Archaeological Excavation Report
E2421 - Caherdrinny 2, Co. Cork

Pits and Postholes
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Caherdrinny 2
Co. Cork

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Client: Cork County Council
Project: N8 Fermoy to Mitchelstown
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Excavation Director: Nicholas Bower
Written by: Nicholas Bower and Penny Johnston
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Excavation Director
Nicholas Bower

Written By
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Summary

The site comprised a cluster of ten pits and post-holes and a series of plough furrows. There was also a small feature containing charcoal located 5 m south of the main cluster of features. Caherdrinny 2 appears to be the remains of a funerary pyre. There is no evidence that the cremated remains were buried at the site. The site does not suggest more than a single episode of burning. The absence of *in situ* scorching of the subsoil suggests either that the pyre was built on the topsoil or that it was raised above ground, with the posts smouldering down to their base, leaving no evidence of *in situ* burning. A radiocarbon date suggested that activity at the site dated to the Middle Bronze Age.

Project Details

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1 Scope of the project

The archaeological works associated with the N8 Fermoy to Mitchelstown Bypass was carried out on behalf of Cork County Council, National Road Design Office, Richmond, Glanmire, Co. Cork. The project was funded by the Irish Government under the National Development Plan 2007-2013. The total archaeological cost was administered by the National Roads Authority through Cork County Council as part of the Authority’s commitment to protecting our cultural heritage. The purpose of the archaeological services project was to conduct archaeological site investigations within the lands made available, to assess the nature and extent of any potential new sites uncovered and to preserve by record those sites of agreed archaeological significance, as approved by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government in consultation with the National Museum of Ireland.

Phase 1 of the project (archaeological testing of the route) was carried out in October 2005 under licence 05E1150 issued by Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG). The principal aim of this phase of the project was to test for any previously unknown sites by a programme of centreline and offset testing and to test sites of archaeological potential identified in the EIS and geophysical surveying. Five Cultural Heritage Sites were tested under individual excavation licences 05E1122-05E1126.

Phase 2 of the project (resolution) involved the resolution of all archaeological sites identified within the proposed road corridor prior to commencement of the construction of the bypass. This phase of the project was carried out from September 2006 to September 2007 and excavations were conducted under the management of a Senior Archaeologist. A total of 28 sites were excavated during this phase of works under separate licences issued by DoEHLG.

A post-excavation assessment and strategy document was prepared in Phase 3 of the project to present a management strategy for dealing with post-excavation work arising from archaeological works along the route of the new N8 Fermoy to Mitchelstown Bypass. It included a proposal for post-excavation and archiving work and a budget for the works. The document detailed the location of the route, the receiving environment, the archaeological and historical background, the scope of the project and the circumstances and scope of fieldwork. The document presented a scheme-wide summary of the archaeological findings, a research framework within which the findings were dealt with and a publication plan and dissemination strategy for the end results.

2 Route location

The route of the N8 Fermoy to Mitchelstown road is located in the rich pastureland of North Cork (Figure 1). The project involves the construction of c. 16 km of the N8 from Gortore north of Fermoy to Carrigane north-east of Mitchelstown. The N8 Fermoy to Mitchelstown road passes through the townlands of Gortore, Ballynacarriga, Glenwood, Ballinglanna North, Ballinrash, Caherdrinny, Gortnahown, Ballybeg, Turbeagh, Glena-
Figure 1: The route of the N8 Fermoy to Mitchelstown Bypass overlain on the Ordnance Survey Discovery Series map.
tlucky, Ballynamona, Kilshanny, Corracunna, Kildrum, Garryleagh, and Carrigane. The townlands are located in the parishes of Kilcrumper, Glanworth and Brigown and Barony of Condons & Clangibbon, with the exception of Gortore, and Glenwood, which are located in the Barony of Fermoy.

The route begins at the northern end of the Fermoy Bypass at Gortore, c. 2km north of Fermoy, and continues northwards across the River Funshion, and to the west of the Glencorra Stream, a tributary of the Funshion, for 4 km. At Caherdrinny, it crosses over the western extremities of the Kilworth Mountains. From there it descends north-eastwards onto the broad plain that extends east and north-eastwards from Mitchelstown. It crosses the existing N8 at Gortnahown and passes to the east of Mitchelstown, crossing the R665 Mitchelstown-Ballyporeen road and links up with the N8 Cashel Mitchelstown Road at Carrigane south of Kilbeheny and 2 km west of where the borders of the Cork, Limerick and Tipperary counties meet.

3 Receiving environment

The topography of East Cork and Waterford consists of east/west valleys separated by intervening ridges. The ridges consist of sandstones and mudstones of the Devonian Period (Old Red Sandstone) laid down 355-410 million years ago and the valleys of Carboniferous limestones laid down 290-355 million years ago. The sediments covering many of the rocks are mainly of glacial origin deposited by glacial ice or meltwater (Sleeman and McConnell 1995, 1).

