dress	7.5x1	partial shaft of pin
03E0350	Kill	076	30a	Cu alloy	pin	Dress	10x1	partial shaft of pin
03E0350	Kill	076	30b	Cu alloy	pin	Dress	8x1	partial shaft of pin
03E0350	Kill	076	30c	Cu alloy	pin	Dress	10x1	partial shaft of pin

mus reg	site	Feature	find no	Metal	object	Function	Dimensions mm	Description
03E0350	Kill	078	40	Cu alloy	pin	Dress	15x2x1	wire head with partial shaft Traces of red dye(?) on this pin
03E0350	Kill	083	41e	Cu alloy	pin	Dress	18x1	partial shaft with textile attached
03E0350	Kill	083	41j	Cu alloy	pin	Dress	11x2x1	wire head intact
03E0350	Kill	083	41i	Cu alloy	pin	Dress	5x1	pointed end of shaft
03E0350	Kill	083	41h	Cu alloy	pin	Dress	11x1	partial shaft
03E0350	Kill	083	41f	Cu alloy	pin	Dress	15x2x1	partial shaft
03E0350	Kill	083	41b	Cu alloy	pin	Dress	8x1	partial shaft
03E0350	Kill	083	41d	Cu alloy	pin	Dress	17x2x1	partial shaft
03E0350	Kill	083	41c	Cu alloy	pin	Dress	24x2x1	partial shaft
03E0350	Kill	083	41k	Cu alloy	pin	Dress	4x2x1	wire head intact
03E0350	Kill	083	41a	Cu alloy	pin	Dress	7x2x1	wire head with partial shaft
03E0350	Kill	083	41g	Cu alloy	pin	Dress	14x1	partial shaft
03E0350	Kill	105	49	Cu alloy	pin	Dress	9.5x1	partial shaft

mus reg	site	Feature	find no	Metal	object	Function	Dimensions mm	Description
03E0429	Morett 1	07/4	52*	Fe	hook	Domestic?	881x22x8	sub-rectangular shaft which curves to an almost U shape at one end, the opposite end is flattened, which may have served to spike it into masonry or wood
03E0429	Morett 1	003a	23	Fe	buckle pin?	Dress	22.7x6.5x3,5	tentative id, flat tapered wedge-shaped object with one straight end the other is rounded off
03E0429	Morett 1	002	42	Fe	nail	Horse	19.6x9x5	partial remains of head of horse shoe, shaft widens to become flat topped head
03E0429	Morett 1	002	34*	Fe	nail	Horse	23x11x6	rectangular flat head, rectangular shaft, incomplete, expanded below head
03E0429	Morett 1	002/3a	17	Fe	unident	Misc	30x9x6.5	curved bar, tapered to a blunt point at one end, broken at the other, rectangular in section, possible bent shaft of rivet or clench bolt
03E0429	Morett 1	002	27*	Fe	nail	Structural	72x11x4	partial round head and rectangular shaft
03E0429	Morett 1	004	26	Fe	nail	Structural	24x5x4	small corroded tapered bar possible point of nail shaft
03E0429	Morett 1	003	21*	Fe	rivet	Structural	109x15x13	tapered rectangular shaft, thickening under head to form triangular flat-topped rectangular head
03E0429	Morett 1	003	20*	Fe	scissors handle	Tools	74x29x5	loop of one arm of handle of scissors, oval aperture fits three fingers

