

**BULLETIN OF THE**  
**GROUP FOR THE STUDY OF IRISH**  
**HISTORIC SETTLEMENT**

**No.1.     December 1970.**

**PRICE 5 SHILLINGS (25p)**  
**(FREE TO MEMBERS)**

Bulletin of the Group for the Study of  
Irish Historic Settlement

No. 1

December 1970

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## GROUP FOR THE STUDY OF IRISH HISTORIC SETTLEMENT

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The three principal aims of the Group, formed in 1969, are:-

- i to produce and circulate useful information concerning Irish historic settlement
- ii to promote and co-ordinate studies of particular aspects of settlement
- iii to express opinions on matters of historic settlement which are of national and local concern, and, where necessary, to press for action

The formation of the Group stems from the belief that the study of settlement is inter-disciplinary and that there is a great need for a group to act as a focus for everyone with interests in this field, including economic and social historians, archaeologists, geographers, architects, surveyors, planners, school teachers, students, and all others who, as active members of local societies, have an interest in the subject. The name of **the** Group is left deliberately wide so that all shades of interest, rural and urban, may be included.

The programme of the Group includes the production and circulation of an annual Bulletin (to include short articles, recent publications, work in progress, short reports of excavations, lists and notes), an Annual meeting (to focus attention on a particular theme and area), and the planning of projects, especially the listing and recording of sites, to which the individual members of the Group and of local societies may contribute.

Membership (annual subscription 50 p) is open to all who are prepared to play an active part in the work of the Group. Members shall receive all publications free of charge. Applications to the Secretary, Dr Robin E. Glasscock, Department of Geography, Queen's University, Belfast, who will be pleased to send further information.

For those joining subsequent to 31.12.1970

G.S.I.H.S. Bulletin, No. 1 (Dec. 1970) available at 25 p.

Articles in Current Periodicals No. 1. (April 1970) available at 15 p.

## NOTES

G.S.I.H.S. Bulletin, No. 1 (Dec. 1970). This, our first annual Bulletin, is an attempt to provide information on matters of general interest in the study of settlement in all parts of Ireland. Most of this number is given to short reports of excavations, both prehistoric and historic, which took place in 1970. Publication of these within the Bulletin means that members may know what work is in progress, and interim reports of this kind overcome to some extent the inevitable delay in the publication of final reports.

It is hoped in future to expand the sections on new finds, both reviews and work in progress.

G.S.I.H.S.: Membership and subscription. Membership now stands at 170. It is regretted that production costs and postal charges have necessitated an increase in annual subscription from 1971 to 10 shillings/50 p. We earnestly hope that members who joined in 1969-70 will not be put off by this increase. 1971 subs. are now due!

Grant. The Group acknowledges with thanks a grant of £10 in 1970 from the Institute of Irish Studies, Queen's University Belfast.

Local archaeological and historical societies, and field clubs. The Group is preparing a list of all existing local societies with the names and addresses of their secretaries. It would help greatly if members could list those known to them in their area and send it to us.

Progress of The Archaeological Survey: The Archaeological Survey was set up in 1965 with a staff of a Director and two investigators (archaeologists). It was decided to carry out a detailed survey of all prehistoric monuments and of all earthworks discovered. As no architectural staff were available only a listing and photographic survey of the architectural monuments was compiled. To date, counties Louth, Monaghan and Meath have been completed and work is at present in progress in counties Cavan and Westmeath (P. Danagher, Director).

#### Forthcoming meetings

1. The Society for Medieval Archaeology meets in Galway, April 1-6. Conference subject 'The Early Church in Ireland'
2. 4th annual conference of the Young Irish Archaeologists Association, Cork, March 19-22. Only paid-up members of the Association are eligible to attend as delegates.
3. G.S.I.H.S. The annual meeting is in Kilkenny, April 30 - May 2. Subject 'The medieval town in Ireland'. The programme is being arranged. Conference headquarters will probably be the Club House hotel with whom bookings

should be made direct. A circular will be sent out in February-March.

New historic monuments act. At the time of preparing this Bulletin, a new historic monuments act for Northern Ireland is on its way through Stormont. The act will give wider powers for compulsory acquisition of important sites, tighten up the legislation and stiffen penalties for destruction. This move is much welcomed, and it is to be hoped that similar legislation to up-date the National Monuments Acts of 1930 and 1954 will take place in Dublin, sooner rather than later in view of the accelerating rate of destruction.

Examples of destroyed earthworks and monuments. The Group is anxious to compile a record of earthworks and monuments destroyed. Please send in information of the type of site, location, approximate date of destruction, and reasons for same.

All communications regarding the G.S.I.H.S. should be addressed to the  
Hon. Secretary,  
Dr R. E. Glasscock,  
Department of Geography,  
Queen's University Belfast,  
BELFAST BT7 1NN,  
N. Ireland.

G.S.I.H.S. First annual meeting. Limerick, May 16-17, 1970.

The Group plans to hold a weekend meeting annually at which there are local excursions, and where papers and discussion are concentrated upon one main topic. At Limerick, Mr Seamus O Cinneide spoke on the city, its historic features and problems of preservation and led a walking tour on the Sunday morning. On Sunday afternoon Mr Mannix Joyce led an excursion to the walled town of Kilmallock.

The main theme of the meeting was ring-forts and Summaries of three papers are included below. Plenty of time was left for discussion and there was a most useful exchange of views.

### Summaries of papers on ring-forts

E. Rynne, Department of Archaeology, University College Galway

#### Ring-forts and their problems

There are many problems associated with the study of ring-forts in Ireland, not least being a clear definition of the type of monument involved and the terminology used to describe it. The following description might be acceptable:

A ring-fort is an area, generally roughly circular and up to 60 metres in diameter, which is enclosed by a rampart of stone, earth-and-stone, or one or more of earth alone, external fosses being a characteristic feature of those with earthen ramparts, but exceptional elsewhere. Within these enclosures there normally stood one or more houses. They were essentially farmsteads.

'Ring-fort' would seem to be the best and most acceptable generic term for all of these monuments, with 'rath' used to describe those with earthen ramparts and 'cashel' to describe those with stone ramparts; 'caher' might, perhaps, conveniently be retained to describe the larger, stronger, more military cashels.

The problem of origin rests on whether ring-forts are indigenous or introduced. Although the idea of enclosing a house is undoubtedly native to any people, it is felt that the larger, more monumental ring-fort was probably introduced, possibly into the South-West and West of Ireland, and perhaps from Brittany/Cornwall (arguments for such an origin and place of introduction depend largely on the distribution of the placename 'caher')

← cathair (Irish) = caer (Cornish), and also on Mr Caulfield's work on early disc-queerns which he associates strongly with ring-forts). Dating also provides a problem. On present evidence it would seem justifiable to introduce ring-forts with the Early Iron Age and perhaps terminate their construction, if not their use, in Late Medieval times.

E. M. Fahy, Department of Geography, University College Cork

Locational factors in ring-fort distribution in  
West Cork

The distribution of ring-forts in the area covered by the Rural Districts of Castletown, Bantry, Schull, Skibbereen, Dunmanway and Clonakilty together with parts of Bandon and Kinsale R.Ds. was analysed in relation to altitudinal controls while the first five R.Ds. listed were also analysed against soil data provided by An Foras Taluntais. Extensive field work was undertaken.

The region contained 860 ring-forts, some of which have been destroyed during land reclamation within the past twenty years. Almost half (48.4%) of the structures were found to lie between the two and four hundred foot contours while only 27.3% were located between four and six hundred feet. Less than 4% stood above the six hundred foot contour, and 20.3% lay below two hundred feet O.D.

It was possible to analyse the distribution of 530 ring-forts in relation to soil types. While Brown Earths and Brown Podzolics, principally the latter, constitute only 31.78% of the soils in the five R.Ds. surveyed 82.2% of the ring-forts were sited on, or peripheral to them. It was notable that an area of 5,000 acres of Brown Podzolics developed on glacial gravels in the Drimoleague district attracted only eleven ring-forts nor were there peripheral groupings.