The landscape of the area is dominated by the Galtee Mountains to the north, the Ballyhoura Mountains to the north-west, the Kilworth Mountains to the east and the Nagles to the south. The landscape is drained by the Blackwater River, the Funshion River (which flows into the Blackwater River c. 2 km north-east of Fermoy), and the Glencorra Stream, a tributary of the Funshion River. The largest population centres in the area, Fermoy and Mitchelstown, have developed on the banks of the River Blackwater and Gradoge (a tributary of the Funshion), respectively.

The route begins at Gortore, c. 2 km north of Fermoy, at an elevation of c. 40 m OD. At Caherdrinny, it rises to its maximum elevation of c. 180 m OD as it crosses over the western extremities of the Kilworth Mountains, before descending onto the broad plain that extends east and north-eastwards from Mitchelstown, at an elevation of 100-120 m OD.

The soils on the southern portion of the route are characterised by acid brown earths derived from mixed sandstone and limestone glacial till. These soils occur generally in the valleys of Cork and Waterford (Gardiner and Radford 1980, 61), and have a wide use range, being suitable for tillage and grass production. The soils on the western limits of Kilworth Mountains are characterised by brown podzolics derived from sandstone. The soils on the northern portion of the route are characterised by brown podzolics derived from sandstone and shale glacial till. They have a wide range of potential uses and are well
suited to arable and pastoral farming (ibid., 67). Land use along the route was almost entirely grassland devoted to intensive dairying and cattle-rearing, with only an occasional tillage field.

4 Archaeological and historical background

Archaeological sites of numerous periods were discovered along the route of the new road (Figure 2). The periods are referred to as follows: Mesolithic (c. 8000 to 4000 BC), Neolithic (c. 4000 to 2000 BC), Chalcolithic (Beaker) (c. 2500-2000 BC), Bronze Age (c. 2000 to 500 BC), and Iron Age (c. 500 BC to AD 500), early medieval period (c. AD 500 to 1100), medieval period (c. AD 1100 to 1650), post-medieval period (c. AD 1650 to the present).

A number of Giant Irish Deer (Megaloceros giganteus) skulls, large antlers, antler fragments and various long-bones were retrieved from the clay sediments, c. 1.5 m below the peat stratum at Ballyoran Bog (04E1014) on the route of the N8 Rathcormac Fermoy. A radiocarbon date of cal BC 11201-10962 was returned for the Giant Irish Deer. Giant Irish Deer are extinct but are known to have inhabited Ireland during two separate periods in the Pleistocene (from 37,000-32,000 BP and 11,750-10,950 BP), with examples from lake deposits beneath peat bogs frequently dating to the period between 11,750 BP and 10,950 BP (Woodman et al. 1997). The Ballyoran Bog examples were found in this typical location of lacustrine (lake) sediments beneath peat and they therefore pre-date the beginnings of bog formation and the first human settlement of the area.

Mesolithic (c. 8000 to 4000 BC)

The earliest known human settlement in Ireland dates from the Mesolithic period (c. 8000 BC - 4000 BC). In Munster, the majority of the evidence (flint scatters) for Mesolithic occupation has ‘come from the Blackwater valley in Co. Cork’ (Woodman 1989, 116). Flint scatters were recorded in the townlands of Kilcummer Lower (CO034-060) on the northern bank of the Blackwater c. 13 km to the south-west of the route and in Ballynamona (CO018-099) and Wallstown (CO018-100) on the northern and southern sides of the Awbeg river respectively c. 20 km to the west of the route (Power et al. 2000, 2). Mesolithic sites and find spots were recorded on other road schemes in Co. Cork, these included; Rath-healy 3 03E1678 and Curraghprevin 3 03E1158 (N8 Rathcormac Fermoy Bypass), Ballynacarriaga 1 01E0567 (N25 Youghal Bypass), Ballinaspig More 5 01E0546 (N22 Ballincollig Bypass) and Carrigrohane 3 02E0431 (N22 BG).

Mesolithic activity was recorded on the route of the N8 Fermoy-Mitchelstown at Gortore E2410 and at Caherdrinny 3 E2422 and Mesolithic stone tools were recovered from Ballinglanna North 1 E2414, Ballinglanna North 3 E2416 and Ballinglanna North 6 E3972.
Figure 2: The route of the N8 Fermoy to Mitchelstown Bypass overlain on the first edition Ordnance Survey map CO010, 011, 019, 020, 027 and 028.
Neolithic (c. 4000 to 2000 BC)

The Neolithic Period is characterised by the introduction of agriculture and the beginnings of the clearance of the woodlands. The population increased and became more sedentary in nature. A substantial Neolithic settlement site has been recorded at Lough Gur, Co. Limerick. Previously the nearest known Neolithic house was located in Pepperhill (CO016-226/01) c. 30 km to the northwest of the route. It was recorded during the construction of the Bruff-Mallow gas pipeline (Gowen 1988, 44-51).

The material culture includes the manufacture of pottery, flint and stone arrowheads, scrapers, axes etc. The range of monuments types includes Megalithic tombs, single burial graves and stone circles. Megalithic tombs can be subdivided into court tombs, portal tombs, passage tombs and wedge tombs. There are few wedge tombs or stone circles known from north or east Cork. Two of the exceptions are wedge tombs located at Labbacallee (CO027-086), which is one of the largest wedge tombs in the country, and at Manning (CO027-091) both located c. 4 km west of the N8.