mus reg	site	Feature	find no	Metal	object	Function	Dimensions mm	Description
03E0461	Morett 2	381	61a*	Fe	vessel rim	Domestic	80x11x3	part of rim of vessel, curve indicates an original vessel diameter of 120mm
03E0461	Morett 2	381	61b*	Fe	vessel body fragment	Domestic	30x14x3	piece of the vessel whose rim is listed above. Small bumps on one side may be decorative as opposed to corroded adhesions stabilised during conservation.
03E0461	Morett 2	013	58*	Fe	nail	Horse	33x8x6	small, curved apparently complete, tapered rectangular shaft widening to rectangular flat head
03E0461	Morett 2	013	59*	Fe	knife?	Knives	63x17x4	possible whittle tang and part of blade, the back of which is on line with the tang, incomplete
03E0461	Morett 2	29	29	Fe	scrap	Misc	19x10x4	small flat scrap of iron, with smaller corrosion debris associated
03E0461	Morett 2	013	?23b	Fe	bar	Misc	59x6x5	corroded flat strip or bar, thin with one end slightly thickened with little upturn
03E0461	Morett 2	013	21	Cu alloy	scrap	Misc	9x7x6	tiny green coloured fragment, roughly rectangular, broken
03E0461	Morett 2	013	21*	Cu alloy	sheet	Misc	15x15x1	roughly square, flat piece of sheet metal, no features
03E0461	Morett 2	013	29*	Fe	nail	Structural	65x11x6	shaft of nail, rectangular in section, tapered, head missing
03E0461	Morett 2	024	2*	Fe	nail	Structural	42x9x7	head sub round, damaged, tapered rectangular-sectioned shaft
03E0461	Morett 2	013	23*	Fe	nail	Structural	74x6x4	rectangular tapered shaft, terminates in point, no head
03E0461	Morett 2	013	19	Fe	nail	Structural	42x9x8	rectangular-sectioned shaft, widens towards head end, point missing
03E0461	Morett 2	017	31*	Fe	strap hinge	Structural	49x19x2	perforated eye of strap hinge
03E0461	Morett 2	013	24a	Fe	nail	Structural	37x5	circular sectioned short bar, possible nail shaft, modern?
03E0461	Morett 2	013	?23a	Fe	nail	Structural	48x8x7	gently tapered rectangular sectioned shaft with flattened top where head would have been,
03E0461	Morett 2	013	24b	Fe	nail	Structural	45x7x5	circular sectioned bar, possible nail shaft, modern?
03E0461	Morett 2	373	49*	Fe	axe head	Tools	222x168x53	socketed axe with shaped socket and splayed blade with curved edge

mus reg	site	Feature	find no	Metal	object	Function	Dimensions mm	Description
03E0633	Cappakeel	063	95	Fe	nail	Structural	15x10x7	partial remains of roughly square shaft, head damaged, corroded with traces of charcoal in adhesions
03E0633	Cappakeel	063	94	Fe	nail	Structural	22x11x6	round headed nail with partial remains of square shaft, corroded with traces of charcoal in adhesions
03E0633	Cappakeel	063	58	Fe	nail	Structural	30x7x5	small nail, roughly square-sectioned shaft, incomplete
03E0633	Cappakeel	063	49	Fe	nail	Structural	38x8x7	small corroded nail in 2 parts. Piece of charcoal in corrosion product on head, roughly square-sectioned shaft, head incomplete
03E0633	Cappakeel	063	56	Fe	nail	Structural	28x11x4	small but complete nail, though corroded it retains a round head and has what appears to be wood incorporated in the corrosion products, roughly square-sectioned shaft
03E0633	Cappakeel	236	65*	Fe	awl?	Tools	133x12x9	tapered bar, though conserved, had severe flaking. Suggestion of strip wrapped around junction of shaft and haft
03E0633	Cappakeel	015	1*	Fe	spear head?	Weaponry	90x30x26	socketed spike tapered to a blunt sub-rectangular point, minimal waist and splayed socket

PLATES



Plate 1: A1 to A3 following removal of topsoil and topsod. Exposure of road surface, wheel ruts, C4 and C7 (from NE)



Plate 2: Following removal of C7 in B1-B3 and wheel ruts are exposed (from NE)




