

Archaeological Objects

found during archaeological investigations carried out prior to and during the construction of Luas Cherrywood



Pictured to the left (1-3) are some of the Post-medieval finds retrieved from the Laughanstown and Murphystown sites:

1 - A group of 18th century musket balls; the smaller ones are possibly from a pistol. Some show evidence of having been fired.

2 - Inscribed metal object, dating to the 18th century, associated with the military camp in Laughanstown.

3 - Copper alloy token dating to 1794, retrieved from beneath a fairly modern garden enclosure or 'Ha-Ha' ditch in Murphystown.



Pictured to the left (4-6) are some of the Neolithic worked lithics or stone tools retrieved from the prehistoric site at Laughanstown (described overleaf):

4 - A small simple modified flint blade.

5 - A flint core with several flake scars evident.

6 - A fine example of a flint side scraper. This kind of tool was used for general domestic chores such as food and animal hide preparation, as well as for more specialised tasks such as bone, ivory and wood working.

Photos 1-7 CRDS Ltd

Background

Luas Cherrywood is the 7.5km extension of the Luas Green Line (currently operating between St Stephen's Green and Sandyford) to Brides Glen. There are 9 new stops along this route.



Recording an archaeology site at Laughanstown (Photo CRDS Ltd)

Railway Procurement Agency carried out a considerable amount of archaeological investigation in advance and during construction of Luas Cherrywood providing a unique opportunity to gain an insight into the past settlement and history of the area.

Between May and September 2006 archaeological testing was carried out in advance of construction by CRDS Ltd who identified new significant archaeology sites at three locations. One possible prehistoric site, located in Brennanstown, was preserved *in situ* or avoided and two sites, located in Murphystown and Laughanstown, were archaeologically excavated and recorded by CRDS Ltd between October and December 2006. A metal detection survey was also carried out at the Laughanstown site due to its close proximity to an 18th century military camp. Ground disturbance works associated with Luas construction were monitored by an archaeologist from CRDS Ltd between March and October 2007. As a result, one further significant prehistoric site was identified and excavated at Brennanstown.



Excavation plan, Murphystown (Image CRDS Ltd)

All of these archaeological investigations were carried out on behalf of Railway Procurement Agency. If you are interested in learning about Luas Cherrywood archaeology finds and discoveries in greater detail please visit our website where you can download a copy of all professional reports generated as a result of the above works at the following link:

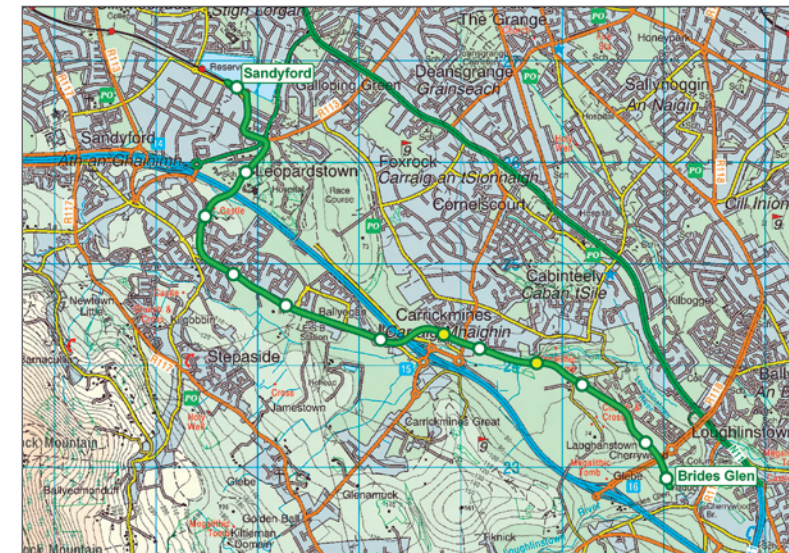
<http://www.rpa.ie/en/rpa/archaeology/Pages/LuasCherrywood.aspx>

LUAS CHERRYWOOD

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UNDER THE TRACKS



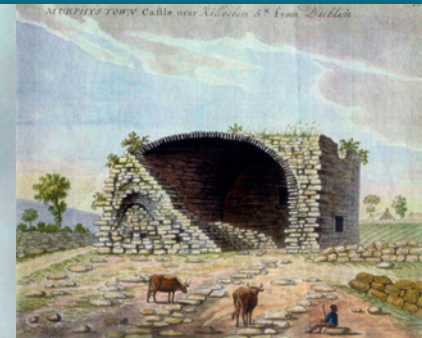
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Archaeological Discoveries

Front cover

- TOP: LUAS crossing the regenerated Nine Arches Viaduct in Milltown (Photo 'Suckindiesel'. From en.wikipedia,CC-BY-2.5)
- LEFT: Decorated 18th century gilded copper alloy buckle, Priorsland (Photo MGL Ltd)
- CENTRE: Ruins of 'Murphystown Castle' by Gabriel Beranger (c. 1775), located c. 30m to the east of Luas Cherrywood (Image © Royal Irish Academy)
- RIGHT: Drawing archaeological features at Brennanstown (Photo RPA)



Prehistoric Period



Neolithic portal tomb, located c. 100m north of Luas Cherrywood, at Brennanstown (Photo © Chris Corlett)

The surrounding neighbourhood is a rich prehistoric landscape as evidenced by numerous archaeological finds and discoveries over the years, such as prehistoric tools, jewellery, settlement sites and burials. Close by a fine example of an upstanding megalithic tomb dating to the earlier part of the Neolithic (c. 4000BC to 3000BC) is located at Brennanstown.

Evidence identified as part of Luas Cherrywood archaeological investigations indicates further prehistoric human settlement in Laughanstown and Brennanstown from the Late Neolithic through to the Late Iron Age (c. 2800BC to 400AD).

