

what we found

in brief:

Some of the findings in and between **Rathcormac** and **Fermoy**.



1. Neolithic pottery
Western Neolithic pottery uncovered during excavations at **Curraghprevin**. (Photo A.C.S. Ltd.)

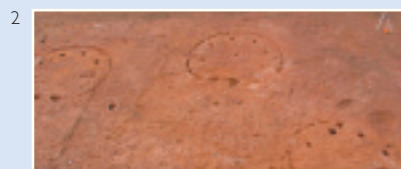
2. Bronze Age houses
Three Bronze Age houses uncovered at **Ballybrowney Lower**. (Photo A.C.S. Ltd.)

3. *Fulacht fiadh*
Timber-lined trough from a *fulacht fiadh* uncovered at **Fermoy**. (Photo A.C.S. Ltd.)

4. Flare kiln
Post-medieval flare kiln uncovered at **Mondaniel**. (Photo A.C.S. Ltd.)

5. Corn-drying kiln
Early medieval corn-drying kiln uncovered at **Fermoy**. (Photo A.C.S. Ltd.)

6. Corn-drying kiln
Early medieval corn-drying kiln uncovered at **Scartbarry**. (Photo A.C.S. Ltd.)



Aerial view of the multi-period settlement uncovered at **Ballybrowney Lower**. (Photo A.C.S. Ltd.)

neolithic

Settlement/habitation

Investigations at **Curraghprevin** revealed two temporary structures and a number of domestic rubbish 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 entranceway 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

The N8 Rathcormac-Fermoy Scheme is 17.5km in length 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 to Dublin road at **Moorepark**. An extensive programme of archaeological investigations were carried out in advance of construction. A total of 44 sites were archaeologically investigated. The work was carried out by **Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd.**, (A.C.S. Ltd.) on behalf of the **National Roads Authority** and **Cork County Council**.

dated to 3090-2580 BC. Finds recovered included Early Neolithic pottery, two flint blades and flint scrapers.

Burnt mound

In the townland of **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. Radiocarbon dating has produced an early date of 3090-2580 BC for this site.



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archaeological DISCOVERIES

front cover images

LEFT: Timber-lined trough from a *fulacht fiadh* uncovered at **Fermoy**. (Photo A.C.S. Ltd.)
MIDDLE: Ditch of the ringfort uncovered at **Skahanagh North**. (Photo A.C.S. Ltd.)
RIGHT: Early medieval corn-drying kiln uncovered at **Fermoy**. (Photo A.C.S. Ltd.)



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bronze age

Settlement/habitation

At **Scartbarry**, evidence of a possible Bronze Age settlement was uncovered. This consisted of a curving drainage trench in association with two circular pits and a group of 34 stake-holes, although no apparent structural or spatial pattern was discernable. In total seven sherds of undecorated coarse ware pottery were recovered from the pits, which were dated to 1630-1380 BC.

At **Rath-Healy**, a concentration of pits and post-holes were revealed. Based on the evidence, 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 1950-1930 BC and 1970-1190 BC.



Three Bronze Age houses uncovered at **Ballybrowney Lower**. (Photo A.C.S. Ltd.)

A multi-phased site was revealed at **Ballybrowney Lower**, which comprised three unenclosed Early Bronze Age houses, three Middle Bronze Age enclosures and evidence of Late Bronze Age cremation pits. The Early Bronze Age houses were circular in plan and located close together. Two houses were constructed of slot-trench foundations, with an average diameter of 7m. The entrances to these houses were located to the east, comprising two substantial post-holes. The third structure was ovoid in plan and had an elongated porch-like entrance to the southeast. It measured approximately 7m x 5.5m. Based on the excavated remains the houses would appear to have originally been constructed using timber posts with wattle and daub walling. All are likely to have had thatched conical roofs. A date of 2580-2200 BC was returned from samples taken from one of the houses but all three have been deemed to be contemporary.

The first enclosure consisted of a sub-circular structure measuring 19m by 21.5m. The enclosing element consisted of a stone-lined slot-trench foundation, which would originally have held upright split timber planks. Two entranceways were identified, one to the north-east and one to the south-east. The entranceways were flanked by large post-holes, which would have held substantial gate posts. Located centrally within the enclosure was a sub-oval house measuring 6m and 4m. It consisted of an enclosing slot-trench terminating

bronze age

in two substantial post-holes, which formed the entrance. This enclosure has been dated to 1940-1520 BC.