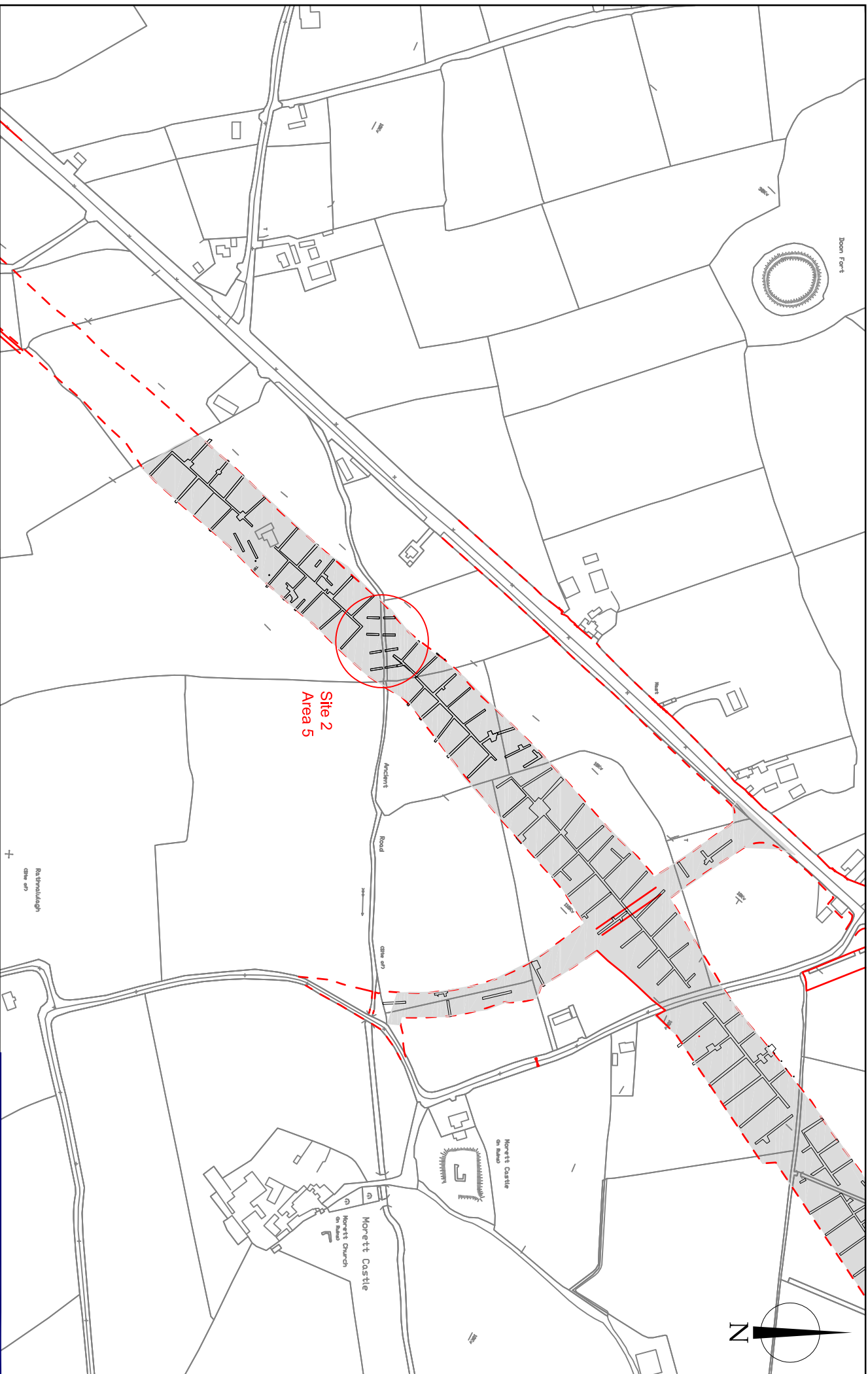
Plate 3: Area B1 and B2 during removal of topsoil and C3a, exposing road surface and wheel ruts (from NE)




