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National Roads Authority  
Archaeology



**Date:** June 2010

**Client:** Kildare County Council

**Project code:** KCK06

**N9/N10 Kilcullen to Waterford Scheme: Phase 3, Kilcullen to Carlow.  
Archaeological Services Contract No. 5 – Resolution, Kilcullen to  
Moone and Athy Link Road.**

**Final Report on archaeological investigations at Site E2978, in the  
townland of Mullamast, Co. Kildare.**

By: Liam Hackett and John Twomey

National Monuments Section Registration Number: E2978

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Report Status: Final



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## **Executive Summary**

This final report presents the results of the archaeological resolution works carried out on behalf of Kildare County Council and the National Roads Authority as part of the Archaeological Services Contract No. 5 - Resolution, Kilcullen to Moone and Athy Link Road. The works were undertaken prior to the commencement of construction of the N9/N10 Kilcullen to Waterford Scheme: Phase 3, Kilcullen to Carlow. The Minister of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government, following consultation with the National Museum of Ireland, issued Directions to Kildare County Council on 8 March 2007 for archaeological resolution works relating to the road development. The registration number, E2978, was allocated by the Department for the excavation of the present site in Mullamast townland under the directorship of Liam Hackett of Headland Archaeology (Ireland) Ltd.

An Environmental Impact Assessment was published in 2003 for the Kilcullen to Powerstown Scheme, with Valerie J Keeley Ltd preparing the Archaeological, Architectural and Cultural Heritage Assessment. This formed Chapter 10 of the EIS produced by the Roughan and O'Donovan - Faber Maunsell Alliance. Geophysical prospection was carried out on certain areas of high archaeological potential by Bartlett-Clark Consultancy as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment, on behalf of Valerie J. Keeley Ltd/Kildare County Council.

Aerial photography was undertaken along the entire route selection as part of the non-invasive assessment after the EIA stage. This work was carried out in April 2004 by Markus Casey.

Archaeological testing carried out by CRDS Ltd for the N9/N10 Kilcullen to Waterford Scheme: Kilcullen to Powerstown. Archaeological Services Contract No. 2 – Test Excavations, Mullamast to Prumplestown and Athy Link Road under Ministerial Direction Number A021/173 on this site between on the 10<sup>th</sup> of July 2006 identified a ring ditch. A fragment of a polished stone axe was reported to have been retrieved during this testing phase, however on analysis, this proved to be an unworked stone (Stephen Mandal, pers. comm.).

Full archaeological resolution was conducted on this site between 3 May 2007 and 5 May. This revealed a circular ditch of relatively modern origin, most likely an ornamental garden feature from the landscaped gardens of the nearby Willowbrook House, now demolished. A Preliminary Report of works on the site was completed by Headland Archaeology (Ireland) Ltd in May 2008.

## **1 Introduction**

The N9/N10 Kilcullen to Waterford Road Scheme, of which the Kilcullen to Powerstown Scheme forms part, was proposed as a High Quality Dual Carriageway/Motorway, forming the Major Inter Urban route between Dublin and Waterford. The Kilcullen to Powerstown Scheme was advanced as a single entity up to the Compulsory Purchase Order/Environmental Impact Statement and was subsequently divided into two separate construction contracts: the Carlow By-pass (Phase 1) and the Kilcullen to Carlow Scheme (Phase 3). Kildare County Council, National Roads Design Office, has responsibility for overseeing the project management of these two schemes. The entire road scheme from Kilcullen to Waterford has now been designated as Motorway.

An Environmental Impact Assessment was published in 2003 for the Kilcullen to Powerstown Scheme, with Valerie J Keeley Ltd preparing the Archaeological, Architectural and Cultural Heritage Assessment. This formed Chapter 10 of the EIS produced by the Roughan and O'Donovan - Faber Maunsell Alliance. Geophysical prospection was carried out on certain areas of high archaeological potential by Bartlett-Clark Consultancy as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment, on behalf of Valerie J. Keeley Ltd/Kildare County Council.

