

# what we found

## in brief:

Some of the findings from the scheme.



### 1. Neolithic pottery

Western Neolithic pottery uncovered during excavations at **Curraghprevin**.

(Photo ACS Ltd)

### 2. Corn-drying kiln

Early medieval corn-drying kiln uncovered at **Scartbarry**. (Photo ACS Ltd)

### 3. Kiln

Post-medieval kiln uncovered at **Lisnagar Demesne**. (Photo ACS Ltd)

# background

The **M8 Rathcormac/Fermoy Bypass** is 17.5 km long and extends from the northern end of the new **N8 Glanmire-Watergrasshill Bypass**, passing to the west of **Rathcormac** and to the east of **Fermoy**, tying into the existing N8 Cork-Dublin road at **Moorepark**. Extensive archaeological investigations were carried out in pre-construction, by **Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd (ACS Ltd)** on behalf of the **National Roads Authority** and **Cork County Council**. During construction, additional investigations were carried out by **Eachtra Archaeological Projects**, on behalf of the construction company **Direct Route (Fermoy) Ltd**. A combined total of 50 sites were archaeologically investigated.



Ditch of the ringfort uncovered at **Skahanagh North**. (Photo ACS Ltd)

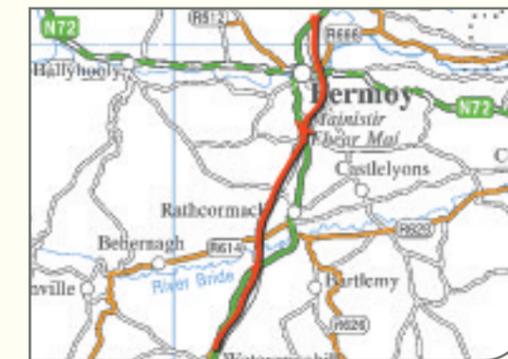
# late glacial/early holocene



Giant Irish Deer uncovered at **Ballyoran**. (Photo John Sunderland)

### Giant Irish Deer

At **Ballyoran**, in an area of fen bog nestled between the summits of **Corrin** and **Ballyoran**, the remains of six adult male Giant Irish Deer (*Megaloceros giganteus*) were discovered. They were buried about 1.5 m into soft clay, underlying peat. The clay was formed by a lake that existed towards the end of the last ice age. The Giant Irish Deer remains were dated to 11139 – 10962 BC. These magnificent creatures (now extinct) would have been almost 6.5 feet high (1.98 m), with antler spanning about 6 feet wide (1.82 m). Nearby, in the overlying bog, a separate piece of Giant Irish Deer antler was found, with tool chop marks. It was found immediately beneath a deposit of wood (Willow/Poplar), which was dated to 8280 – 7965 BC, making it possibly the oldest evidence of human activity in Munster!



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# archaeological DISCOVERIES

### front cover images

**LEFT:** Timber-lined trough from a *fulacht fiadh* uncovered at **Fermoy**. (Photo ACS Ltd)  
**RIGHT:** Iron Age enclosure uncovered during excavations at **Ballybrowney Lower**. (Photo ACS Ltd)  
**MIDDLE:** Post-medieval flare kiln uncovered at **Mondaniel**. (Photo ACS Ltd)



# mesolithic

At **Curraghprevin** a hearth and three associated stake-holes (roasting spits?) were excavated which provided a date of 6250 – 6040 BC. The features suggest the site was used as a temporary 'stop-over', possibly by a roving hunting group. While small, the site is one of the earliest excavated in County Cork.



Western Neolithic pottery uncovered during excavations at **Curraghprevin**. (Photo ACS Ltd)

# neolithic

## Settlement/habitation

At **Gortore** a rectangular Early Neolithic house, a little more than 6 m by 5 m and dating to 3928 – 3655 BC was discovered on the southern bank of the **River Funshion**. Finds included 23 sherds of Early Neolithic pottery, emmer wheat and fragments of charred apple.

Investigations at **Curraghprevin** revealed two temporary structures and associated pits. One structure consisted of five post and stake-holes forming a light U-shaped structure opened to the south.

A second, more substantial structure consisted of post and stake-holes, with an entrance to the north. This structure may have been used as a seasonal house. Several hearths and pits were identified nearby. Some of the features were dated to 3090 – 2580 BC. Finds recovered included Early Neolithic pottery, two flint blades and flint scrapers.



Early Neolithic house uncovered during excavations at **Gortore**. (Photo Eachtra Archaeological Projects)

## Burnt mound

At **Fermoy**, excavations revealed the badly truncated remains of a burnt mound found in association with a pit containing cremated bone and a cache of flint pebble cores. They were radiocarbon-dated to 3090 – 2580 BC.

# bronze age

## Settlement/habitation

At **Scartbarry**, a curving drainage trench was revealed in association with two circular pits. A cluster of 34 stake-holes were present but no apparent structural or spatial pattern was discernable. Seven sherds of undecorated Bronze Age pottery, retrieved from the pits, were radiocarbon-dated to 1630 – 1380 BC.

At **Rath-Healy** a concentration of pits and post-holes were revealed. Evidence suggests that the site may have been used as a working area, associated with a nearby domestic settlement. A range of finds were recovered, including four sherds of Bronze Age pottery, several pieces of flint, three flint tools, a flint javelin and a smoothing stone. The site produced a date range of 1930 – 1950 BC and 1970 – 1190 BC.

A multi-phased site was revealed at **Ballybrowney Lower**. It included a cluster of three unenclosed houses and three enclosures dating from the Middle Bronze Age.