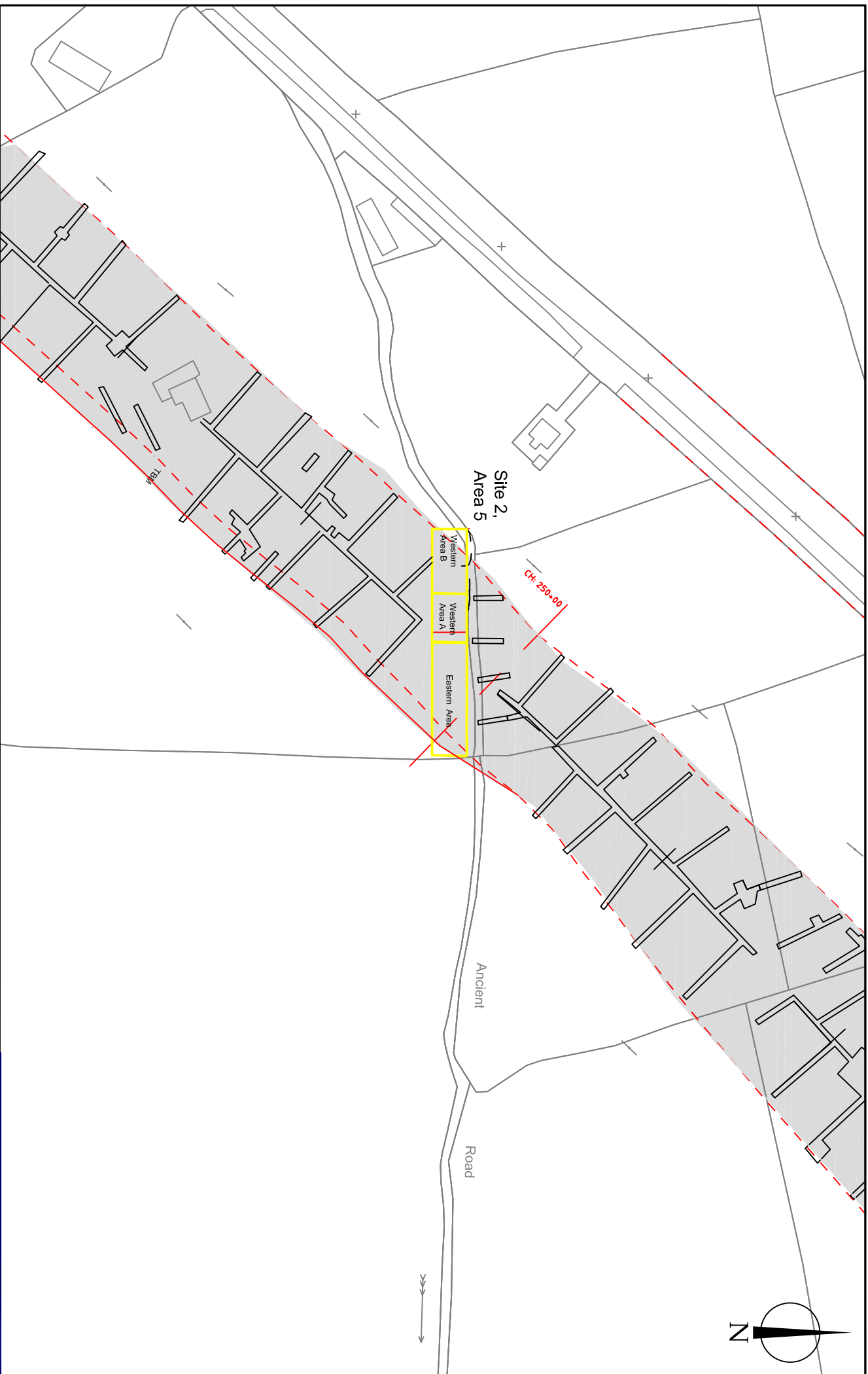
Plate 4: Areas A1 and A2 following removal of C4, showing road surface, drain C5 and C13 (from E)