The analyses show that the ring-fort builders were primarily interested in lowland settlement on best quality agricultural soil. Land lying below two hundred feet O.D., even when of good quality, accounted for less than quarter of the sites and gravelly soil, though in favoured altitudinal range held no special attraction.

The validity of the statistical analysis is well exemplified by a comparison between the R.Ds. of Castletown and Skibbereen. The former is a mountainous peninsula with a narrow lowland fringe, the latter is a rolling lowland with a hilly upland rim. Castletown, measuring 73,445 acres contains only 12% good soil while Skibbereen, 114,024 acres, has 49% good soil. In acreage Skibbereen has more than six times the amount of good soil, but has twelve times the number of ring-forts. This very significant difference between the districts is due to the predominance of lowland in the Skibbereen area.

The reluctance to construct ring-forts on low-lying sites is not altogether explained by the periodic flooding experienced on valley floors as similar low-lying coastal strips were also avoided. It is quite evident from field observations that sites which commanded a reasonable view of the surrounding landscape, without necessarily occupying a summit position, were very popular locations. No doubt, such semi-strategic siting reinforced the feeling of security created by the enclosing bank, bank and ditch or, rarely, banks and ditches.

Avoidance of the higher levels of the landscape is attributable to the presence of blanket bog, poor or skeletal soils, steep slopes, greater exposure and somewhat higher precipitation.

Reluctance to construct ring-forts on the gravels may have been due to their unsuitability to the bank and ditch style of construction and the fact that they did not contain suitable stone for building revetments, or that the soils supported coniferous forest.

It is generally supposed that early agriculturalists recognised good soil by the presence of elm trees. As there are no calcareous soils in West Cork the elm cannot have been of any significance. It is not represented in charcoal samples from various early sites nor has it been recognised through pollen analysis of peat samples. Evidently the oak, which is well represented on early sites and in peat samples, was the definitive element in soil selection for agricultural purposes. It is possible that the presence of pine trees on the glacial sands and gravels was taken as indicative of light soils which were not favoured by the settlers.

It can be concluded that the ring-fort builders of West Cork were essentially lowland agriculturalists who invariably constructed their fortified enclosures on rising ground within the farm-land.

A. E. T. Harper, Archaeological Survey of Northern Ireland

#### The distribution of ring-forts in Co. Armagh

The survey of Ancient Monuments in Co. Armagh has included a comprehensive survey of the county's ring-forts. This note concerns the earthworks in this category, although inclusion of stone structures would hardly change the general conclusions.

Types of ring-fort were distinguished on a morphological basis.

- 1) Multivallate
- 2) Univallate
- 3) Platform
- 4) Stone revetted
- 5) Vanished sites, and those which remain only vestigially



When the altitudinal distribution of these monuments was studied an interesting difference emerged between the distribution of the two predominant types. Although the great majority of sites occurred on hilltops or hillside sites, platform types exhibit a significantly lower altitudinal frequency distribution than univallate sites. The implications may be that at lower altitudes it was necessary deliberately to raise living sites above the water table thus creating platforms.

As is frequently noted the highest, and lowest lands are avoided. Further evidence to explain the distribution of ring-forts may be available from the study of place name evidence. We may note the marked avoidance by ring-forts of areas whose townland names incorporate the element 'derry' as the first element in their name.

Another aspect to be pursued is the extent to which the pattern of ring-fort distribution can be correlated with the known socio-political division of Co. Armagh at an early date.

REPORTS OF EXCAVATIONS IN 1970PREHISTORIC SETTLEMENTS

TYRONE: BALLYNAGILLY (H 743827)

A. M. APSIMON, Department of Archaeology, University of Southampton, on behalf of the Ancient Monuments Branch, Ministry of Finance, N.I.

The fifth and final season of excavation took place in July and August 1970. Rescue excavation of a complex of Neolithic and Bronze Age settlement sites on and around a low gravel hill was completed by the excavation of the Bell Beaker settlement site in square G. Structural features included post and stake holes, some of which may have formed part of a house, though no complete plan was recovered. There were numerous hearths and pits and finds included much Beaker pottery and flint-work.

The settlement sequence can be summarised as follows:

- 1) Earliest Neolithic: Three radiocarbon dates between 3600 and 3800 B.C. on material from Neolithic features. These are the earliest dates for Neolithic settlement in the British Isles.
- 2) Early Neolithic: settlement with rectangular, plank walled house dated to about 3250 B.C. and contemporary with forest clearance for agriculture.
- 3) Middle Neolithic: One focus with pottery of Sandhills - Carrowkeel affinities, dated to around 2900 B.C. and apparently contemporary with change to predominantly pastoral land use.
- 4) Late Neolithic: The period between 2600 and 2100 B.C. was marked by abandonment of the area and regeneration of the forest.
- 5) Earlier Bronze Age - Bell Beaker: Three distinct settlement sites with material of early type, dating from around 2000-1900 B.C. and coincident with forest clearance for mixed farming.
- 6) Earlier Bronze Age - Irish Bowl: Reoccupation of one Beaker site, dated to about 1600 B.C., with renewed forest clearance, possibly connected with pastoral farming.
- 7) Earlier Bronze Age - Plainware: One site with plain pottery, apparently from large, well made, straight sided, flat bottomed pans. The affinities of this material remain to be defined. There are three radiocarbon dates between 1600 and 1500 B.C.

- 8) Later Bronze Age - pre-Roman Iron Age: No archaeological sites found, but pollen evidence indicates extensive mixed farming in the area between about 1200 and 200 B.C.
- 9) Early Christian and Medieval: Pollen evidence suggests pastoral farming renewed from about 6th century A.D onwards, with cereal cultivation prominent round about the 6th, 12th and 15th centuries.

Reference: ApSimon, A. M., 'An Early Neolithic House in Co. Tyrone', J. Roy. Soc. Antiq. Ireland, 99 (1969), 165-8

MEGALITHS

DONEGAL: CROAGHBEG (G 649748)

L. N. W. FLANAGAN, Ulster Museum, on behalf of Office of Public Works, Dublin.

The second season's excavation at this site (the third court-grave to be excavated in the same small valley, those in Bavan and Shalwy having previously been excavated by the writer) took place in August 1970.

Both chambers of the main gallery and the surviving subsidiary chamber on the north side of the forecourt were excavated. Small finds were disappointing, the only finished implements from the chambers being two heat-shattered flint plano-convex knives, a classical flint hollow scraper and a concave scraper. Surprisingly, both main chambers and the subsidiary had sills between the jambs. The floor of the subsidiary was very neatly paved over half its area.

In addition to the chambers a number of cuttings were opened around the cairn, but outside it. Excavation of the forecourt and of the total periphery of the cairn will be continued next year.

LONDONDERRY: BALLYBRIEST (H 762885)

A. M. APSIMON, Department of Archaeology, University of Southampton, in collaboration with Professor E. Estyn Evans, Queen's University Belfast

At the dual-court cairn, Carnanbane originally excavated by Evans (Proc. Roy. Irish Acad., 45 C (1939)), a test cutting was made south of the eastern grave. The black layer reported by Evans was located beneath undisturbed cairn stones and large charcoal samples were taken for radiocarbon dating. A quantity of broken Early Neolithic pottery was also found. The investigation lends support to Evans' conclusion that the construction of the cairn followed soon after the deposition of the black layer.

The second site examined was the Gallery Grave 120 m south of Carnanbane. Here two test cuttings were made close to the sides of the cairn. The extant width of the cairn was about 5.5 metres but no kerb was found. Samples of charcoal were obtained from the pre-cairn surface and deposits between this and overlying peat, but no archaeological material was found. The monument is a good example of the class, oriented S.S.W. with a chamber 3.25-4.00 m long, 1.10-1.25 m wide and about 1 metre high.

MAYO: BALLYGLASS (G 097381)

S. O'NULLAIN, Ordnance Survey Office Dublin, on behalf of the Ordnance Survey and the Office of Public Works Dublin

The excavations at Ballyglass, 1970, are a continuation of the work which commenced on the court tomb (Ma.13) in 1969. Before excavation the monument was seen to consist of a large elliptical courtyard having a lateral entrance on its northern side. Two galleries, each with two chambers are placed opposite each other and opening from the narrow ends of the court.