Some Late Bronze Age features were also present. The houses were roughly circular in plan and averaged 7 m in diameter. One of houses was more ovoid in plan and had an elongated porch-like entrance to the south-east. Based on the excavated evidence, the houses would have originally been constructed using timber posts with wattle and daub walling and all are likely to have had thatched conical roofs. They dated to 1620 – 1440 BC.

The first enclosure, dated to 1940 – 1520 BC, was sub-circular; with a diameter of about 20 m. The enclosing element consisted of a stone-lined slot

trench foundation which would originally have held upright split timber planks. Two entranceways were identified to the north-east and south-east. Centrally within the enclosure was a sub-oval house, measuring 6 m east to west and 4 m north to south.

The second enclosure dated to 1760 – 1610 BC was to the north-west of the first. It was enclosed by a relatively narrow and shallow ditch. It measured approximately 38 m in diameter and had a causewayed entrance to the north-east. There was some evidence of post-holes and compacted stone surfaces within the enclosure that may have formed part of dwelling floors or occupational surfaces.

The third enclosure, dated to 1940 – 1520 BC, was to the east of the others. Its enclosing stone-lined slot trench was similar in form to the first enclosure, but contained few internal features.

An internal concentric ditch in the second enclosure was dated to 1130 – 830 BC with a pit cluster and an associated screen fence at the south of the site dating to 1010 – 830 BC. These dates suggest that the site continued to be occupied in the Late Bronze Age.



Three Bronze Age houses uncovered at **Ballybrowney Lower**. (Photo ACS Ltd)

# bronze age

## Fulachta fiadh/burnt mounds

*Fulachta fiadh* are believed to have been cooking sites predominantly of Bronze Age date, but some Neolithic examples are known. These sites derive from a process of using heated stones to heat or boil water.

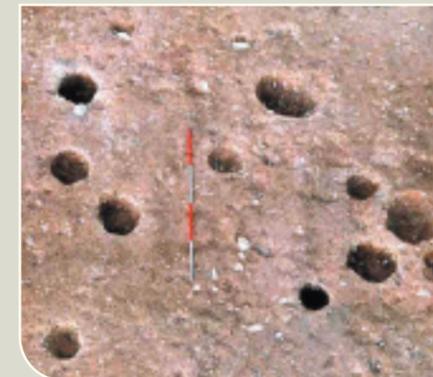
What the heated water was used for remains unclear, but processes such as cooking, dyeing, processing hides, bathing, sweating, ceremonial cleansing or fermentation have been suggested. 12 Bronze Age examples were identified on the scheme.

Excavations at **Scartbarry** revealed compelling evidence of a *fulachta fiadh* being used as a Bronze Age sweathouse.

Beneath the burnt mound the excavation exposed a

very substantial, elongated and deep, stone slab-lined trough. To the immediate east was a large stone flagged hearth. Straddling over the trough was a substantial house-like structure with a stone-lined slot trench and entranceway to the south. This structure was clearly directly associated with the *fulachta fiadh*. The site has been dated to 1940 – 1630 BC.

At **Fermoy** investigations revealed a spread of heat shattered stone linked to two oval-shaped pits about 1.13 m in diameter and 0.17 m deep, and a sub-rectangular trough lined with five oak timber planks. Two large planks measuring 0.50 m by 2 m and 0.70 m by 2 m were placed horizontally filling the base of this trough. This site was dated to 1030 – 810 BC.



Iron Age bowl furnaces uncovered at **Lisnagar Demesne**. (Photo ACS Ltd)

# iron age

At **Lisnagar Demesne** a series of pits and bowl furnaces plus a shaft furnace were identified. These represented a localised area of iron working dating to 340 BC – AD 140. The shaft furnace pit was sub-circular with oxidized clay along its sides. It contained a piece of a clay lid and an abundance of iron slag.

At **Maulane East** a series of isolated pits were uncovered. Several finds were retrieved, including one piece of flint debitage, a hone stone and three lumps of slag. These have been dated to 320 BC – AD 40.

# early medieval

## Settlement/Habitation

At **Ballybrowney Lower**, an early medieval enclosure was located to the north-west of an upstanding (though undated) trivallate ringfort. The enclosure was formed by a 22 m by 18 m sub-rectangular ditch and dated to about AD 780 – 870. At approximately 70 m to the south-east, archaeologists also identified a corn-drying kiln, dated to AD 630 – 780.

Part of an early medieval ringfort ditch was excavated at **Skahanagh North**. The ditch's width varied in places between 2.4 m and 3.4 m and its

depth between 0.8 m and 1.2 m. A 4 m wide causeway entrance was noted in the north of the ditch. Charcoal from the ditch fill has been radiocarbon dated to AD 710 – 1020.

At **Corrin**, part of a similar ringfort ditch was excavated. This ditch was U-shaped in profile and averaged 1.6 m deep by 4 m wide. A causewayed entrance was recorded at the northern end of the enclosure. Radiocarbon dates this ditch at AD 690 – 820.

# medieval

## Settlement

At **Mondaniel** an undefended rural medieval settlement was uncovered. The main structure was rectangular, measuring 15 m by 8 m, and has been dated to the 13th/14th century. The house appears to have been built of mud walls, with two entrances. It had an internal hearth towards the east of the structure, a compacted stony floor surface and internal room partitions.

# post-medieval

## Industry

A cluster of three lime kilns was investigated at **Mondaniel**. The principle one was of a type known as a flare kiln. It consisted of a large, sub-circular pit, about 7.5 m in diameter and 3.8 m deep. A stoke-hole was constructed to the south-west to funnel in air. The kiln was later reduced, to form a smaller kiln.

Externally, to the north-east, a third kiln (of later date) was built. The main kiln is thought to date to the 17th/18th century.



Post-medieval kiln uncovered at **Mondaniel**. (Photo ACS Ltd)