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Seminar programme

Gresham Hotel, Dublin, 15 September 2005

Introduction

Fred Barry
Chief Executive, National Roads Authority

A Neolithic settlement at Monanny, Co. Monaghan

Fintan Walsh
Excavation Director, Irish Archaeological Consultancy Ltd

Archaeological discoveries from the N2 Finglas–Ashbourne Road Scheme Project

Maria FitzGerald
Project Archaeologist, Meath County Council National Roads Design Office

Through the mill—the excavation of significant early medieval settlement at Raystown, County Meath, on the N2 road realignment

Matthew Seaver
Excavation Director, Cultural Resource Development Services Ltd

Excavation of a ringfort at Leggetsrath West, Kilkenny

Anne-Marie Lennon
Excavation Director, Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd

Excavation of a children's burial ground at Tonybaun, Co. Mayo

Joanna Nolan
Excavation Director, Mayo County Council

Excavation of an early medieval vertical watermill at Killoteran, Co. Waterford

Donald Murphy
Excavation Director, Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd

Aerial survey—a method of investigation for archaeological studies at the EIS stage of the planning process

Lisa Courtney
Senior Archaeologist, Margaret Gowen & Co. Ltd

Excavation of a 'plectrum-shaped' enclosure at Newtown, Co. Limerick

Frank Coyne
Excavation Director, Aegis Archaeology Ltd

Excavation of a souterrain at Tateetra, Dundalk, Co. Louth

Avril Hayes
Excavation Director, Aegis Archaeology Ltd

Settlement, Industry and Ritual

The excavation of an early church and burial site at Ballykilmore, Co. Westmeath

John Channing

Excavation Director

and

Patrick Randolph-Quinney

Osteoarchaeologist, Valerie J Keeley Ltd

Archaeology and the National Roads Authority: five years on

Dáire O'Rourke

Senior Archaeologist, National Roads Authority

Glossary

Alluvium Fine-grained, well-sorted soils deposited by rivers.

Archaeometallurgy The study of the archaeology of metal production.

Artefact Any portable object that has been used, modified or manufactured by humans.

Assemblage All of the artefacts found at a site, including the sum of all sub-assemblages at the site.

Bailey Fortified enclosed courtyard or ward surrounding or attached to a medieval castle. Also a fortified earthwork enclosure attached to a motte (see motte and bailey).

Barrow An earthen burial mound, generally dating to the Bronze Age and Iron Age.

Bronze Age The period c. 2400–600 BC that succeeded the Neolithic period and saw the introduction of bronze for tools and weapons.

Burnt mound A mound of burnt stones that can be found in isolation or in association with a *fulacht fiadh* (see below).

Cairn A mound of stones.

Capstone A slab or block of stone forming the top of a burial cist or the roof of a chambered tomb or souterrain.

Carinated/carination A break in the profile of a pottery vessel, which forms a keel or ridge, usually marking the junction of the body with the neck.

Causewayed enclosure A Neolithic enclosure with circuits of ditch interrupted by causeways. An embankment or palisade stood within the ditch.

Chert A flint-like material, usually black or dark brown, that is a form of very fine, crystalline silica.

Collared Urn A type of Bronze Age pottery vessel with a flat base, conical body and heavy overhanging rim or collar.

Context A generic term for the smallest identifiable stratigraphic unit recognised in an excavation.

Cordoned Urn A type of Middle Bronze Age pottery probably derived from Collared Urns (see above). The outer face is decorated with applied cordons or raised ribs.

Crannóg A defended settlement, mainly dating from the early medieval period, built on an artificial, or artificially enlarged, island.

Cremation The practice of burning the dead. In prehistory the ashes were commonly placed in a pottery vessel and buried in a pit.

Cropmarks Patterns or variations in the colour or growth rates of pasture or planted crops; these often relate to buried archaeological features.

Debitage Detached pieces of stone from larger stone cores that are discarded during the process of stone tool production.

Dendrochronology A dating method based on the study of tree-rings as a means of providing precise calendar dates.

Drystone walling Walls constructed of stone without the use of mortar.

Enclosure A piece of ground surrounded by a boundary such as a wall, bank or ditch.

Encrusted Urn A Bronze Age pottery vessel with heavy applied decoration in horizontal and vertical bands around the upper portion of the body.

Environmental Impact Assessment The process for anticipating the effects on the environment caused by a development. An Environmental Impact Statement is the document produced as a result of that process.

Environmental Impact Statement See Environmental Impact Assessment, above.

Faience Blue artificial glass-like material made from baked siliceous clay.

Feature This term refers to any component of an archaeological site such as a post-hole, pit, wall, ditch or any deposit that may have accumulated on the site.

Fibula A decorative brooch of safety-pin form to fasten a cloak or other garment.

Flint A hard, brittle siliceous rock with conchoidal fracturing properties that is highly suitable for the manufacture of edged tools.

Food Vessel Heavily decorated biconical or bowl-shaped Early Bronze Age pot, mainly associated with cremation burials.

Fulacht fiadh A site, generally dating from the Bronze Age, consisting of a horseshoe-shaped mound of burnt stones, a hearth(s) and a trough(s). These sites were used to heat water for a variety of possible purposes. Also known as ancient cooking places.