The second enclosure was located to the north-west of the first. This enclosure was enclosed by a relatively narrow and shallow ditch. While only half of the enclosure was exposed within the excavation area, the enclosure would appear to have had a maximum diameter of approximately 38m. A causewayed entrance was identified to the north-east of the enclosure. 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 partial remains of an internal concentric ditch were also identified. This site was dated to 1710-1560 BC.

The third enclosure, dated to 1940-1520 BC, lay to the east of the second and to the north-east of the first. Approximately half of the enclosure was exposed within the excavation area. The enclosing stone-lined slot-trench was similar in form to the first enclosure; however, relatively few features were located within it.

Further to the north, at the western edge of the excavation area, archaeologists revealed a pit containing at least one human cremation. The burial was dated to 1070-730 BC. The cremation was physically surrounded by a later enclosure of Iron Age date.

Fulachta fiadh/burnt mounds

Twelve other *fulachta fiadh* or burnt mounds were identified across the scheme. *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 water. What the heated water was used for is still unclear. Processes such as cooking, dyeing, processing hides, bathing, sweating, ceremonial cleansing or fermentation have been suggested.



Timber-lined trough from a *fulacht fiadh* uncovered at **Fermoy**. (Photo A.C.S. Ltd.)



Fulacht fiadh with hut structure uncovered at **Scartbarry**. (Photo A.C.S. Ltd.)

bronze age

Excavations at **Kilbrien** identified a badly damaged *fulacht fiadh* consisting of a burnt mound of heat shattered stone in association with a trough and two adjacent post-holes. The trough was oval in plan and consisted of fragments of burnt stone and some charcoal, the post-holes were located to the edge of the trough. The site has been dated to 1760-1420 BC.

An extraordinary and unique example of a *fulacht fiadh* was revealed at **Scartbarry**. 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 the trough was a substantial house-like structure with a stone-lined slot-trench and entranceway to the south. This structure was clearly in direct association with the *fulacht fiadh*. The site has been dated to between 1940-1630 BC.

iron age

At **Lisnagar Demesne**, a series of pits and bowl furnaces were identified. These represented a localised area of iron working dating to 340 BC-AD 140. The principle bowl furnace was sub-circular in shape with steep sides and a curved base; it measured 0.46m x 0.41m and 0.12m in depth.

At **Maulane East**, a series of isolated pits were uncovered and several finds were recovered, including one piece of struck flint, a honestone and three lumps of slag. These features have been dated to 320 BC-AD 40.

medieval

Settlement/habitation

At **Skahanagh**, investigations partially revealed an early medieval ring-ditch, which has been dated to AD 710-1020. The majority of the enclosure lay outside of the area of the road. The width of the ditch varied in places between 2.4-3.4m and its depth between 0.8-1.2m. A 4m wide causewayed entrance was noted to the north of the ditch.

At **Corrin**, a similar ring-ditch with a causewayed enclosure was partially exposed within the excavation area. The ditch was U-shaped in profile



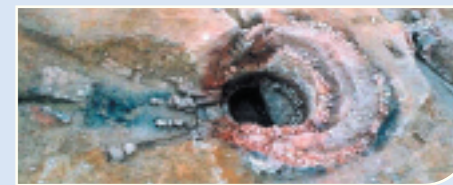
Ditch of the ring-ditch uncovered at **Skahanagh North**. (Photo A.C.S. Ltd.)

and averaged 1.6m deep by 4m wide. The causewayed entrance was recorded at the northern end of the site. Radiocarbon dates place this ditch between AD 690 and AD 820.

post-medieval

Industry

A cluster of lime kilns was investigated at **Mondaniel** in association with an external working area. The principle kiln was of a type known as a flare kiln. It consisted of a large pit, sub-circular in shape, measuring approximately 7.5m in diameter and 3.8m deep. Internally, a low wall of large sandstone blocks flanked the inside wall. A stoke-hole was constructed to the south-west to funnel air into the kiln. The kiln was later modified to produce a smaller kiln within the disused earlier kiln. A third kiln of later date was



Post-medieval flare kiln uncovered at **Mondaniel**. (Photo A.C.S. Ltd.)

constructed to the north-east of the two previous kilns. To the south, the foundation imprints of probable working sheds were also identified. Radiocarbon dates from these sites range from AD 1680-1730.