Recent infrastructural work on the N8 Rathcormac to Fermoy and the Ballincollig Bypass have added significantly to the number of Neolithic sites in the county. A Neolithic house was excavated at Gortore (E2119), on the N8 Rathcormac to Fermoy road and another Neolithic house was excavated at Barnagore (02E0384), along the route of the Ballincollig Bypass. Both of these Cork examples produced essentially the same radiocarbon results (cal BC 3940-3620 at Barnagore and cal BC 3928-3655 from Gortore) and they represent the oldest known houses in the county. A single pit at Fermoy townland (05E0078), located c. 3 km to the south of Gortore, produced 12 sherds of a Middle Neolithic Globular bowl, and another site at Curraghprevin (c.12 km south of Gortore) produced Western Neolithic (Early Neolithic) pottery and a radiocarbon date of 3090-2580 BC (Late Neolithic).

Rectangular Neolithic houses were recorded on the route of the N8 FM at Gortore 1b (E2410), Ballinglanna North 3 (E2416) and Caherdrinny 3 (E2422). A large enclosure containing several structures associated with Late Neolithic pottery was excavated at Ballymacarriaga 3 (E2412). Activity dating to the Neolithic was also recorded at Ballynamona 1 (E2428), Ballynamona 2 (E2429), and Gortnahown 2 (E2426) and Gortore 2 (E3973).

Bronze Age (c. 2000 to 500 BC)

The Bronze Age is characterised by the introduction of metallurgy and an increase in settlement and burial sites. Copper ores were mined and copper, bronze and gold items manufactured. The range of burial site types includes cist graves, pit and urn burials, cremation cemeteries, barrows, ring-ditches and wedge tombs. Stone circles and standing stones also date to the Bronze Age. Both enclosed and unenclosed settlement sites are known. The most prolific Bronze Age site type is the *fulacht fiadh*; over 2,000 examples have been recorded in County Cork alone. These monuments survive as low mounds of charcoal rich black silt, packed with heat-shattered stones, and generally situated close to a water source. *Fulacht fiadh* are generally classified as ‘cooking places’, whereby stones
were heated in a hearth and subsequently placed in a trough of water, the water continued to boil with the addition of hot stones and wrapped food was cooked within the hot water. The trough eventually filled with small stones, ash and charcoal that were removed, forming the basis of the familiar mound.

The Bronze Age cemetery site at Mitchelstowndown West, c. 16 km to the north of Mitchelstown, contains 53 small barrows. The Discovery Programme Report 1 (Daly and Grogan 1992, 44) selected four of this group for excavation.

Until recently, Bronze Age settlement sites were a rarity in North Cork. A Bronze Age occupation site was recorded underlying the medieval ringfort Lisleigh 1 (CO027-158) c. 2.5 km to the west of the N8 (Power et al. 2000, 210). A house site was excavated at Killydonoghoe on the route of the N8 Glanmire-Watergrasshill Bypass (Sherlock 2003). Three circular houses dating to the Middle Bronze Age were excavated at Mitchelstown (04E1072) on the N8 Mitchelstown Relief Road. A large Bronze Age settlement site consisting of three circular enclosures and three circular houses was excavated in 2003 at Ballybrowney (03E1058), on the route of the N8 Rathcormac-Fermoy (Cotter 2005, 40).

Bronze Age round houses were recorded on the route of the N8 Fermoy – Mitchelstown at Kilshanny 1 (E2432) and Ballynamona 2 (E2429). Burnt mounds/fulachta fiadh sites were recorded at Ballinglanna North 1 (E2414), Ballinglanna North 3 (E2416), Ballinglanna North 6 (E3972), Ballynamona 2 (E2429), Caherdrinny 1 (E2420), Kilshanny 3 (E2432) and Kildrum 1 (E3971). Two ring ditches and associated cists and pits burials were recorded at Ballynacarriga 3 (E2412). Portions of several encrusted urns and food vessels dating to the Early Bronze Age were recorded in association with the burials. A cremation burial and associated Early Bronze Age urn were also recorded at Glenatlucky (E2427).

Iron Age (c. 500 BC to AD 500)

Until the last decade there was little evidence of a significant Iron Age presence in the Cork region. Settlement sites are few and far between as well as being difficult to identify (Woodman 2000) while the material culture of this period is limited. Linear earthworks, believed to have marked tribal boundaries, and hillforts are two of the most visible monuments of the period. Recent infrastructural work on the N22 Ballincollig Bypass, the N8 Glanmire Watergrasshill Bypass and the M8 Rathcormac Fermoy has altered the picture considerably.

Three separate stretches of a linear boundary, the Claidh Dubh, have been recorded in County Cork. The longest stretch, c. 24 km in length extends from the Nagle Mountains, across the Blackwater valley and into the Ballyhoura Hills. Radiocarbon dating following excavation of a section of it revealed it dated to some time before AD100 (Doody 1995, 23).