Aerial photography was undertaken along the entire route selection as part of the non-invasive assessment after the EIA stage. This work was carried out in April 2004 by Markus Casey.

Construction commenced on Phase 1, the Carlow By-pass, in January 2006 and the road was completed and opened in May 2008. Construction of Phase 3, the Kilcullen to Carlow Scheme, which also includes a new single carriage link road to Athy town, commenced in January 2008.

Archaeological test-trenching was undertaken in advance of Phase 1, the Carlow By-pass, by Headland Archaeology (Ireland) Ltd between June and August 2005 (Archaeological Services Contract No. 3). This work identified 64 archaeological sites, which required archaeological excavation in advance of road construction. The resolution works for these sites were undertaken by Headland Archaeology (Ireland) Ltd between January and August 2006 (Archaeological Services Contract No. 4).

Archaeological test-trenching was undertaken in advance of the construction of Phase 3, the Kilcullen to Carlow Scheme, by IAC Ltd and CRDS Ltd, between October to November 2005 and May to August 2006 (Archaeological Services Contracts No. 1 and No. 2, respectively). This work resulted in the identification of 102 archaeological sites, which required resolution in advance of construction. The resolution works for these sites were undertaken by Headland Archaeology (Ireland) Ltd between March and December 2007 (Archaeological Services Contracts No. 5 and No. 6). This report details the results of one of those excavations, undertaken under NMSR Number E2978.

The project was funded by the Irish Government and the European Union through Kildare County Council/National Roads Authority, under the National Development Plan 2000-2006 and 2007-2013.

Construction Phases 2 and 4 relate to the section of road between Powerstown, Co. Carlow and the Waterford city By-pass and are project managed by Waterford County Council, National Roads Design Office.

## **2 Site description and location**

Site E2978 was situated in the townland of Mullamast, parish of Narraghmore, barony of Kilkea and Moone and was located 1 km southwest of Ballitore village and c. 210 m east of a tertiary road that leads northward to Peelhall Crossroads, at National Grid Reference 279154,195016 (Figure 1). The site was located in undulating pasture land near the eastern base of Mullamast hill, and approximately 70 m northwest of a small tributary of the river Greese, which was dry at the time of excavation.

Two monuments are recorded on the RMP map within a kilometre of the site (Figure 2). These are an enclosure site (RMP KD 036-044) and a 19<sup>th</sup> century landscaping feature (RMP KD 036-045) both in the townland of Mullamast. These landscaping features are "*a man-made feature that is laid out to produce the effect of natural scenery, or other features, usually within demesnes and associated with a country house. These date from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century AD*" (National Monuments Service 2007). The feature excavated on site E2978 is considered to be a similar, although smaller, type of monument.

A number of sites discovered in testing and subsequently excavated as part of the same road scheme were located to the west; Site E2976, a pit and stake holes site was 25 m to the northwest, (Hackett, 2009a), Site E2979 a pit site was 120 m to the west (Hackett, 2008) and Site E2980, a prehistoric inhumation cemetery (Hackett, 2009b) was adjacent to the nearby tertiary road, 200 m to the west. Depicted on both the 1st Edition 6" Ordnance Survey map no. 36 (1838) in good repair and 1st Edition 25" Ordnance Survey map no. 36-06 (1909) map in ruins, Willowbrook House (National Inventory of Architectural Heritage ref. no. KD-55-S-791952) was located approximately 100 m to the northwest of the site. There are no surviving visible physical remains of this building today.

## **3 Aims and methodology**

The objective of the work was the preservation by record of any archaeological features that would be impacted by the proposed development, in advance of the road construction programme.

Topsoil stripping of the site was conducted using a 360° tracked machine fitted with a 1.9 m wide ditching (toothless) bucket under constant archaeological supervision. A total area of 400 m<sup>2</sup> was exposed. The resulting surface was cleaned and all potential features investigated by hand. Archaeological contexts were recorded by photograph and on *pro forma* record sheets. Plans and sections were drawn at scales of 1:50 and 1:10 respectively. Registers are provided in the appendices (Appendices 1-4). Ordnance Datum levels and feature locations were recorded using Penmap and a total station theodolite.