During the 1969 season, the court, the S.E. gallery and the eastern and southern part of the enveloping cairn were excavated. The base of a kerb of dry-stone work, running the full length of the structure was exposed at the southern side of the monument. A short section of a similar kerb was later exposed along the north side of the tomb. Excavations during 1970 concentrated on the N.W. gallery and on the heavy cairn-mass behind it.

Finds from the tomb included flint and chert scrapers of various forms, two flint javlin-heads, a small polished stone axe, and a few arrowheads. Numerous shards of Neolithic pottery, some of which bore decoration, were also recovered. A portion of a Beaker pot, found in the upper layers of one chamber, may have been a secondary deposit. The burial site was cremation and numerous fragments of cremated bone were found throughout the fill of the chambers, indicating the disturbed nature of the deposit.

Removal of the heavy cairn stones behind the N.W. gallery revealed the foundations of a prehistoric timber house. The wall of the house ran under the kerb of the tomb at several points and it was quite obvious that the house pre-dated the building of the tomb.

The house, which was not fully excavated this season, measures at least 10 m long by 6 m wide. The structure is orientated N.W.-S.E. and is outlined by a series of post-holes with connecting trenches. The house would appear to have been divided into three rooms and within these were exposed a number of fires and stone settings. Though it was not possible to proceed with the excavation of the house this year, a trial excavation across one of the foundation trenches produced shards of shouldered Neolithic pottery similar to wares found in the court-tombs.

The excavation forms part of a series undertaken by the Ordnance Survey designed to elucidate specific problems which arise during the course of the Megalithic Survey of Ireland. The excavations are financed by means of a grant from the Office of Public Works, which is administered through the Royal Irish Academy, and by the Ordnance Survey Office.

See also article on 'Court Cairns' in Current Archaeology, No. 22 (Sept. 1970), 301-303.

MEATH: KNOWTH (N 995736)

G. EOGAN, Department of Archaeology, University College Dublin,  
on behalf of Office of Public Works, Dublin

During the 1970 season, which lasted from April to October, excavations were concentrated on two main areas. One was an area in front of the entrance to the western tomb in the large tumulus (site 1); the other area was on the opposite side of site 1, along the eastern edge of the large mound and in the neighbourhood of the entrance to the eastern tomb.

Excavations outside the entrance to the western tomb have established that considerable activity took place over that area during the Neolithic period and again, but less intense, during the Early Bronze Age. The Neolithic features consisted of trenches and pits. One of the trenches looks as if it could have held posts. The trenches and pits were filled with dark earth that had a fair amount of charcoal mixed through it. In addition sherds of pottery were numerous. The sherds are undecorated but a large number have features and from it appears that round-bottomed shouldered bowls were a prominent type. In one pit a remarkable carved stone object over 20 cms long turned up. This may have been a phallic symbol. In addition to pits and trenches stone settings and spreads of quartzite occur. As yet the excavations are not complete over this area but it does not appear that the trenches and pits form any precise pattern. As these features, together with the stone settings, are confined to an area just outside the entrance perhaps one could speculate that they were in some way connected with ceremonies that may have formed part of the burial ritual.

The excavations have also revealed that one of the small passage graves (site 7) overlies, and is therefore later, than some of the trenches.

Numerous sherds of Beaker pottery occur over part of the area but this is found at a higher level. As yet no structures can be associated with the activity of the Beaker folk.

The excavations on the eastern side are a continuation of the investigation of an extensive settlement of Early Christian date. At this site there is still a considerable amount of work to do but from the evidence coming to light it seems that the occupation covered an area that was about 20 m long and 10 m wide. Five souterrains were associated with it.

See also Current Archaeology, No. 22 (Sept. 1970), 292-296.

MEATH: NEW GRANGE (O 007727)

Professor M. J. O'KELLY, University College Cork, on behalf  
of the Office of Public Works Dublin

No report received, but see recent article in Current Archaeology, No. 22 (Sept. 1970), 297-300.

HILL-FORTS

ARMAGH: NAVAN FORT (H 847452)

D. M. WATERMAN, for the Ancient Monuments Branch, Ministry of Finance, N.I.

A summary account of the excavations to date has appeared in Current Archaeology, No. 22 (Sept. 1970), 304-8.

In 1970 investigation of the sequence of Late Bronze-Early Iron Age structures underlying the mound was continued. All associated features were excavated through a well-developed fossil-soil, beneath which, at the surface of the natural sand, plough-marks in two directions were recognised. Within the original ditched enclosure, wall-slots of the fenced annexes attach to the primary series of round houses were further examined, as well as the superimposed foundation trenches of three round houses with opposed entrances. These later houses had central posts and internal hearths, in one case stone-paved.

Of the large timber structure, 130 feet in diameter, subsequently built over the original settlement area, the full plan of the ambulatory-like feature was recovered. The entrance appears to have been on the west, on the axis of the ramp dug for the erection of the central post: from this direction, a double row of posts lead inwards, encircle the central post, and return on a parallel course to the outside of the building.

KILDARE: DUN AILINNE (N 820078)

B. WAILES, University of Pennsylvania, for the University of Pennsylvania and the Office of Public Works Dublin.

Three seasons' work have been carried out at this site so far, financed by the National Monuments Branch of the Office of Public Works, the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania, and with generous grants for Field Training of some students from the Ford Foundation.

In 1968 work was directed toward the discovery of an occupation area (if any): magnetometer survey and fairly extensive trial trenching showed intensive Iron Age occupation on the summit of the hill, a little to the south of centre of the 34 acre enclosure. This was the only area where there was any clear evidence for occupation of any period. Excavation in 1969 and 1970 has concentrated on this Iron Age occupation, and a little over half of this has been cleared, though by no means completely excavated.

The first Iron Age phase is a circular palisade trench about 22.0 m diameter, of which a little over half is now revealed. There are no other structures certainly associated with it as yet. The second phase consists of three close-set palisade trenches, also forming arcs of circles, set concentrically. The approximate diameters are 33.0 m, 31.0 m and 27.0 m; the outer trench is about 0.90 m deep x 0.80 m wide, the middle one 0.70 m x 0.40 m, the inner 0.40 m x 0.25 m. The graded size of these trenches, and their close spacing, tentatively suggest that the timbers originally set in them may have supported a fairly substantial structure, heavier (?higher) on the outside and lighter (? lower) on the inside. There are no other coherent features yet to be associated with this phase. The third phase has double palisade trenches, also forming arcs of circles, about 42.0 m and 37.0 m diameter. The centre of these concentric circles is a hut about 6.0 m diameter. Between this hut and the outer double palisade is a ring of large post-holes (ca. 1.0 m deep and 1.0 m wide), which also centres on the same hut. The posts contained in these large holes remained standing while the outer palisade trenches and the central hut were covered by a layer of burnt stone, charcoal, ash and blackened earth, containing considerable animal bone and some Iron Age artefacts. Finally, the large posts were extracted, and more burnt material was deposited over most of the site, forming a low mound slightly less than 1.0 m high at its centre.

The ring of large posts of the third phase cannot at present be convincingly interpreted as any part of a larger structure; and seem to have been free-standing. Although there is a substantial occupation level, intact thanks to the protection of the covering 'low mound', it is difficult to see any clear traces of secular occupation in the nature and disposition of the finds and features (e.g. no domestic hearths, workshop areas etc as yet). And the 'low mound' is strongly suggestive of using 'fulacht fiadh' debris to cover deliberately a dismantled and abandoned site. All of these factors suggest, on present evidence, that at least the later Iron Age phases at Dun Ailinne are more amenable to 'ritual' than to secular interpretation. But it must be emphasised that excavation is far from complete, and the earlier Iron Age phases barely more than defined to date. Substantial Neolithic material is incorporated in the Iron Age levels and top soil, suggesting strongly that some structure of that period (? megalithic tomb) was partly or wholly destroyed by Iron Age activities on the site. The Iron Age finds have not been studied closely yet, but preliminary examination suggests that a bracket of first century B.C. to fifth century A.D. would be probably appropriate.