Two of the four hillfort sites in Cork are located in North Cork (Power et al. 2000, 205). Caherdrinny (CO019:97/01&03) is located at the western end of the Kilworth Mountains, c. 700 m to the west of the N8, Corrin (CO035:49/01) is located at the east-
ern end of the Nagle Mountains, overlooking a pass between the Blackwater and Bride river valleys just south of Fermoy.

Iron Age dates were returned from a roundhouse at Ballinaspig More 5 01E0546, a possible bowl furnace at Curraheen 1 01E1209 and the fulacht fiadh at Curraheen 4 02E1297 on the N22 Ballincollig Bypass; the Iron Age structure at Muckridge 1 01E0429 on the N25 Youghal Bypass; iron working sites at Kilrussane 01E0701 and Trabstown 01E0501 on the N8 Glanmire Watergrasshill Bypass; the iron working site at Lisnagar De-mesne 1 03E1510, the pit at Maulane East 1 03E1286, the pit at Scartbarry 3 03E1800, the corn-drying kiln at Rath-healy 1 03E1139, the burnt mound at Fermoy Wood 04E1014 and the ring ditch at Ballybrowney Lower 3 05E0233 all on the M8 Rathcormac Fermoy.

Activity dating to the Iron Age was recorded on the route of the N8 Fermoy – Mitchelstown at Ballinglanna North 3 E2416, Ballinglanna North 4 E2417, Ballynacarriaga 3 E2412, Gortnahown 1 E2423, Gortnahown 3 E2477 and Caherdinny 3 E2422. The sites, with the exception of a single fire pit at Ballinglanna North 4 E2417, did not date exclusively to the Iron Age.

Early medieval period (c. AD 500 to 1100)

The early medieval period is characterised by the arrival of Christianity to Ireland. The characteristic monument type of the period is the ringfort. Ringforts are the most numerous archaeological monument found in Ireland, with estimates of between 30,000 and 50,000 illustrated on the first edition of the Ordnance Survey 6" maps of the 1840’s (Barry 1987). As a result of continued research, the construction of these monuments has a narrow date range during the early medieval period between the 7th and 9th centuries AD. Although there are some very elaborate examples of ringforts, they often take the form of a simple earth or stone enclosure functioning as settlements for all classes of secular society (Stout 1997).

A major research excavation of two ringforts was undertaken at Lisleagh, c. 2.5 km to the west of the N8 route, in the late 1980s/early1990s. Structural, domestic and industrial evidence was recorded at both sites. A number of stake and wattle round houses, and ironworking were recorded in Lisleagh I, which had two phases of occupation, ranging from the early 7th century to the 9th century AD (Monk 1995, 105-116).

Souterrains, frequently associated with ringforts and enclosures, are man made underground chambers linked by narrow passageways. The concealed entrance is located at ground level. It is thought souterrains were used for storage or places of refuge during times of trouble (Clinton 2001). It has also been hypothesised that some may have been used for housing slaves.

The monastery of Brigown (which gave the name to the modern parish in Mitchelstown) was founded in the 7th century by Fanahan. Fanahan is reputed to have commissioned seven smiths to make seven sickles which were used by him for self-mortification. The new monastery was named, Brí Gabhann, for the smiths (Power 1996, 3). The ecclesiastical remains comprise a church, graveyard, holy well and site of round tower
A possible enclosure site with evidence of metalworking was excavated by John Purcell in Brigown. This was possibly the enclosure of Brigown. No dates were obtained from the site (John Purcell personal communication).

A horizontal-wheeled mill (CO027-108) was located on the northern side of the Glen-corra Stream c. 120 m north of the confluence with the River Funshion.

A ringfort and associated souterrain (CO027-109) were excavated on the route of the N8 Fermoy – Mitchelstown at Ballynacarriga 2 (E2413). Two circular houses and a comprehensive range of metalworking activities were excavated at Gortnahown 2 (E2426). Sites with evidence of metalworking activities were also excavated at Ballynamona 2 (E2429) and Ballinglanna North 1 (E2412).

**High and later medieval periods (c. AD 1100 to 1650)**

This period is characterized by the arrival of the Anglo-Normans and the building of tower houses. Mitchelstown was formerly known as Brigown / Mitchelstown (CO019-149). It was listed as a market town in 1299 and was located on the southern bank of the Gradoge River, to the east of Mitchelstown Castle (Power et al. 2000, 595). The town developed under the patronage of the House of Desmond. It passed into the hands of the Earls of Kingston in the 17th century (Power 1996, 23).

The Condon family controlled the barony of Condons and Clongibbon. Two of their castles are located in close vicinity to the route of the N8 FM. Clogheagh Castle (CO027:113) is located on the northern bank of the Funshion River to the east of the new route. It was built on an outcrop of limestone bedrock. It is a 5-storey tower with associated bawn wall (Power et al. 2000, 537). Caherdrinny Castle (CO019:97/02) is located to the west of the route. It was a 5-storey tower built within the hillfort enclosure (CO019:97/01&03). Glanworth Castle (Boherash CO027-42) is located on a sheer limestone cliff overlooking the River Funshion 5 km to the west of the route. The 13th-century hall house is associated with a four-sided walled enclosure (ibid. 516).