Neolithic / Bronze Age

(4000 - 600 BC)

Excavations in the townland of Brennanstown have revealed a habitation site dating to the Late Neolithic / Early Bronze Age (c. 2800BC to 1700BC). This consisted of a concentration of pits, postholes and stakeholes centred on a hearth, representing a single homestead or temporary campsite. The archaeological features uncovered were dated by fragments of prehistoric pottery, of which almost 100 sherds or pieces were retrieved. Worked lithics or stone tools including a flint thumbnail scraper, a possible flint awl or piercer and a possible quartz arrowhead were also recovered.

This site is likely to be a component of a larger area of prehistoric settlement activity. A short distance (c. 40m) to the south of the site, on top of a low rise, a significant range of features of likely prehistoric origin were exposed during pre-development testing for Luas Cherrywood. These features were not excavated as it was possible to avoid and preserve them *in situ*; therefore no datable evidence was recovered. However the features were comparable in character and composition to those exposed at the Brennanstown site and it is likely that they date to the same period.

Prehistoric Period

Approximately 500m to the southeast of the two Brennanstown sites another prehistoric habitation site was revealed in Laughanstown. This comprised the remains of two possible structures or homesteads, located 40m apart. Each was represented by a concentration of stakeholes and postholes; one centred on a small shallow oval pit and the other centred on two large sub-rectangular pits, which both contained evidence of use as hearths. The homestead remains do not appear to represent an established or prolonged settlement; however, the evidence does



Remains of a possible prehistoric structure at Laughanstown (Photo CRDS Ltd)



Neolithic stone axe butt recovered from the remains of possible structure (Photo CRDS Ltd)

suggest that the site was occupied during *multiple periods* of prehistory. The earliest phase of activity was contemporary with the site excavated at Brennanstown, evidenced by similar Late Neolithic / Bronze Age pottery fragments, representing the remains of seven vessels. A range of stone tools including a stone axe butt, a small rubbing stone and flint tools (some are pictured overleaf) were also retrieved and evidence of flint knapping, the process of making stone tools, was identified in the vicinity of the possible structures.

Bronze Age / Iron Age

(600 BC - 400 AD)

Two radiocarbon dates were obtained from the central features of each possible structure at Laughanstown. The first date (790 to 530BC) indicated that the site was occupied during the Late Bronze Age / Early Iron Age; while the second that occupation also occurred sometime during the latter end of the Iron Age (250 to 430AD). A large granite hearthstone and

fragments of a ceramic crucible (a heat proof container or furnace lining used for melting metal) as well as rich macrofossil remains, including charred wheat chaff and barley grain, were also recovered from this later occupation phase. This evidence suggests that both industrial activity and domestic activity, such as metal working and cooking, was occurring at the hearthstone.

Historic Period

The start of the historic period is marked by Ireland's conversion to Christianity in the 5th century AD prompting the construction of churches, monasteries and stone carvings such as decorated cross slabs and high crosses like those found close by at Tully, pictured to the right (Photos 1 & 2: © Chris Corlett).

No evidence of the earlier part of the historic period, the Early Medieval period (400 - 1169 AD), was identified during the course of Luas Cherrywood archaeological investigations, however, **medieval quarrying** in the vicinity of 'Murphystown Castle' and **further military activity** associated with an 18th century historic army camp was revealed.



Tully Church, located c. 200m southwest of Luas Cherrywood; the nave foundation walls, which are Early Medieval in date, are visible to the fore (Photo CRDS Ltd)

Medieval

(1169 AD - early 16th century AD)

The historic period is characterised by successive foreign invasions which introduced urbanisation into a largely rural landscape and new types of homesteads such as tower houses. These were essentially fortified residences occupied by the Gaelic and Anglo-Norman gentry. The ruined remains of one such tower house, known as 'Murphystown Castle' are to be found c. 30m to the east of Luas Cherrywood.

Gabriel Beranger depicted the remains of this castle in 1775 (pictured on the front cover) which was constructed sometime during the 15th or 16th century. All that now remains are two granite walls to first storey height and traces of a vaulted or arched ceiling. Archaeological investigations carried out in the vicinity of this site uncovered the remains of medieval quarry trenches, cut directly into the granite bedrock.

Historic Period

It is possible that the extracted building material was used in the construction of 'Murphystown Castle' or transported further afield for use in Carrickmines castle. Fragments of pottery vessels, dating to between the 12th and 14th century, were recovered from within



Section excavated through medieval quarry trench (Photo CRDS Ltd)



Tool mark in medieval quarry trench (Photo CRDS Ltd)

Post-medieval / Industrial

(16th century - 19th century AD)

Luas Cherrywood passes c. 60m southwest of an important historic military camp site established in Laughanstown by the British Government in 1795. The camp was partially set up on the site of an earlier 17th century camp, occupied by James II's army. The later 18th century military camp was very extensive, occupying an area over 120 acres in size and accommodating up to 4000 troops at its peak. Timber buildings or army huts were constructed, which was unusual for the 18th century and indicated a much more permanent encampment. The military site was also home to a ballroom and coffee house where Irish and foreign newspapers were available. The camp was dismantled at the close of the 18th century. Excavations within the footprint of Luas Cherrywood in Laughanstown identified structural evidence suggestive of possible foundations for a timber framed

dwelling. Significantly, a range of military artefacts such as buttons, musket balls and a number of tokens dating to the later 18th century were also recovered from the site as part of a metal detection programme carried out in association with the excavation. This artefact assemblage gives a clear indication of the possible extent of the historic 18th century Laughanstown military encampment and may suggest the building foundation features identified, as being of a similar date.



Military feather-shaped cap badge from Laughanstown, possibly from the Scottish Perthshire Fencibles (Photo CRDS Ltd)