It is hoped to continue excavation in June and July 1971, when visitors would be most welcome.

#### Bibliography of reports to date:

'Excavations at Dun Ailinne, Co. Kildare' Expedition 11 no. 2, Winter 1969

'Excavations at Dun Ailinne, Co. Kildare, 1968-9: interim report' forthcoming J.R.S.A.I.



'Excavations at Dun Ailinne, near Kilcullen, 1970'  
forthcoming Journal of Kildare Archaeological Society.

See also 'Dun Ailinne' in Current Archaeology, No. 22  
(Sept. 1970), 309-311.

TYRONE: CLOGHER (H 539513)

R. B. WARNER, Ulster Museum

Preliminary Report on Season March/April 1969 (not excavated  
in 1970).

The earthworks lie on a steep and prominent drumlin, now called Castle Hill, just south of the village and Cathedral of Clogher. An impressive slightly oval Fort, with an internal area of slightly more than  $\frac{1}{2}$  acre (diameter 60 m), crowns the hill. This inner fort, which we call for convenience the Citadel, is now surrounded by a high scarp-bank and deep ditch and partly by a well preserved counterscarp bank. These are in turn surrounded at a distance by a high contour-scarp-bank, the enclosed area being trapezoidal in shape and over 3 acres in extent (175 x 150 m). Included within the circuit of this outwork are a mound of unknown origin (possibly a damaged passage grave), a Ring-barrow of probably Early Iron Age date at the South end and an impressive system of extra banks at the North end. From the East side of the Fort two more banks run down the drumlin slope to a spring and stream at the valley bottom where they meet a massive bank which possibly surrounded the whole hill. The enclosed area of this last bank would be more than 40 acres, but it is not at all certain that it is contemporary with the Hill-Fort. More banks can be traced on the slopes of the hill, and the whole is thus a most complex and impressive affair.

The Hill-Fort lies in the middle of the Clogher Valley, or Blackwater Gap (Magh Lemna) on the route between Emhain Macha and the Armagh plain and the Erne Ford at Portora. It is also an important juxtaposition to the centre of the modern Diocese. There is a local tradition, which unfortunately goes back only 200 years, that the site is Rath Oriel (Rath Airgialla).

Excavation was begun on March 3rd, 1969, and has proceeded for 6 weeks with student and local labour, numbers varying from 12 to 25 workers. Mr Barry Raftery of University College, Dublin, undertook to assist in the direction of the site, and without his help the progress made would have been well nigh impossible.

It was decided to attack certain problems of immediate importance, these being the relative and absolute dates, and the

structure, of the various enclosing banks, and an indication of the structures within the Citadel. Five trenches were therefore opened. A phosphate survey was undertaken by Mr C. Lynn of Queen's University, as yet unchecked archaeologically. The complex of earthworks at the North end, the Ring-barrow and the Mound were left untouched, although it is now certain that they will prove fruitful and important. The total area of trenches opened was some 260 square metres.

In general with Hill-Fort excavation, banks and ditches prove rather fruitless, but in this case the results have been very encouraging and interesting. The lowest levels in the Citadel and the innermost bank, have not been fully explored as yet, but this Citadel would appear to have been occupied, but not necessarily built in the first half of the first millennium A.D. From the low levels came coarse pottery of a type now believed to date from the Early Iron Age, and from upper levels imported pottery of the beginning of the Later Iron Age, with metalworking remains. A sub-Roman 'tiolet implement' was found in a position which is not inconsistent with these conclusions. Internal structures have yet to be sorted out.

The contour bank has yielded metalwork of the Early Iron Age.

Bones and charcoal from the Citadel will be analysed and Radio Carbon dated.

It is fair to say that this excavation, as with Mr Flanagan's Early Iron Age burials from Kiltierney, will cause the whole Irish Iron Age picture to be reconsidered and reconstructed. Work so far has shown that our previous ideas need changing but does not go far enough in changing them. It is imperative that work at Clogher be resumed as soon as possible particularly in view of the new galleries for 1971. It will only be possible to set up a rational or accurate Iron Age gallery if adequate funds are immediately made available for continuing the excavation. The Ring-barrow and outworks should certainly prove highly rewarding.

My thanks are due to the St Louis Convent for granting permission to excavate on their land; to the Chairman, Trustees and Directors of the Ulster Museum for granting facilities; to the nuns of St McCartan's Convent for much help; to the numerous volunteers and local labourers who worked on the site.

WICKLOW: RATHGALL (S 902731)

B. RAFTERY, University College Dublin, on behalf of the Office of Public Works Dublin

Excavation during 1969 was confined to the small central enclosure and it was established that occupation had taken place here during the Late Bronze Age, the Early Iron Age and the Mediaeval periods (Antiquity, 1970, 51-54). During the 1970 season excavation was again concentrated mainly in the inner enclosure, though a wide cutting was extended through the wall on the east.

Perhaps the most interesting result of the second season's work at Rathgall, was the discovery and partial excavation of two large houses of completely different type. The first had already been touched upon last year but during 1970 new and interesting structural details were brought to light.

This house stands in the centre of the (much later) stone enclosure. It is a large circular house almost 15 m in diameter which is surrounded by a concentric, V-shaped ditch. An outer palisade trench and inner ring of post holes held the walls of the structure, and a considerable number of quite massive posts in the interior demonstrated the probability that the entire structure was roofed. The entrance was in the east: it consisted of a narrow gap in both rings of posts flanked by four massive gate posts. Leading inwards from these, two parallel lines of post holes suggest the existence of a passage-way leading towards the centre of the house.

The second house was found immediately to the east of the V-shaped ditch referred to above. Only part of its plan has so far been brought to light, but the large post holes demonstrate the presence of a very large rectangular house. This was not just an ordinary dwelling place, but rather a workshop where intensive bronze-working was carried on. A large hearth in the western end of the structure was the focus for a dense scatter of mould fragments, all recognisable pieces being certainly for the manufacture of objects of Late Bronze Age type. In addition, a bronze socketed gouge, a fragmentary lignite bracelet, a bronze conical-shaped rivet and a great quantity of coarse pottery came from the occupational level of the "workshop".

Though the date of the "workshop" is beyond doubt, its relationship to the circular house is not yet clear and a further season's work must be done before any positive statement can be made in this respect.

As well as the two houses, several more of the large, open-air hearths were excavated, bringing the total now discovered to nine. Mould fragments from several of these show that they too were involved in the bronze working industry carried on at the site with striking intensity.

The later phases of occupation were not as clearly illustrated as the earliest phase. Glass beads with concentric circles may belong to the Iron Age phase as may some of the coarse ware. Green-glazed pottery, a second, late thirteenth century silver coin and an iron cross-bow bolt can with certainty be assigned to the latest phase of occupation on the site. No structures can so far be definitely related to either of these two periods.

# OTHER PREHISTORIC EXCAVATIONS

GALWAY: ORAN BEG (M 420255)

E. RYNNE, Department of Archaeology, University College Galway

A small ring-barrow in the townland of Oran Beg, near Oranmore, Co. Galway (O.S. 6" sheet 95) was completely excavated over the Easter period, 1970. The site was at the edge of a gravel quarry and consequently in immediate danger of destruction, for which reason the National Museum of Ireland agreed to sponsor its excavation.

The ring-barrow consisted of a very low encircling bank, about 11 m in overall diameter, with a shallow internal fosse; the central area averaged about 5.50 m in diameter.

A small quantity of cremated bones, hardly enough to be interpreted as those of a complete skeleton, was discovered near the centre. Although possibly the primary burial, it was not accompanied by any grave-goods. At the bottom of the surrounding fosse, in the NE quadrant, another burial-deposit was discovered. This consisted of even fewer cremated bone-fragments accompanied by over eighty tiny beads and some bronze fragments, all in a small area (about 1 m in diameter) of dark earth mixed with charcoal. Five of the beads are of plain blue glass and the others are of yellow paste, many of the latter being found in fragmentary state. All the beads are featureless, and all are between 3 mm and 5 mm in maximum measurement. As some of them were fused together, it is apparent that they had been subjected to intense heat, perhaps on the funerary pyre.