**Post-medieval period (c. 1650 to the present).**

The post-medieval period is characterised by mills, limekilns, workhouses, country houses and associated demesnes, vernacular buildings and field systems (Figure 3). Three demesnes associated with country houses are within the route of the N8 at Moorepark, Ballynacarriga and Glenwood. The estate system was dismantled in Ireland in the early 20th century. Demesnes usually comprise of a large country house with associated stables, farm buildings and gate lodges, areas of woodland and ornamental gardens etc. The demesne was usually enclosed by a high stone wall such as that associated with Moorepark. Moorepark house and demesne was the seat of the Earls Mountcashell (Lewis 1988, 312). The Moorepark Estate covered an area around 800 acres and extended both north and south of the river Funshion. The house was sold to the British War Office c. 1903 by the 5th Earl’s daughter (Bence-Jones 1996, 211). It burned down in 1908 and was never
Figure 3: The route of the N8 Fermoy to Mitchelstown Bypass overlain on the RMP map CO010, 011, 019, 020, 027 and 028. The map is based on the second edition Ordnance Survey maps.
rebuilt. No trace of it now survives. The demesne is clearly defined by woodland on the 1841-2 and 1906 edition Ordnance Survey maps, which was most likely enclosed by a wall. It is likely that the demesne walls are contemporary with the mansion house and therefore date to the 18th century. The Cork to Dublin mail coach road originally ran to west of the demesne walls as it appears on the 1841-2 and 1906 Ordnance Survey maps.

The site of a workhouse (C0019-11301-) built in 1852 is located in Kilshanny townland to the east of Mitchelstown. The complex of buildings, including a hospital chapel and mortuary, was enclosed within a three-metre high limestone wall and could accommodate up to 600 people. Closed in 1916 and burned by the IRA in 1922, only the boundary wall and main entrance way survive today (Power 2002, 48).

A late 19th century bridge of rubble limestone, approached by a causeway at either end, carries a tertiary road from Kilworth-Glanworth over the Glencorra Stream. A road crosses the stream at the same location on the 1841-2 Ordnance survey map, but the bridging structure is not named. The site is named Glencorra Bridge on the 1906 edition of the Ordnance Survey map and is of local architectural significance.

5 Site Location and Topography

The site is situated on well drained sloping ground, with Caherdrinny Castle and hillfort visible to the west and Flagstaff hill visible to the east. The Galtee Mountains are visible rising in the distance some 13 km to the north-east.

6 Excavation methodology

The excavation was carried out under E-Number E2421 and complied with the method statement approved by the Department of Environment, Heritage, and Local Government, in consultation with the National Museum of Ireland. The site was mechanically stripped of topsoil under strict archaeological supervision. Stripping was done with a tracked machine with a flat toothless bucket. Where appropriate mini-diggers were used, and in the larger areas to be stripped multiple large tracked machines were used; all stripping operations involved the use of multiple dumpers for topsoil mounding. Topsoil stripping commenced in the areas of identified archaeology and continued radially outward until the limit of the road take was reached or until the limit of the archaeological remains was fully defined. A grid was set up in the excavation area(s) and all archaeological features were sufficiently cleaned, recorded and excavated so as to enable an accurate and meaningful record of the site to be preserved. The excavation, environmental sampling, site photographs, site drawings, find care and retrieval, on-site recording and site archive was as per the Procedures for Archaeological works as attached to the licence method statements for excavation licences.
Plate 1: Aerial view of Caherdrinny 2 showing surrounding landscape (Photo: Hawkeye).

Plate 2: Elevated view of post-holes and cremation deposits before excavation from south.
The site was over a 2 week period between 29/01/07 and 09/02/07 by a crew of seven people. Only areas within the CPO were resolved. The full extent of the area of excavation measured 518 m² (Figure 4 and Plate 1).

7 Excavation results

The full record of excavated contexts is recorded in the context register (Appendix 1) and the stratigraphic matrix (Appendix 2). Detailed stratigraphic descriptions are found in the groups and sub-groups text (Appendix 3).

The site at Caherdrinny 2 was discovered during Phase 1 archaeological testing of the new route, carried out under licence no. 05E1150 (Cotter et al. 2006). Features found during testing included a cluster of ten pits. The site was classified as a possible cremation cemetery on the basis of testing results. Excavation revealed that the site comprised a cluster of ten pits and post-holes, a series of plough furrows and a small feature containing charcoal located 5 m south of the main cluster of features (Figure 4).