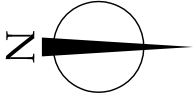
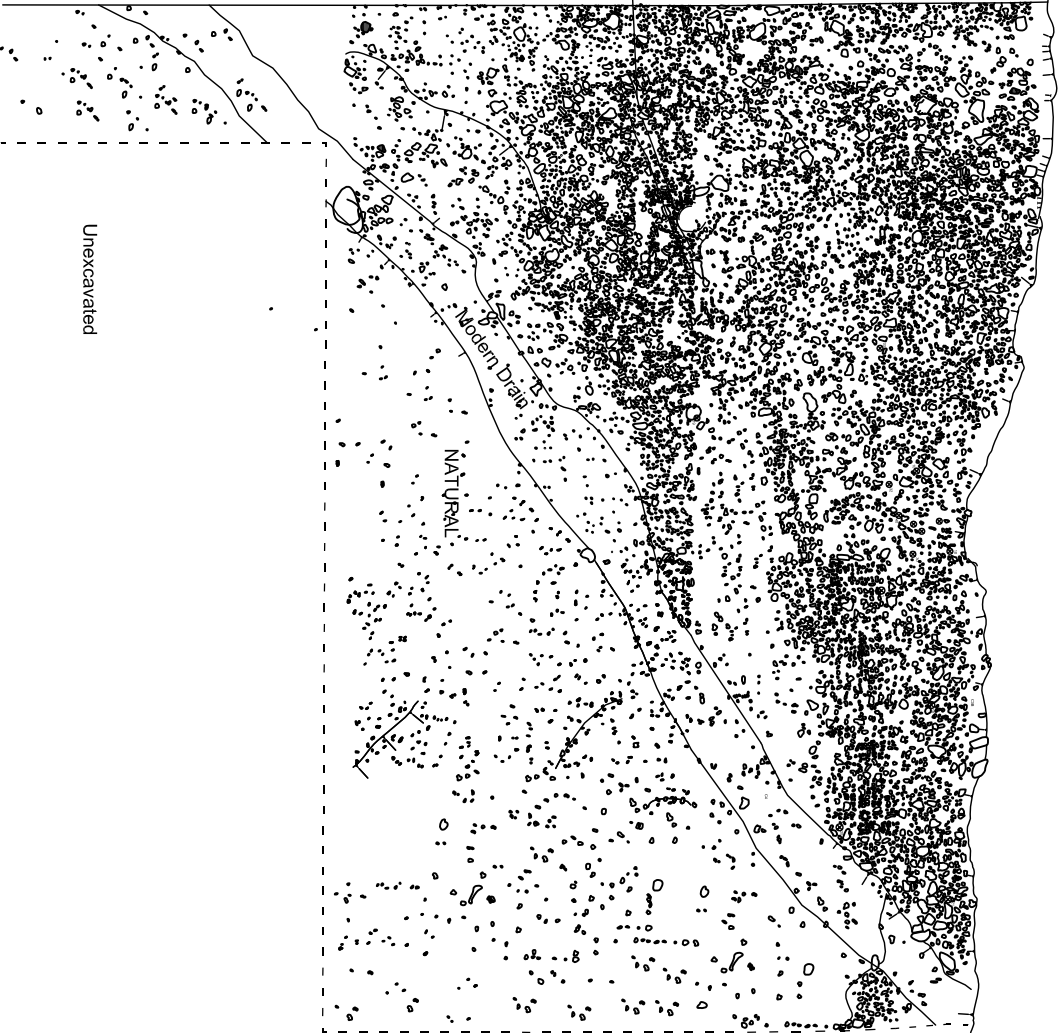
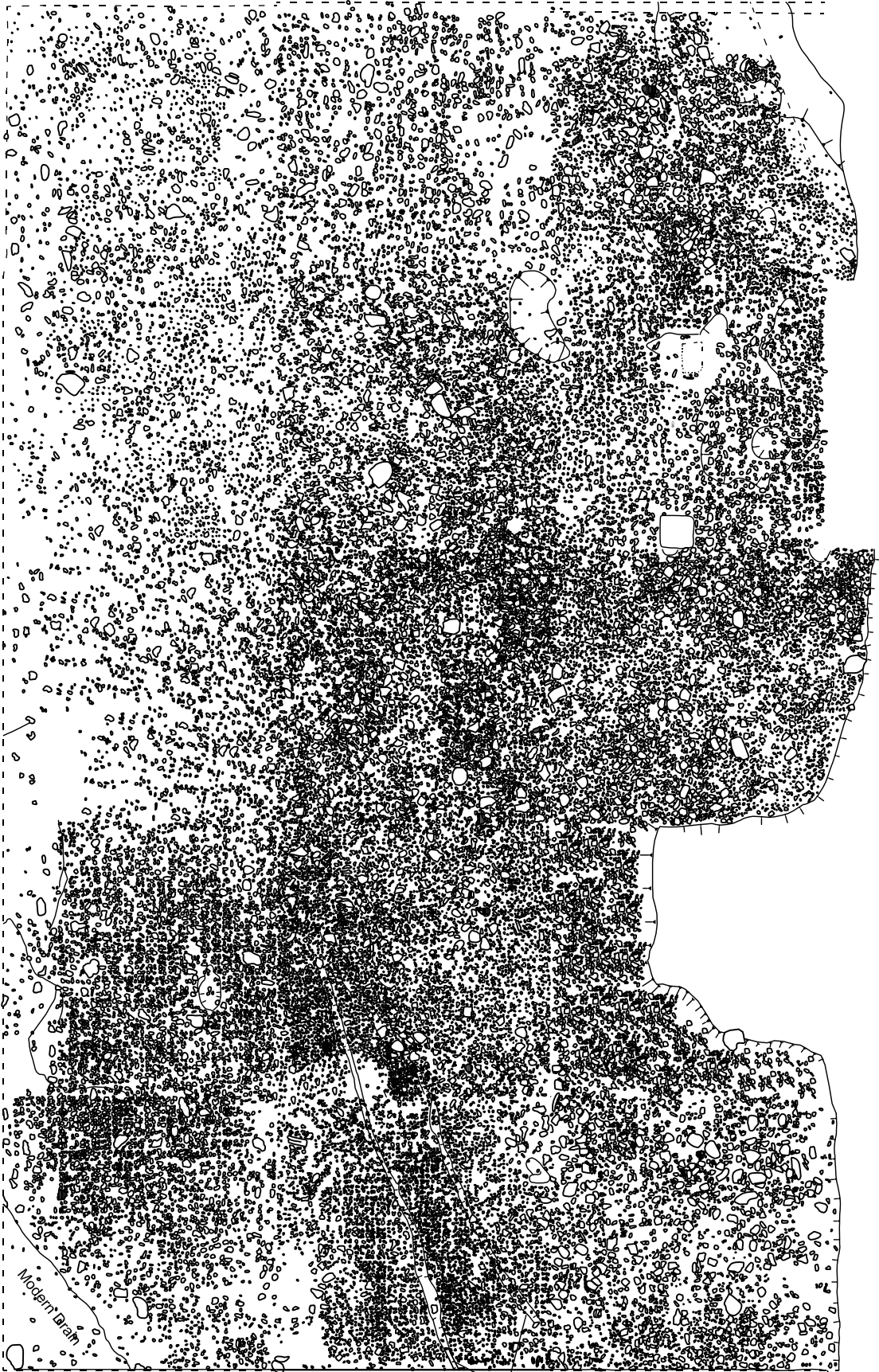
Title Location of Site 2, Area 5.			Notes			 Valerie J. Keeley Ltd. Archaeological Consultancy Brehon House Castletomer Co. Kilkenny. Tel: (+353) 056 4440236 Fax: (+353) 056 4440237 email: vjk@vjk.ie
Job/Exc No. 03E0429	Compiled by DE	CAD reference Final Report	Date 12/09/03	Scale 1:15000	Drawing No. Fig 1	
Client Kildare County Council.						Project N7 Heath-Mayfield