The bronze fragments include three portions of a small (infant's ?) armlet, about 3 cm in internal diameter, which was cast with diagonal ridges giving it a rope-like appearance externally. The only other object found was a small bronze artifact, 1.65 cm long, shaped like a tiny bar-bell. The purpose of this object is unknown, unless it may have served as some sort of toggle-like clasp for a necklace made from the beads.

This site can be closely paralleled with the ring-barrow at Grannagh, near Ardrahan, Co. Galway, which was "investigated" by Macalister in 1916 (cf. *P.R.I.A.*, 33 (1917), 508-9) and completely excavated in 1969 by the present writer before its destruction by quarrying. The Grannagh ring-barrow produced bronze fibulae, coloured glass beads, iron fragments, etc, all of which indicated an Early Iron Age date for the monument. A similar date would seem appropriate for the Oran Beg ring-barrow.

MAYO: CARROWNAGLOGH

M. HERITY, Department of Archaeology, University College Dublin, on behalf of the Office of Public Works, Dublin

No report received.

MAYO: GLENULRA (G 051406)

S. CAULFIELD, Department of Archaeology, University College Dublin, on behalf of the Office of Public Works Dublin

Excavations were carried out in Glenulra townland for a period of five weeks from mid July to mid August. The site excavated was part of a joint excavation project in association with Dr Michael Herity who excavated at Carrownaglogh, Co. Mayo. The aim of the research project is to investigate field walls and other structures which underlie the blanket bog of the west coast of Ireland in many places from Kerry to Donegal.

This season, half an oval enclosure 25 m x 22 m was uncovered. The enclosure lies less than 300 metres east of Behy court cairn on the same shoulder of Ceide hill. The excavation was a follow up to last year's investigation of field walls in the neighbourhood of the tomb. The fields are generally quite large enclosing several acres and the oval enclosure was a free-standing structure in one of these fields. The area excavated, 24 m x 16 m lay in cut-away bog: the other half of the enclosure is still overlain by 1.5 metres of uncut peat.

The enclosing wall was in a ruinous condition but originally would have stood approximately 1 m high and slightly less than 1 m wide. Three possible interpretations for the structure were suggested.

1. A small tillage plot
2. A cattle compound
3. A habitation area

The excavation revealed a certain concentration of stone within the enclosure and immediately outside what appears to be an entrance there is a roughly paved and cobbled area. In this rough cobbling there is a small pit with a setting of stones around its rim. Within the enclosure, along the western

side an accumulation of stones showed a small structure approximately 1 m x 1 m but its function was not clear.

Areas of scattered stone, and attempts at stone terracing rule out the possibility of tillage within the enclosure a concentration of charcoal in two places associated with settings of small stones showed the location of fires.

Excavation through the stony levels was not carried out this year as the excavation was an exploratory one to determine the nature of the site rather than to carry out a complete investigation. There were no definite artifacts recovered. Out of over 5,000 pebbles and flakes of quartz, chert and other stone picked up individually on the site less than a dozen appear to be struck flakes of chert and only two flakes of flint were recovered.

While finds were therefore disappointing the evidence from the structure and the traces of fires indicate much activity on the site and in deciding between a cattle compound or a dwelling area I am at present in favour of the latter.

On the completion of the excavation the site was covered in polythene and then resodded. It is hoped to complete the excavation of the enclosure in a further season.

TYRONE: CAMKENNY (H 353867)

C. LYNN, for the Ancient Monuments Branch, Ministry of Finance, N.I.

A ring-cairn was excavated in July and August 1970 prior to its destruction under a farm improvement scheme. The site comprised a circular bank, at most 2 feet high, averaging 10 feet wide and 80 feet in diameter crest to crest. It was built of dumped stones of local schist and overgrown with rushes and hill peat. The bank did not have any surviving indications of a deliberate method of construction except that in places its core consisted of a very rough double line of larger stones. This may have been occasioned by the nature of the terrain and the clearing of the site rather than by any tradition or ritual necessity. In the centre a very low cairn, roughly oval, 10 x 12 feet covered a series of 13 small pits in a random arrangement containing apparently the much comminuted remains of a cremation deposit. The sandy soil all around the pits had been disturbed to a depth of 6-9 ins where the bone and charcoal seemed simply to have been 'worked' into the soil. Underneath part of the bank an area about 4 square feet of the natural soil had been turned a brick red by an intense fire. A thick scatter of charcoal over and around this patch produced more and larger pieces of cremated human bone than could be separated from the

soil under the central cairn. There were no grave goods as such but associated with the structure and deposits were several scrapers, an arrowhead, a small polished stone axe, five sherds of plain coarse pottery and two small perforated stone discs perhaps beads or buttons. Less reliably associated was a lump of slag found among the upper stones of the central cairn.

The site was built on a level area of a rocky hillside. The natural sandy till contained many numerous large erratic boulders. For this reason it would be unwise to make much of its stone construction and it may be that the monument belongs in the class of early Bronze Age ring-barrows, normally built of earth.



RING-FORTS

ANTRIM: CARNMONEY (J 333845)

M. AVERY, Department of Archaeology, Queen's University Belfast

A second season of excavation at this rath took place for approximately 7 weeks from June 29th, 1970. Areas opened were a bank section approximately 30 m by 3 m, and approximately 120 square metres within the interior.

3 main periods of occupation were present:

- (1) pre-rath: gullies of uncertain date, of which partial plans were recovered; no finds associated
- (2a) rath period A: inner bank and ditch built, and a deep gully in the centre of the rath, enclosing a circular area about 7 metres in diameter. A structure built within this area was later burnt.
- (2b) rath period B: inner bank heightened and ditch redug; outer bank and ditch possibly added now. Much of the interior was covered with a dumped layer of clay, and a new structure built in the centre; this structure was also burnt.

Charcoal was recovered from both burnt structures of period 2, and a quantity of pottery and animal bones, together with glass beads, bronze, shale and iron objects, was recovered stratified from each of the levels. This promises well for dating.

- (3) Post-rath: The interior was covered to a depth of 30 cms by dumped clay, and the foundation-gully of a rectangular structure cut in to the surface of this. The date is obscure, since scraps of both 13th and 17th century pottery were recovered from this level.

A peat monolith was taken for examination from the recut inner ditch of period 2b, and samples for radiocarbon dating.

ANTRIM: TULLY (J 163806)

A. E. T. HARPER, for the Ancient Monuments Branch, Ministry of Finance, N.I.

Excavations in advance of destruction for runway extensions were undertaken in September, October and November of 1970. The site is a ringfort with raised interior surrounded by two ditches and two banks. The diameter of the enclosed internal area is roughly 30 m. At least four phases of occupation are indicated for the site. It is not certain that these phases represent continuous occupation but this seems likely.

The interior forms an eminence which seems to consist principally of peat up to 2 m thick with a further 2 m of occupation built up on top. The banks and ditches are neither cut into, nor consist of peat - there is no peat in the surrounding low-lying area. The question of whether the raised peat in the interior is naturally situated or was deliberately placed in position has not yet been determined.

The site has yielded good evidence of occupation including remnants of wooden structures - both circular and rectangular - from the earliest period. Numerous hearths and abundant small finds including three bronze pins, glass beads, a bone comb, a piece of woven fabric, and 'souterrain ware' sherds.

The earliest level has yielded no pottery but levels above this have yielded 'souterrain ware' which is quite plain throughout the sequence with the exception of one cordoned sherd from the latest phase. The prospect of dating the change from a no pottery to a pottery using culture on a single site is most exciting.

There is some evidence that the outermost bank may originally have been stone or stone revetted. That this either collapsed or was thrown down and peat and soil formed over the collapse in the ditch before further silting occurred with the re-establishment of a heightened outer bank. It has not however been possible to link stratigraphy in the outerworks with occupation in the centre.