Full archaeological resolution was conducted on this site between 3 May 2007 and 5 May 2007. The crew on site E2978 consisted of 1 director, 1 deputy site manager and 3 site assistants.

## **4 Excavation results**

Removal of the topsoil (001) revealed a circular ditch (005) (Figure 3) measuring 7.20 m in external diameter. It was, on average, 0.40m wide, 0.35m deep with steeply sloping sides and a flat base. The basal fill was a deliberately laid bed of stones (004, Plate 1) to facilitate drainage. Its upper fill consisted of mid brown silty sand (003) with frequent small stones and lime, ash and charcoal inclusions. It yielded modern pottery, glass shards and red brick fragments.

## **5 Discussion**

The results of the excavation at Site E2978 are discussed here following stratigraphic, environmental, dating and artefactual analysis. The site is then discussed on a local level and related to other sites known in the vicinity (including those discovered on the current scheme). Finally the site is discussed on a national level in an attempt to place it in context and assess how it contributes to the archaeological record in general.

The circular ditch identified in testing as a ring-ditch has, after full excavation, been interpreted as a post-medieval, ornamental garden feature. The artefact assemblage recovered consisted of a shard of glass, a fragment of red brick, and a sherd of pearlware pottery, all of which dated to the post-medieval period. It is likely to be associated with Willowbrook House, which was originally located 100m to the northwest of the site. A similar, though larger, 19<sup>th</sup> century landscaping feature (RMP KD 036-045) was located less than 1 km northwest of the site.

Gardens have been a feature of the Irish landscape for centuries, the temperate climate being particularly favourable to their development and maintenance. They would have been developed in association with a country house and demesne for the owners use and pleasure. While an element of demesnes from Anglo Norman times, it was from the 16<sup>th</sup> century on that ornamental gardens became an important feature in the environs of an Irish country house. The ephemeral nature of gardens lent itself to changing styles and fashions over the centuries; many of the symmetrical ornamental gardens of the earlier centuries being replaced in favour of a more natural landscaped form during the 18<sup>th</sup> century reflecting a desire to make the garden a part of the wider landscape. The later half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century saw many of these gardens developed into landscaped parks, some of which still survive today such as at Fota, Co. Cork and Powerscourt, Co. Wicklow. Many others reverted to agricultural land with the demise of the Irish landed gentry and the 'big house' in the late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The circular ditch excavated may represent the border of a flower bed, the stone lined base providing drainage for the feature, or a tree ring: a feature used to define or enclose an ornamental tree. Alternatively it may constitute the foundations of a turf seat. Made of turf, wattle, wooden planks or stone, a turf seat would have been a raised platform used as a place to relax in the garden away from the house, with a tree sometimes being planted in the centre to provide shade.

This feature can be contextualised within the study of designed natural environments which adds to our understanding of past human activity during the post medieval period in the Ballitore area.

All the archaeology related to this site within the CPO has been resolved.

## 6 Archive quantities

The site archive is comprised of the following materials:

<b>Item</b>	<b>Quantity</b>
Context Sheets	5
Plans	1
Sections	2
Photographs	3
Registers	1
Notebooks	1

The archive material is contained within 1 box.

Storage of the archive in a suitable format and location is required in order to provide for any future archaeological research. It is proposed that in addition to the paper archive a digital copy is prepared. The archive is currently stored in the offices of Headland Archaeology (Ireland) Ltd., Unit 1, Wallingstown Business Park, Little Island, Co. Cork. It is proposed that following completion of post-excavation analysis, the archive is appropriately deposited in consultation with the National Museum of Ireland.