Title	Notes	Job/Esc. No.	Completed by	CAD reference	Client
Site 2, Area 5, Ancient Road, Morett, Co.Laois		03E0429	DE	Final Report	Kildare County Council
		Date 12/09/03	Scale 1:5000	Drawing No. Fig 2	Project N7 Heath-Mayfield
<div>  <div> <p><i>Valerie J. Keely Ltd.</i> Archaeological Consultancy</p> <p>Breilton House Castlescorner Co. Kilkenny.</p> <p>Tel: (+353) 056 4440236 Fax: (+353) 056 4440237 email: vk@vjk.ie</p> </div> </div>					






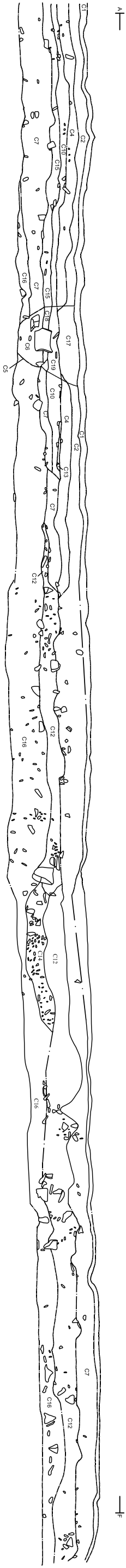
Title Site 2, Area 5, "Ancient Road", Morett, Co. Laois, showing excavation areas	Notes	Job/Esc No. 03E0429	Completed by DE	CAD reference Final Report	Client Kildare County Council
	Date 21/08/03	Scale 1:2000	Drawing No. Fig 3	Project N7 Heath-Mayfield	<div data-bbox="79 1680 183 1792"> </div> <div data-bbox="79 1792 183 2161"> <p>Valerie J. Keely Ltd. <i>Archaeological Consultancy</i></p> <p>Brehon House Castlecorner Co. Kildare</p> <p>Tel: (+353) 056 4440236 Fax: (+353) 056 4440237 email: vk@vjk.ie</p> </div>




Western Excavation, Area B

Western Excavation, Area A

Title Site 2, Area 5, "Ancient Road", Morett, Co. Laois, following excavation.		Notes  = DECAYED STONE  = Find		Job/Exc No. 03E0429		Compiled by DE		CAD reference Final Report		Client Kildare County Council	
				Date 21/08/03		Scale 1:110		Drawing No. Fig 4		Project N7 Heath Mayfield	
											
										<i>Valerie J. Keeley Ltd.</i> <i>Archaeological Consultancy</i> Brethon House Castlecorner Co. Kilkenny. Tel: (+353) 056 4440236 Fax: (+353) 056 4440237 email: vjk@vjk.ie	



Title East Facing Section, Site 2, Area 5, Ancient Road, Morett, Co. Laois.	Notes	Job/Exc No. 03E0429	Compiled by DE	CAD reference Final Report	Client Kildare County Council
		Date 14/07/03	Scale 1:40	Drawing No. Fig 5	Project N7 Heath Mayfield
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