The arc of burnt posts (Plate 2) comprised a total of nine post-holes (C. 4, C.6, C.8, C.13, C.15, C.17, C.20, C.27 and C.29). The average dimensions of these post-holes were 0.34 m length, 0.3 m width and 0.12 m depth. Most post-holes had steep sloping sides and a rounded base, e.g. C.15 (Plate 3) and C.29 (Plate 4). However, two of the post-holes, C.7 and C.8 (Plate 5) had vertical sides and a flat base. Five of the post-holes (C.4, C.6, C.8, C.15 and C.17) were noticeably larger in diameter and deeper, ranging from 0.31 m to 0.56 m diameter by 0.10 m to 0.20 m in depth. They contained the remains of in situ burnt wooden posts. Packing with re-deposited subsoil was found in four of these postholes (C.6, C.8, C.15, and C.17). The large posts were spaced approximately 1 to 1.5 m apart, suggesting that these represent a rudimentary structure. The smaller, shallower post-holes were either badly truncated, or that they had a supporting function for the larger post-holes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
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<th>Width</th>
<th>Depth</th>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Post-hole dimensions at Caherdrinny 2

Four of the postholes (C.6, C.13, C.15 and C.27) were truncated by a furrow that ran from north-west to south-east.

A small pit (C.24) was present between two large post-holes (C.6 and C.17). It was 0.24 m in diameter and was just 0.04 m deep and it was probably truncated. It contained a
Plate 3: Mid-excavation view of post-hole (C.15) from west (Photo: John Sunderland).

Plate 4: Mid-excavation view of post-hole (C.29) from east.
Plate 5: Pre-excavation view of post-hole (C.8) from south.

Plate 6: Pre-excavation view of charcoal-rich deposit with burnt bone inclusions (C.11) from east.
deposit (C.25), a dark greyish-brown silt with moderate charcoal flecking and burnt bone flecking. However, large quantities of bone were not retrieved and therefore this was not interpreted as a cremation deposit.

A deposit of burnt bone (C.11) was found between a post-hole (C.17) and the pit (C.24). It was 0.5 m in diameter and 0.1 m deep. The deposit was a firm black clay-silt with frequent charcoal and burnt bone inclusions (Plate 6). The burnt bone was from an adult, but only partial remains survived. It was not possible to determine age and gender (Appendix 3). Charcoal from this deposit was identified as sloe/cherry (Prunus) and this returned a Middle Bronze Age radiocarbon date of cal BC 1493 – 1398 (UB-12976). This deposit was sitting directly on the ground surface and this suggests that it was either deliberately placed there or that it was simply left where it fell after a fire.

These features were interpreted as the remains of a funerary pyre, possibly for a single cremation. No pottery was present and there was no evidence of an attempt to bury the human remains at this site. All archaeological activity was found within a small area and it is possible that the larger post-holes may represent the remains of a structure that was used to limit and contain the fuel used for the cremation.

An isolated pit (C.34) was found 5 m to the south of the main group. It measured 0.3 m in diameter and it was 0.05 m deep and it was probably truncated. It contained a single fill (C.35), a light brown clay with occasional charcoal. This is an isolated feature and its relationship to the other archaeological features excavated at this site is unknown.

A total of nine furrows traversed the site (Plate 7). Only one of these was given context numbers, (cut C.31 and fill C.32). The furrows ran downhill from south to north and they were evenly spaced, 3 m apart. The fill (C.31) was a very soft dark brown silty clay. The
measured furrows were 20 m long and continued beyond the limit of excavation. They were 0.4 m wide and 0.1 m deep.

Plant remains
Plant remains analysis was carried out by Penny Johnston (Appendix 4). A single sample from the fill (C.9) of a post-hole was examined from this site. No plant remains were retrieved.

Charcoal
Charcoal from Caherdrinny 2 was identified by Mary Dillon in advance of radiocarbon dating. This was taken from the cremation deposit (C.11). Cherry/Sloe (*Prunus*) charcoal was identified. This is in contrast to the usual fuel type discovered in cremation deposits, where oak is the most common wood type used, but other types of wood, including cherry/sloe types, were also burnt (O’Donnell 2007, 45-46 and Fig. 3.12; McQuade et al 2009, 145).

Radiocarbon date
Radiocarbon analysis was carried out by the 14 Chrono Centre in Queen’s University Belfast. Dates were calibrated using Calib Rev5.0.2 (©1986-2005 M.Stuiver & P.J. Reimer) and in conjunction with Stuiver & Reimer 1993 and Reimer et al. 2004.

<table>
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<th>Context</th>
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<th>2 sigma calibration</th>
<th>1 sigma calibration</th>
<th>Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>UB-12976</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Sloe/cherry charcoal (<em>Prunus</em> spp.)</td>
<td>3153±22</td>
<td>-27.2</td>
<td>cal BC 1447-1411</td>
<td>cal BC 1464-1394</td>
<td>Middle Bronze Age</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Radiocarbon dates from Caherdrinny 2

Human remains
The human remains from this sample were examined by Linda Lynch (Appendix 5). Two samples were examined, from C.11 (a cremation deposit) and C.1 (from topsoil, probably re-deposited from C.11). The results from both contexts were similar; both samples were small portions of adults. Age at death and gender were not possible to determine. There was wear on some of the bones that may have been the result of taphonomic processes at the site, but may also indicate that the bones were retained for some time after cremation but prior to burial. It is possible, or likely, that the samples were derived from the same burial deposit, and possibly from the same individual. Fracturing on the bones suggest that these were bones from a fully fleshed body and therefore the people who carried out the cremations were well versed in the necessary techniques involved in the cremation of a human body.
8 Discussion

There are numerous known Bronze Age burials sites, recorded in the area around Caherdrinny 2 (Figure 5). These include cist burials, Food Vessel burials, Urn burials and simple pit burials. The burials are generally located on low-lying ground between 60 m and 100 m OD, with some situated close by the rivers of the area such as the Funshion River and its tributaries (the Sheep River, the Tooraleagan River and the Gradoge River). The deposit of a small quantity of cremated human remains at Caherdrinny 2 must be seen within the context of this burial tradition, and within that dating to the Middle Bronze Age in particular.