## References

Hackett, L. 2008 *N9/N10 Kilcullen to Waterford Scheme: Phase 3; Kilcullen to Carlow. Archaeological Services Contract No. 5- Resolution, Kilcullen to Moone and Athy Link Road. Preliminary Report on archaeological investigations at Site E2979, in the townland of Mullamast, Co. Kildare.* Unpublished report by Headland Archaeology (Ireland) Ltd. for Kildare County Council and the National Roads Authority.

Hackett, L. 2009a *N9/N10 Kilcullen to Waterford Scheme: Phase 3; Kilcullen to Carlow. Archaeological Services Contract No. 5- Resolution, Kilcullen to Moone and Athy Link Road. Final Report on archaeological investigations at Site E2976, in the townland of Mullamast, Co. Kildare.* Unpublished report by Headland Archaeology (Ireland) Ltd. for Kildare County Council and the National Roads Authority.

Hackett, L. 2009b *N9/N10 Kilcullen to Waterford Scheme: Phase 3; Kilcullen to Carlow. Archaeological Services Contract No. 5- Resolution, Kilcullen to Moone and Athy Link Road. Preliminary Report on archaeological investigations at Site E2980, in the townland of Moone, Co. Kildare.* Unpublished report by Headland Archaeology (Ireland) Ltd. for Kildare County Council and the National Roads Authority.

National Inventory of Architectural Heritage 2009 *Historic gardens and designed landscapes* <http://www.buildingsofireland.ie/Surveys/Gardens/Ashorthistory> (Last accessed December 3 2009)

National Monuments Service 2007 *National Monuments Heritage Service Public Mapviewer.* <http://www.archaeology.ie/smrmviewer/mapviewer.aspx> (Last accessed December 3 2009).

Ó Drisceoil, C and Jennings R. 2006 *N9/N10 Kilcullen to Waterford Scheme: Archaeological Services Contract No. 2, Mullamast to Prumplestown Co. Kildare. Centreline Testing Ministerial Direction Numbers: A021/110, A021/112, A021/122, A021/126-137, A021/140-192.* Unpublished report by CRDS Ltd for Kildare County Council and the National Roads Authority

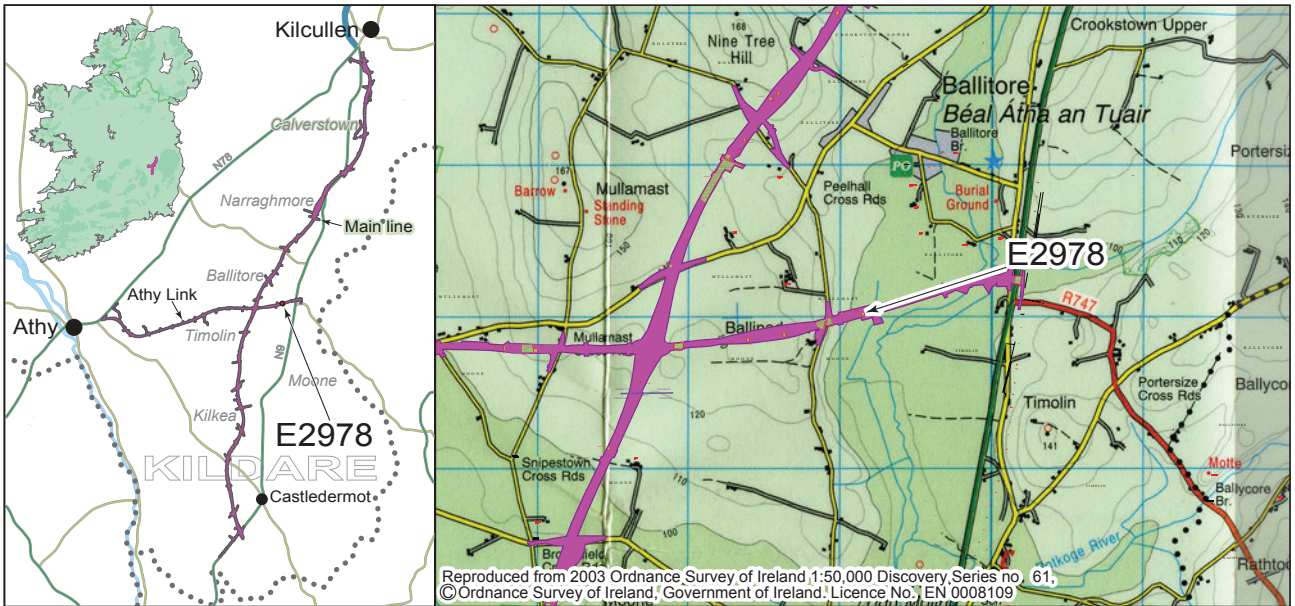
The Medieval Gardener 2009 *Medieval garden features* <http://www.themedievalgardener.co.uk/Garden%20Features.htm> (Last accessed December 3 2009)