DOWN: FARRELL'S FORT (J 335661)

A. E. P. COLLINS for the Ancient Monuments Branch, Ministry of Finance, N.I.

A limited excavation was undertaken at Farrell's Fort (County Down Arch. Survey, 151-2) in April 1970. A cutting 32 by 14 ft was made in the N.E. edge of the ring-work, strictly confined to the area threatened by new building. This showed that the first stage of settlement had been within a perimeter bank c. 4 ft high. Occupation soil to a depth of 1 ft had accumulated against its inner edge. This phase was followed by a deliberate heightening of the interior with 4 ft of clean gravel. Slighter traces of occupation lay on top of this. Finds composed a very few featureless souterrain sherds and a Tievebulliagh axe.

(report to be published in a future number of Ulster J. of Archaeology)

TIPPERARY: BOWLING GREEN, THURLES (S 137592)

T. FANNING for the Office of Public Works, Dublin

During the month of August a limited excavation was undertaken on a ring-fort in the townland of Bowling Green on the outskirts of Thurles on lands which are intended for development within the near future.

The fort, which is roughly circular in appearance, is surrounded by a single bank and fosse. It is quite large, with an interior diameter of some 50 metres and an overall diameter of about 70 metres. Situated on a ridge (O.D. 380) which runs northwards to the east of the town of Thurles the site commands a good view of the Suir valley.

In the course of the excavation a number of cuttings were made to determine the structural nature of the defences. These revealed traces of a substantial stone facing to the bank, particularly in the north eastern sector. Many of the stones found during the excavation of the fosse must have originally formed portion of this facing. The bank itself now almost levelled in places, was largely composed of soil obtained in digging the fosse.

On excavation, the interior of the ring-fort showed evidence of occupation in the Early Christian and Medieval periods. Post-holes and hearths, located in the central area, indicated that some form of house structure originally stood there. The finds, which came mainly from this sector, included a number of small iron knives, whetstones, bronze pins and some Medieval pottery. Large quantities of animal bone were found in the excavation of the fosse and elsewhere on the site. Some of the finds e.g. the foot of a cast bronze skillet, can be dated to the 17th century when the bowling green, from which the townland name is derived, was flourishing. Of particular interest was the discovery, in the south eastern sector of a buried layer of soil nearly a metre deep in places which indicated that the original ground level in this area had been deliberately raised to provide a level "platform" within the fort.

Although the site lies within the area traditionally accepted as being the battlefield of Thurles no identifiable relics were recovered which could be associated with this encounter between Irish and Norman forces in 1174 A.D.

EARLY CHRISTIAN SITES

CLARE: INISHCALTRA (R 697850)

L. de PAOR, University College Dublin, on behalf of the Office of Public Works, Dublin

As part of a long-term project of excavation, work was begun in 1970 on the monastic site of Holy Island, or Inishcaltra, Co. Clare. The island, of more than forty acres, is in Lough Derg, about a quarter of a mile from the western shore of the Shannon near Mountshannon. Here there are ruins of stone churches, a round tower, remains of stone crosses and grave-slabs, and an extensive system of enclosures and paths or roadways defined by earthworks. Most of the remains clearly visible on the ground are concentrated on the western half of the island, but air photographs show that some of the earthworks extended to the east as well. The site has been fully described by Macalister (P.R.I.A., C 1916-17, pp. 93 ff).

Excavation in the first season was commenced at three sites on the island:

- (1) The church known as the "Baptism Church" (O.S.) or "St. Brigid's Church" (Macalister);
- (2) The "Holy Well" (Macalister) or "Lady Well" (O.S.);
- (3) The "Cottage"

The Baptism church is a ruin of a small single-celled building, with a carved Romanesque doorway which, together with the whole of the west gable, was re-erected by the Board of Works in the last century. There was also a round-headed window in the east wall when the Ordnance Survey visited the island, but most of the east wall subsequently fell. The church stands inside an enclosure bounded on the south by the lower part of a well-built masonry wall pierced with a round-arched gateway. On the other three sides the enclosure before excavation was marked by banks, at least partly of earth, in which some stone showed.

Excavation showed that the enclosure was free of burials. Collapsed masonry from the church was found on all sides, including the more or less intact east gable under a light turf. The enclosure boundary proved to be complex, and at the close of the 1970 season it seemed that the enclosure resulted in part at least from the adaptation of pre-existing features, part of the system of "field enclosures" which extends over a large part of the island. The denuded earthen banks which define this system are, in this area at least, associated with deep v-ditches. Finds from the lower silt-like fill of these ditches included an openwork bronze brooch with animal ornament in Lindisfarne style and no objects which could be given an appreciably later date. The church enclosure proper, which was fitted into the corner of one of the "field enclosures"

had several stages, the last of which, a crude drystone wall, may be of late medieval date. An earlier stage was marked by a ditch, filled largely with food refuse (much animal bone) which was associated with a rich occupation deposit to the north of the church. Bronze pins and other objects of twelfth-thirteenth-century date came from the deposit. What appeared to be an earlier stage of enclosure was marked by the remains of an earthen bank.

The mortared stone wall bounding the enclosure to the south was at both terminals returned briefly to the north, where the unmortared and poorly built cashel wall bounding the west, north and east sides joined it. This south wall appears to be associated with St Mary's church (lying to the south of St Brigid's) and is probably of thirteenth-century date.

The area to the west of the church, both inside and outside the enclosure, was one of industrial activity of several kinds. Part of a bronze-working furnace was found, and also remains of iron-reduction pits. There was an area in which roofing slates were trimmed. Outside the enclosure to the west, working pits were numerous. Two complete decorated quern-stones (almost identical in design) were found, as well as one broken in course of manufacture.

A hollow-based barbed flint arrowhead and a small polished stone axe were found in the area north of the church and indicate that there had been some Early Bronze Age activity in the vicinity.

Several fragments of Romanesque sculpture of a high quality were found in secondary position. These do not belong to any of the architectural features now remaining on the island. It is possible that Inishcaltra was a centre of production for twelfth-century carved work, perhaps for churches along the Shannon.

The interior of the church had been used at some relatively late date for burials. These, however, were sealed by several phases of dilapidation and by the small occupation deposit which marked the herd's shelter recorded as having occupied the east end of the church in the early nineteenth century. From evidence found with two of the skeletons it would seem that this was a specialised burial place, for women dying in childbirth.

Excavation at St Brigid's was suspended at the end of the season and it is hoped to complete it in 1971.

The well was pumped dry and excavated. An area around it was also excavated. It was found that a paving of gravel had been laid down around the well, and that a drain had been constructed to keep this area dry. There was abundant evidence of a cult of offerings, mainly coins and small objects. These dated from c. 1850 onwards, the greater part of them from the early twentieth century.

The interior of the "cottage" was excavated, together with an area around it. This, a two-roomed building with back-to-back fireplace, had been constructed without foundations, the base-courses of the walls being laid directly on the turf. No floor remained in the interior, possibly as a result of the "clearing out" undertaken by the Board of Works in 1870. It was clear however that the floor of the building had sloped sharply. Finds were few - fragments of iron objects - and not closely datable.

TIPPERARY: LIATHMORE-MOCHOEMOG (S 225577)

R. E. GLASSCOCK, Department of Geography, Queen's University Belfast, on behalf of the Office of Public Works, Dublin

Work in the third and final season on this Early Christian monastic site was concentrated on the investigation of the circular foundation found in 1969 and on new excavation south-east of the later-medieval church.

The circular foundation proved to be, without doubt, the base of a round tower. As there is no historical record or oral tradition of a tower here it is thought that it must have fallen, and its stones been removed, sometime before 1500. A few of the shaped stones of the outer face of the tower were found elsewhere on the site and showed the diameter to have been about 15 ft 6 ins. No dressed stones were found in situ; the circular foundation of rough limestone boulders was 8 ft 6 ins in depth, its bottom stones set deep down into the natural boulder clay. As in some other excavated round towers, such as that of St Canice's Kilkenny, the tower was erected on an area of earlier burials.