Excavation along the route of the N8 Fermoy to Mitchelstown has increased the number of cremation burials found in the area (including Glenatlucky, Ballynacarrig 3 and Ballynamona 2) and most of these are probably Bronze Age in date. However pottery and radiocarbon dates from both Glenatlucky and Ballynacarriga 3 both date to the Early Bronze Age, and therefore both of these sites pre-date the Middle Bronze Age burial at Caherdrinny 2.

There were three Middle Bronze Age burial sites excavated along the route of the N8 Cashel to Mitchelstown, to the north of Caherdrinny 2. These comprised an isolated cremation pit at Marlhill, a cemetery and structure at Racecourse Demesne and a flat cremation cemetery at Templenoe, all in Co. Tipperary (McQuade et al. 2009, 130 - 138). The results from Templenoe included many ‘token’ burials, where a representative sample rather than the entire body is included in the burial (Ibid., 142). This was also common in cremation deposits examined from along the route of the gas pipeline to the west (Lynch and O’Donnell 2007, 109). Grogan (2004, 69) argues that the practice of depositing small or token amounts of bone became the norm in the Irish Middle Bronze Age burial tradition. The burial at Caherdrinny 2 also reflects this Middle Bronze Age trend.

Most Irish Middle to Late Bronze Age burials are simple unmarked pits that were small and circular (Grogan et al. 2007, 114). At Caherdrinny 2 the burial deposit was not even found within a pit. The surrounding post-holes suggest that this was a marked deposit. This is possibly because it was a pyre site and therefore the deposit of burnt bone was not necessarily a formal one.

Despite the prevalence of burial sites in the area around Caherdrinny 2, pyre sites are not common in the region. In fact, this is true in Irish archaeology in general and pyre sites are usually considered rare and difficult to identify (Lynch and O’Donnell 2007, 108). In addition, there is no methodological set of criteria used to identify these site types and most classifications of pyre sites rely on the interpretations of individual archaeologists. A search of the excavations database (www.excavations.ie) which includes all records of Irish excavation up until 2005, suggests that there are around eleven sites where possible pyre sites have been identified. These include one each in counties. Down (Cloughskelf), Cavan (Drumbo Site 2), Donegal (Drumhinny Lower), Kerry (Rockfield), Dublin (Laughaunstown), Cork (Carrigaline Middle) and Sligo (Nazareth House, Magheraboy). Two possible pyre sites were identified in counties Louth (Mell 2 and Site 127 Carn More
5, Faughart) and in Kimerick (Hermitage and Kilbane). Most of these sites are not associated with structural remains and appear instead to be large charcoal-rich deposits that contain fragments of cremated bone. The evidence from Caherdrinny 2 is slightly different to these finds, but this may simply reflect the huge variety of mortuary traditions that are evident in the burial record from the Irish Bronze Age.

Evidence from Co. Limerick suggests that burial grounds from the Middle Bronze Age (in particular barrow cemeteries) may represent the boundaries of small territories that stretch back from the network of rivers and tributaries in that area (Cooney and Grogan 1999, 131). The location of Caherdrinny 2, relatively close to a waterway (150 m from one of the springs of the Funshion), may suggest that the link between cremation burials, rivers and territories was also found in this part of north Cork. The distribution map of known prehistoric and Bronze Age sites within the region of the N8 Fermoy to Mitchelstown (Figure 5) suggests that this is the case, since barrow and ring ditches and Bronze Age burial sites mostly appear to be sited near waterways, sometimes on opposite sides of a river or stream. There is a possibility that these sites are territorial markers.

While there are a number of Bronze Age sites within the vicinity of Caherdrinny 2 (with domestic and ritual evidence retrieved), there are fewer sites that date specifically to the Middle Bronze Age. These include three round houses excavated at Mitchelstown 1, 5.8 km from Caherdrinny 2. There is no evidence to suggest that these sites are linked to the same territory, but it is possible or likely that some of the area of the N8 Fermoy to Mitchelstown road, traversed by several rivers, tributaries and streams, was broken into a number of different territories in the Middle Bronze Age.

9 Conclusion

The site at Caherdrinny 2 was probably a pyre site or a site associated with cremation ritual. Pits and post-holes with charcoal-rich deposits were found. The remains of a single human individual were identified. Radiocarbon dates indicate that this cremation dated to the Middle Bronze Age.
Figure 5: Distribution of Bronze Age sites in the area around Caherdrinny 2

- Barrow (25)
- Burial (33)
- Cairn (3)
- Fulacht Fiadh (163)
- Cave (3)
- Kerb circle (2)
- Standing stone (19)
- Lithic Scatter (6)
- Settlement (22)
- Kilometres

http://eachtra.ie/index.php/journal/e2421-caherdrinny2-co-cork/
10 References


Clinton, M. 2001 *The Souterrains of Ireland*. Bray, Wordwell.