Valerie J. Keeley Ltd 2003 'Architectural, Archaeological and Cultural Heritage', in Roughan and O'Donovan – Faber Maunsell Alliance (ed.) *N9/N10 Kilcullen to Waterford Scheme: Kilcullen to Powerstown: Environmental Impact Statement Vol. 1. 10/1 – 10/154.* Published report for Kildare County Council and the National Roads Authority.

## **Acknowledgements**

The director would like to thank the following for their contribution to the excavation and post-excavation phases of this project:

- Noel Dunne, NRA Archaeologist, Kildare County Council, National Roads Design Office.
- Project and post-excavation managers Colm Moloney, Damian Shiels, Åsa Carlsson and Patricia Long, Headland Archaeology (Ireland) Ltd.
- Graphics department, Headland Archaeology (Ireland) Ltd.
- John Twomey, Site Supervisor, Headland Archaeology (Ireland) Ltd.
- The excavation team.



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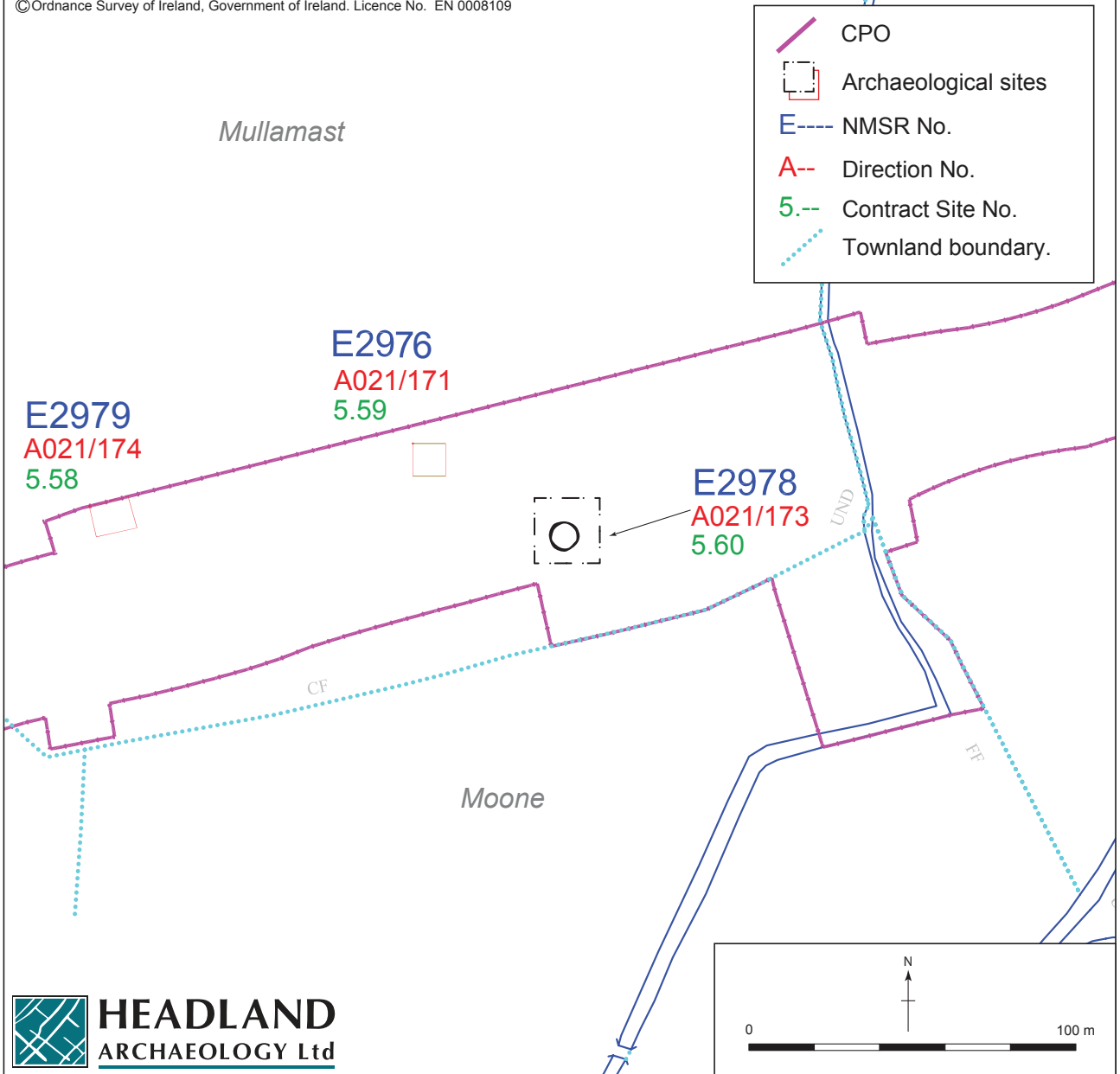