Geophysical survey Methods of exploring below the surface of the ground by measuring

anomalies in the soil's magnetic susceptibility, electrical resistivity and other properties capable of being detected by instruments.

Hammerstone A rock used to detach smaller fragments of stone from a larger core during the production of stone tools, or any other percussive process.

Henge A more or less circular enclosure, normally with the bank outside the ditch and often enclosing a circle of stones.

Hone stone A whetstone for sharpening edged tools.

Infield A field located close to a farmhouse, comprising arable and manured land kept continually under crop.

Inhumation The name given to the burial custom by which the body was laid in a grave.

Iron Age Final period of prehistory, beginning around 600 BC. Iron superseded bronze for the manufacture of tools and weapons in this period.

La Tène The site of an Iron Age votive deposit of metal artefacts, some bearing distinctive curvilinear decoration, at Lake Neuchâtel, Switzerland. La Tène has given its name to La Tène art and to the second period of the European Iron Age.

Lithics General archaeological term applied to all collections of stone tools, working debris and raw materials.

Loom-weight A weight used to weigh down the threads (known as warps) that run lengthways on a loom.

Medieval Period succeeding the Iron Age, in Ireland from the advent of Christianity in the fifth century up to the 16th century AD.

Megalith A large stone used in the construction of prehistoric tombs, stone circles and stone alignments.

Mesolithic The Middle Stone Age, c. 7000–4000 BC, when Ireland was first settled by early hunters and foragers.

Metalling/metalled surface The hard-packed surface of a road, track or street, comprising layers of gravel and stone.

Microlith A very small stone tool, characteristic of the Early Mesolithic period, which is generally thought to have been hafted for use (e.g. as barbs and tips of arrows).

Monitoring The presence of an archaeologist during development works, such as topsoil removal, to identify and record archaeological deposits, features or objects.

Motte A Norman fortification consisting of a round mound, flattened on top, and thought to have been surmounted by a wooden tower or palisade.

Motte and bailey A Norman military stronghold comprising a motte, surrounded by a ditch, with an adjoining separately defined enclosure known as a bailey.

Neolithic The Late Stone Age, c. 4000–2400 BC, characterised by the beginnings of farming.

Osteology/Osteoarchaeology A branch of archaeology that deals with the study and analysis of human and animal skeletal remains.

Palaeoenvironment An ancient or past environment.

Palisade A stake-built or post-built defensive barrier, often positioned on top of an embankment or rampart.

Porcellanite A type of metamorphic rock used in the manufacture of stone axes.

Post-excavation A general term applied to those analytical and reporting tasks to be undertaken following the fieldwork stage of an archaeological project.

Post-hole The void or soil-filled hole where a post once stood.

Post-medieval The period after the medieval period, often taken to be the period after the dissolution of the monasteries in the mid-16th century.

Prehistoric Any period for which there is no contemporary documentary evidence.

Quern-stone A large stone used for grinding grain into flour.

Radiocarbon dating A dating method that measures the decay of the radioactive isotope Carbon 14, which is present in all organic material.

Rath A circular earthen enclosure, otherwise known as a ringfort.

Record of Monuments and Places A list of archaeological sites with accompanying maps recorded on a county-by-county basis by the State. Inclusion in the list affords archaeological sites certain legal protections.

Revetment Facing of hard, solid material given to a structure built with softer, less stable material to retain and support it.

Ring-ditch A small circular enclosure defined by a ring-shaped ditch, which is often associated with prehistoric burials. Many have been discovered to be ploughed-out barrows (see above).

Ringfort A defended farmstead, mainly dating from between the seventh and ninth centuries AD, enclosed by one or more concentric earthworks comprising a bank and outer ditch.

Ring-pin Early medieval dress-fastener, usually of copper-alloy, with a swivel ring inserted through a perforation in the pin.

Roadtake The land area to be occupied by a proposed road.

Scraper Stone tool comprising a round or horseshoe-shaped flake deliberately shaped to provide a working edge.

Site A term used to refer to places of archaeological interest or potential.

Slag Partly vitrified waste material from the smelting of a metal ore or glass-making.

Souterrain A long, narrow, stone-walled subterranean gallery, usually with a slab roof. Some have small chambers off the main passage.

Standing stone A block or slab of stone set upright as a marker, dating mainly from the Neolithic and Bronze Age.

Stone alignment/row A line of upright stones set at intervals along an axis. They are common from the later Neolithic period and Bronze Age.

Stratigraphy The laying down of layers one above the other. A succession of layers should provide a relative chronological sequence for the events it represents or the objects it contains.

Test excavation A limited form of archaeological excavation where the purpose is to establish the nature, extent, significance and, if possible, the date of archaeological deposits and features.

Tower house Fortified residence commonly built from the 15th century through to the 17th century.

Trial trench See test excavation, above.

Vase Urn A type of Bronze Age pottery consisting of small hand-made, well-decorated vases.

Vertical mill A type of mill with a vertical wheel, driven by water directed onto paddles from below or from above.

Viking (*Vikingur*) Scandinavian word for seafaring raiders from Norway, Sweden and Denmark who ravaged the coasts of Europe from the seventh century AD onwards.

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