The main work of the 1970 season was the excavation of a large area of ground (approximately 13,000 square feet) south-east of the later-medieval church. All the surface earthworks of this area were found to be associated with re-occupation of the site in the late seventeenth century. While wall footings and associated finds of pottery and iron objects were found, no complete house plans were identified. Beneath this late seventeenth-century occupation were several trenches and pits of earlier date. It is likely that ~~these~~ were associated with Early Christian activity and had been filled in the seventeenth century or earlier. Apart from these features nothing was found of the moastic site.

A raised platform, a conspicuous earthwork of this site, was sectioned and found to be a burial ground. As there were no small finds no precise dating can be given. Shaped stones of the round tower were found on the surface of this burial ground and if we presume a pre-sixteenth century date for the fall of the round tower then it is probable that the burials are either of later-medieval or Early Christian date.

The final season of excavation confirmed the interpretation of the first two seasons, namely that following the abandonment of the monastery about 1050 the site was not re-occupied until the late seventeenth century when a few flimsy houses were put up near the church ruins. There is no archaeological evidence for the continuity of settlement throughout the medieval period at Liathmore and whatever group of people was maintaining the fabric of the church, and perhaps burying their dead there, must have been living at some distance, perhaps in the Norman settlement of Two-mile-borris two miles away.

Short reports in Old Kilkenny Review, 22 (1970), 31-4 and 23 (1971), 45-6.



MEDIEVAL TOWNS

DUBLIN: DUBLIN (O 152340)

B. O RIORDAIN, for the National Museum, Dublin

The National Museum excavations at High Street and Winetavern Street, Dublin, continue to produce large quantities of significant material.

At High Street 12th century layers have produced a number of coins, bone 'trial pieces' - one with Urnes style decoration, abundant evidence of bone and other working, in particular that connected with comb-making, a collection of 12th century pottery some of which is of French origin, whilst other vessel sherds are of Ham Green, Bristol type. Other finds of this period include iron keys, leather shoes, bone gaming pieces, bronze pins, iron knife-blades and miscellaneous objects of wood and bone.

At Winetavern Street the 11th and 10th century deposits have been investigated and significant details of post and wattle house remains and a timber pathway have been recorded. Finds have included numerous examples of wooden vessels both stave-built and lathe-turned, bone combs and comb-cases, bronze pins of many types, iron tools, fragments of woollen cloth and many examples of leather shoes. A quantity of unglazed 11th century French pottery has also been found and three coins of 11th century date.

See also article on the Dublin excavations in Current Archaeology, No. 22 (Sept. 1970), 312-316.

MEDIEVAL CHURCHES AND MONASTIC BUILDINGS

LONDONDERRY: BANAGHER (C 675065)

ARMAGH : ARMAGH (H 877448)

C. LYNN, for the Ancient Monuments Branch, Ministry of Finance, N.I.

Banagher Old Church and the Friary Church Armagh are in State care and during the period November 1969 to April 1970 successive excavations were carried out to remove the build up of debris and burials, down to original floor level, which had accumulated since the abandonment of both churches. This work was carried out with a view to forthcoming conservation and preservation of the buildings.

At Banagher relatively modern disturbance went below the old floor level but at the east end of the added chancel the foundations and lower courses of an altar, apparently of 15th century date were discovered. A space behind the altar may have been utilised as a sacristy. Part of the foundation of the altar consisted of a broken quern and a badly worn re-used sandstone slab bearing a crude lion passant and geometric interlace carved in relief within panels. These remains at the east end have been protected and re-buried until complete conservation and recording are possible. What appears to be a mason's mark was found on the south window of the chancel.

The excavations at Armagh Friary Church again produced the remains of an altar at the east end. This time only the foundations in a very fragmentary state were recovered but the structure was free-standing and slightly trapezoidal in plan. Almost beside the altar the foundations of a tomb which had been inserted into the south wall of the church and indications of an original mortar floor were recovered. Two other wedge-shaped tombs had been constructed, one against the inner south east angle and the other against a blocking wall of the south aisle arcade. Other wall and pier foundations are instructive in determining the architectural history of the friary church and confirm the suspected existence of an inserted tower in the nave. Many small and greatly devitrified fragments of stained glass were scattered through the debris of the nave, but significantly only two pieces of window-leading. Three musketballs, two of which had spent themselves in the soil confirm that a skirmish took place around the ruins at some time.

Both of the above excavations produced a fragment of a trepanned skull, in both instances apparently of mid 18th century or earlier date.

LONDONDERRY: DUNGIVEN (C 692083)

A. E. T. HARPER for the Ancient Monuments Branch, Ministry of Finance, N.I.

The Augustinian Priory of Dungiven which stands roughly a mile south of the present day village of Dungiven is sited on a bluff overlooking the River Roe to the south and west. It is an Ancient Monument in State Charge.

Excavations connected with the conservation programme of Ancient Monuments Branch of the Ministry of Finance were begun in the autumn of 1968 and have continued in 1969 and 1970. More work is envisaged. Work has been mainly concentrated at the west end, although clearance occurred on the south side and at the east end.

The western limits of the earliest stone building extant are indicated by the antae surviving at the S.E. coign of the nave. However the bulk of the west wall originally exposed is clearly late reconstruction and is flush butted to the north wall which runs on beyond the line of the original building. Clearance of destruction debris demonstrated that at some stage in the medieval period the nave had been extended westward. This extension may coincide with the addition of the quire to the east end which was shown to be imposed on ground already used for burial. The disinterred remains from within the area of the quire were found reburied east of the east end in a shallow charred pit - medieval everted rim coarseware sherds were associated with this pit.

Inside the southwest angle of the nave the foundation of a small rectangular tower was uncovered.

Beyond the extension to the nave at the west end, a cobbled yard and a room with a flagged floor with steps leading to an entrance to the church on the south side appear to be of post reformation date since, incorporated in the wall structures are pieces of 'Bangor Blue' slate, imports of which occur late.

Walls of late date run southward from the S.E. coign of the quire, from the junction of the quire and nave, from the original west end of the church, and from the extended west end.

The late wall at the junction of quire and nave presumably post reformation seals a medieval pebble floor with associated hearth and occupation material. An earlier, medieval, wall flush butted to the foundation of the nave is in turn sealed by this floor. Early burials which are cut through by this wall are dug into the fill of an extremely deep - 6-8 feet - rock cut channel which runs under the foundation of the earliest church building and yielded a crucible of probably early type.

There were indications on the south side at the west end of a stone built wall which may be earlier than the nave.

Excavations have thus established that

- (1) Earlier occupation and probably an earlier building - possibly a church - existed on the site before the 12th century church which forms the earliest standing remains.
- (2) The church was extended at the west end in the medieval period. This extension was probably blocked off from the nave and the original west end restored but the extension continued in use perhaps for secular purposes in the post reformation period. Further additions of a secular nature were made at the west end.
- (3) A range of medieval buildings along the south side existed and the existence of a conventual layout is strongly implied.

TIPPERARY: HOLYCROSS (S 089543)

M. O hEochaidhe, for the Office of Public Works Dublin

No report received.

CASTLES

DOWN: GREENCASTLE (J 255118)

C. LYNN for the Ancient Monuments Branch, Ministry of Finance,  
N.I.

Excavations at this site again have been designed to precede conservation of parts of the monument and to try and reconcile the continuing history and importance of the site in the middle ages with the archaeological evidence for the very early dilapidation of its outer defences.

The line of the inner edge of the surrounding ditch has been traced on the north side and at present excavations are continuing on the east to completely empty the rock-cut ditch on that side. Finds include numerous sherds of 13th century glazed jugs, cooking pots, some iron knives and many animal bones. It would appear that the castle originally had a ditch on only three sides, the southern perimeter having been a steep rocky scarp. This is confirmed by the discovery at the southern end of the east ditch of a 9 feet high masonry dam, quite intact, evidently part of the original defence design and presumably matched by another on the west.

All the evidence so far obtained points to the systematic destruction of the curtain wall not long after it was built and confirms the findings of early excavations. The problems are to try and define more closely the date of this destruction, reconcile it with the turbulent but possibly patchy early history of the building and to discover if any other outer defences superseded the demolished curtain. If the original curtain was not replaced then Greencastle would have been in effect a "tower house" from some time in the early 14th century. Further it is hoped by examining the large slabs of tumbled masonry intact in the ditch to get some idea of the original appearance of the superstructure of the curtain.