Figure 1 - N9/N10 Kilcullen to Waterford Scheme: Phase 3, Kilcullen to Carlow. Archaeological Services Contract No. 5 - Resolution, Kilcullen to Moone and Athy Link Road: E2978 site location.

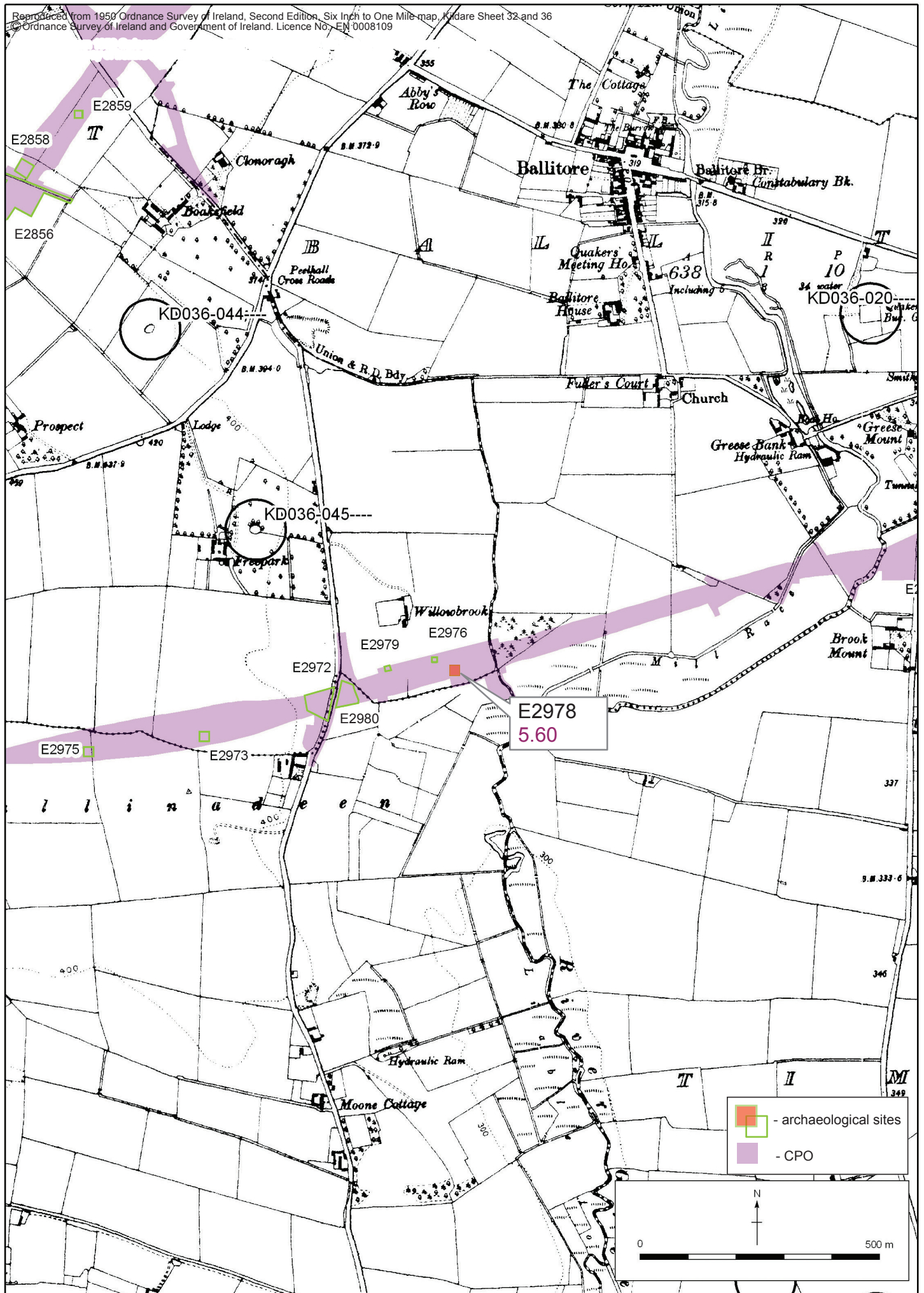
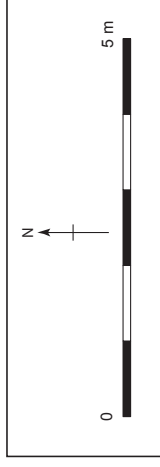
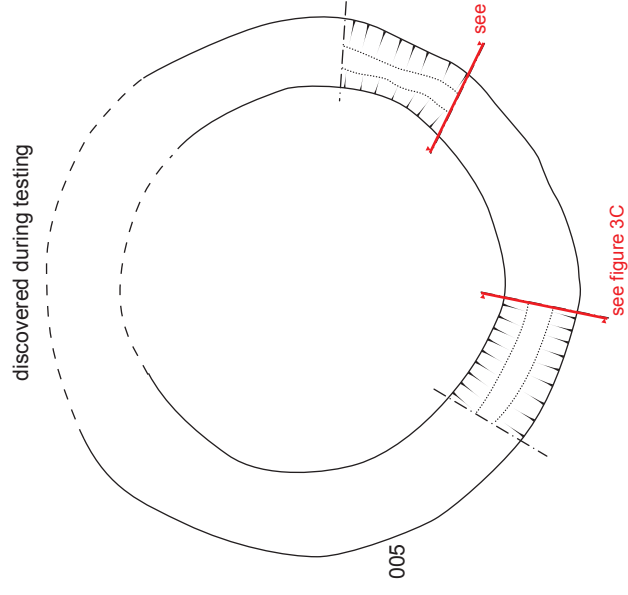


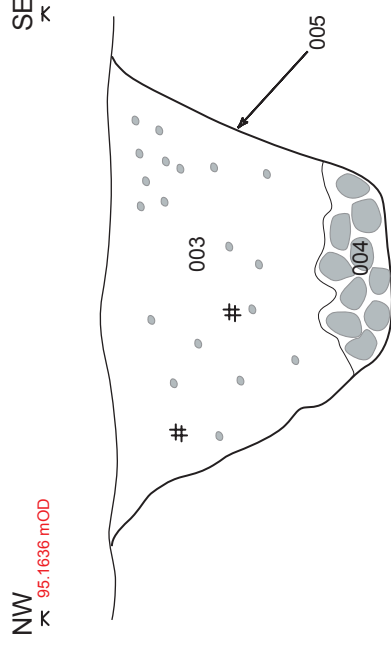
Figure 2 - N9/N10 Kilcullen to Waterford Scheme: Phase 3, Kilcullen to Carlow. Archaeological Services Contract No. 5 - Resolution, Kilcullen to Moone and Athy Link Road: E2978 extract from RMP.

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X = 279163.5806 Y = 195005.8003 Z = 94.9582

B



C

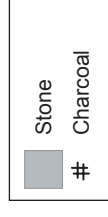
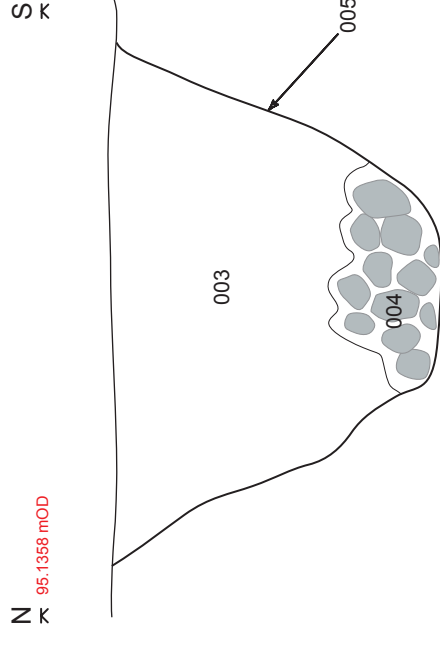


Figure 3 - N9/N10 Kilcullen to Waterford Scheme: Phase 3, Kilcullen to Carlow. Archaeological Services Contract No. 5 - Resolution, Kilcullen to Moone and Athy Link Road: E2978 (a) post-excavation plan of ring-ditch (005), (b) northeast-facing section of (005) and (c) west-facing section of (005).



Plate 1 - Mid-excavation photo of circular ditch (005), facing northwest.

**Appendix 1 – Context Register for Site E2978**

Context no.	Type	Fill of:	Filled by:	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Interpretation
1	Topsoil	-	-	0.3	-	-	-	Topsoil
2	Subsoil	-	-	-	-	-	-	Subsoil
3	Fill	3	-	0.30-0.35m	0.40m	7.2m external diameter, 5.1m internal diameter.	Upper fill. Mid brown silty sand with frequent small stones occasional lime, ash, charcoal, redbrick and pottery.	Fill of modern garden feature. N.A.S.
4	Fill	3	-	0.10m	0.25m	7.2m external diameter, 5.1m internal diameter.	Stone basal fill.	Fill of modern garden feature. N.A.S.
5	Cut	-	4 & 5	0.32m	0.40m at top 0.25m at base	7.2m external diameter, 5.1m internal diameter.	Circular feature with steep sides and a flat base.	Cut of modern garden feature. N.A.S.

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### Appendix 2 – Finds Register for Site E2978

<b>Find no.</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Identification</b>	<b>Description</b>
E2978:003:001	Ceramic	Ceramic	Post-medieval	Fragment of pearlware pottery
E2978:001:002	Glass	Glass	Post-medieval	Shard of glass
E2978:001:003	Metal	Brick	Post-medieval	Red brick

### Appendix 3 – Photo Register for Site E2978

<b>Photo Number</b>	<b>Direction facing</b>	<b>Description</b>
E2978:001	South-southwest	Mid excavation of (003), (004) and (005)
E2978:002	South-southwest	Mid excavation of (003), (004) and (005)
E2978:003	South-southwest	Mid excavation of (003), (004) and (005)



#### Appendix 4 – Site Matrix for Site E2978