FINDS REPORTEDGiant Beaker from Cluntyganny, Co. Tyrone

Mr James Brennan recovered a Giant Beaker, of a type found mostly in East Anglia, from a site at McCracken's farm, Cluntyganny Co. Tyrone (Grid Ref. H 783816). The pot had apparently been buried inverted in a shallow pit between large boulders, close to the bank of a small stream. It was not accompanied by a burial or any other finds and there was no evidence of a former settlement or burial monument on the site.

A. M. Apsimon

Investigation of a Sweathouse near Hollyford, Co. Tipperary

I accompanied Mr T. P. O'Neill of the National Museum on Monday 15th June 1970 to inspect the sweathouse reported to the Museum by Michael Ryan, p.c., Piperhill Hollyford. Mr Ryan brought us to the site which is about one mile N of Hollyford village and 300 yards off the Tipperary-Nenagh road. The structure is about 8 metres from a small stream which joins the Multeen River. The sweathouse is constructed of Dry Stone and is built into the side of the hill which surrounds it on three sides. The top is completely covered with earth grass and brambles. Height from top outside to ground in front of entrance is 1 m 95 cms. The structure is round in plan: internal diameter 1 m 58 cms: height 1 m 90 cms. The entrance faces East and is 90 cms high 45 cms wide. Top section is domed and covered by a capstone 97 cms in diameter 5 cms thick.

Close to the site are old disused copper mines which were extensively worked in the 18th century. There is no tradition of the mines being associated with this sweathouse.

Mr Ryan described how the structure was used. A fire was lighted inside and allowed to burn. (The capstone was removed to increase draught.) When the structure was very warm the fire was allowed to die down and the embers removed, then the people went inside and sweated in the high temperature.

The discovery of this sweathouse is made interesting by the fact that it is the first one in Munster brought to the notice of the Museum Authorities. It is situated in townland of Clonmurrageha. Barony Kilnamanagh Upper Co. Tipperary O.S. 45 (not marked) Co-ordinates 20.2 cm. North. 50 cm West.

Michael O'Dwyer  
Pallasgrean, Co. Limerick

SOME RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Peter Harbison, Guide to the National Monuments in the Republic of Ireland,  
Gill and Macmillan, Dublin, 1970, 284 pages, paper-back, £1.50

Aubrey Gwynn and R. Neville Hadcock, Medieval Religious Houses: Ireland,  
Longmans, London, 1970, 479 pages, £7.00

L. N. W. Flanagan, Regional Archaeologies, Ulster,  
Heinemann, London, 1970, 56 pages, 90 p.

Donald Moore ed., The Irish Sea Province in Archaeology and History,  
Cambrian Archaeological Association, Cardiff, 1970, 125 pages, 90 p.

A. R. Orme, The World's landscapes, 4 Ireland,  
Longmans, London, 1970, 276 pages, paper-back, £1.50

Alan Gailey and Alexander Fenton eds., The spade in Northern and Atlantic Europe,  
Ulster Folk Museum, Holywood, Co. Down, 1970, 257 pages, paper-back, £1.65

Maurice Craig and the Knight of Glin, Ireland Observed,  
Mercier Press, Cork, 1970, 118 pages, £2.50

Current Archaeology, No. 22 (September 1970) is devoted to Ireland and includes illustrated reports on the excavations at Knowth, New Grange, Ballyglass, Behy, Navan Fort, Dun Ailinne and Dublin.

Available only to subscribers to Current Archaeology which is published six times a year for a subscription of £1.00. Subscriptions should be sent to Current Archaeology, 128 Barnsbury Road, London, N.1.

N. Stephens and R. E. Glasscock eds., Irish Geographical Studies in honour of E. Estyn Evans,  
Department of Geography, Queen's University Belfast, 1970, 403 pages, £4.75

Ulster Architectural Heritage Society,  
List of historic buildings in and near the City of Derry, 1970, 62 pages, £1.05

(With An Taisca) List of historic buildings in and near the town of Monaghan, 1970, 32 pages, 53 p.

These and earlier lists published by the Society may be obtained from Ulster Architectural Heritage Society, The Building Centre, 4 Arthur Place, Belfast BT1 4HG

Françoise Henry, Irish Art in the Romanesque Period, 1020-1170 A.D.,  
Methuen, London, 1970, 240 pages + plates, £4.50

Publications available (postage extra) from the Kilkenny Archaeological Society, Rothe House, Kilkenny include:-

Helen M. Roe, High Crosses of Western Ossory,  
1969, 30 p.

A. J. Otway-Ruthven ed., Liber Primus Kilkenniensis,  
1961, 25 p.

Owen O'Kelly, History of the County of Kilkenny,  
75 p.

Anthony Dowle and Patrick Finn, The Guide Book to the Coinage Of Ireland: from 995 A.D. to the present day,  
Spink & Son Ltd., London, 1969, £1.75

Peter Seaby ed., Coins and Tokens of Ireland,  
B.A. Seaby Ltd., London, 1970, 168 pages,  
£1.20

David Wilson, The Vikings and their origins,  
Thames and Hudson, London, 1970, 144 pages,  
paper-back, 75 p.

Atlas of the Diocese of Cashel and Emly: privately produced and not for general sale. Dr Morris, Archbishop of Cashel, informs us that a limited number of copies will be sent to principal libraries. The Atlas is listed here because it is a very valuable reference work for the diocese, and it is hoped that other sees might produce similar volumes.



Two recent works on Irish coins

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Few excavations produce no coins at all, and if Irish excavations produce few 'Irish' coins, the exceptions to the rule are often highly significant. Until recently, however, the digger of Irish sites was handicapped by the absence of a reliable illustrated work of any description, let alone one of a size that would enable it to be slipped into a pocket. The gap has now been more than filled by the appearance in quick succession of two excellent volumes that both represent quite exceptional value in an inflationary age. The first is by Anthony Dowle and Patrick Finn, and is entitled The Guide Book to the Coinage of Ireland: From 995 A.D. to the present day (London, Spink & Son Ltd., 1969, price 35/-). A total of 849 varieties are described, and 246 illustrated actual size by generally excellent direct photographs and a very few line-drawings. There are brief historical notes on the background of each series, and a useful bibliography. Already numismatists are beginning to use 'D & F' references, and there could be no more sincere compliment.

The second of the volumes is one edited by Peter Seaby, and it is entitled Coins and Tokens of Ireland (London, B.A. Seaby Ltd., 1970, price 24/-). The total of varieties described is 4646 where coins are concerned, and of these 268 are illustrated actual size, and again the direct photographs are excellent. In addition there are illustrations of a number of foreign coins frequently found in Ireland, and of some typical coin-weights of nummiform appearance, while pp. 106-165 are given over to most serviceable listings of the tokens which at different times have formed a very significant constituent of the coinage of Ireland, no fewer than 130 representative examples being selected for illustration. Again there are short historical notes prefacing each section, and the bibliographical information is full and useful. It is not surprising that numismatists have begun to employ 'Seaby' references, and there can be no doubt that 'D & F 596: Seaby 4621' pinpoints a particular halfpenny Irish of George III with a precision that is entirely satisfying.

The two works are to a surprising extent complementary, and their modest price may suggest that possession of both should not unduly tax the resources of the director of an excavation. What they do not provide is a connected narrative account of the Hiberno-Norse and Anglo-Irish coinages of Ireland, and it remains true that the scientific study of these series is still in its infancy. By 1971, however, we should at least have two works that will serve to put some flesh and blood on the very useful skeletons with which we are now furnished, a handbook for the period c. 1170-1605 and a listing of coin-hoards for the period c. 1500 to the present day. Neither will be particularly cheap, a reminder of the service that is given to non-collectors by the coin-dealers who are able to publish reliable works such as those here noticed at prices that will not deter archaeologists from taking them into the field. It is on site that they are most profitably used.

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