Power, D., Lane, S. and Byrne, E., Egan, U., Sleeman, M., with Cotter, E.,


Websites

## Appendix 1  Stratigraphic Index

<table>
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<th>Context #</th>
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<th>Filled with</th>
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<th>Strat below</th>
<th>Short Description</th>
<th>Dimensions (m)</th>
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<td>1, 4,</td>
<td>1, 4, 6, 8,</td>
<td>2, 5, 7,</td>
<td>2, 5, 7,</td>
<td>Dark brown silt topsoil which covers the whole site. Soft compaction. Occasional medium sub-angular and sub-rounded pebbles. Occasional small and medium sub-angular and small sub-rounded stones. Occasional small decayed stones. Contained some pottery (Slipware, Medieval) and lithics (flint and chert pieces/debitage) and disturbed burnt bone.</td>
<td>0.4 max depth</td>
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<td>Layer</td>
<td>1, 4,</td>
<td>1, 4, 6, 8,</td>
<td>10, 13,</td>
<td>2, 5, 7,</td>
<td>Light orange, silty-clay subsoil. Stiff compaction. Moderate inclusions of medium angular and sub-angular pebbles. Occasional small and large angular, and small sub-rounded stones. Moderate medium sub-angular stones. This material underlay all features and is likely glacially derived. It overlays the boulder clay subsoil (glacial till).</td>
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<td>Layer</td>
<td>1, 4,</td>
<td>1, 4, 6, 8,</td>
<td>10, 13,</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Light pinkish orange clay, hard compaction. Moderate inclusions of small and medium sub-rounded stones. Boulder clay subsoil, underlay bright orange silty-clay subsoil. This 'boulder clay' is glacially derived till, pinkish-white, containing subrounded limestone boulders and angular red sandstone. This subsoil only encountered during deliberate sondaging of context 3 to test its depth.</td>
<td>unknown</td>
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<td>Posthole cut</td>
<td>5, 12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Oval cut of posthole, with rounded corners. Break of slope top gradual on S, sharp elsewhere. Sides: steep and concave S and W; gentle smooth N; moderate concave E. Break of slope base gradual all around. Base oval in plan, tapered rounded point in profile. Containing remains of burnt post.</td>
<td>0.56 x 0.50 x 0.16</td>
</tr>
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<td>Posthole fill</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Dark greyish brown silty clay, firm compaction. Occasional sub-angular medium pebbles and small stones. Moderate inclusions of flecks and small pieces of charcoal. Upper fill of a posthole containing moderate charcoal.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Cut</td>
<td>7, 26</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Almost circular cut of a truncated posthole. Break of slope at top and base is gradual N and S; imperceptible E and sharp W. Sides: gentle convex N and S; gentle smooth E; steep convex W. Base oval in plan and flat in profile. It is on the line of a South to North plough furrow and has therefore been truncated by it. This is one of possibly four more substantial posts, with in-situ charred posts (charcoal) which may have a structural purpose.</td>
<td>0.45 x 0.40 x 0.10</td>
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<td>Posthole fill</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
<td>Black sandy silt, soft compaction. Occasional small sub-rounded stones. Frequent flecks, moderate small and occasional medium pieces of charcoal. Almost entirely charcoal. Appears to be the remains of an in-situ charred/burnt post.</td>
<td>0.40 x 0.36 x 0.08</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Posthole cut</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cut of circular posthole. Sharp top break of slope on N. Steep concave side. Imperceptible base break of slope on N. Base circular in plan, concave in profile. One of four more structural postholes. Contained the remains of a charred/burnt in-situ wooden post.</td>
<td>0.32 x 0.31 x 0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Posthole fill</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>Soft black silty clay. Occasional small sub-angular stones. Frequent flecks, frequent small and moderate medium pieces of charcoal. Occasional flecks of burnt bone. Fill was made up almost entirely of charcoal, suggesting the charred/burnt remains of an in-situ wooden post. Subsoil had been packed in around the edges of the post to help hold it upright (fill not recorded).</td>
<td>0.32 x 0.31 x 0.12</td>
</tr>
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<td>Possible cremation cut</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sub-circular in plan. Break of slope at top and base is imperceptible. All sides gentle concave. Base sub-circular in plan, concave in profile. A cut number was issued, but it seems more likely that there was no cut. Fill 11 may have been deposited directly on the ground surface. The ‘cut’ is derived from charcoal staining the subsoil below.</td>
<td>0.50 x 0.50 x 0.10</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Deposit</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>A deposit of firm, black, clayey silt. Occasional fine sub-angular and sub-rounded pebbles. Frequent flecks and small pieces of charcoal and burnt bone. Consistently flecked through with inclusions of charcoal and burnt bone. One fragment of burnt bone was 100mm in length, but was fragmentary when lifted. This suggests that if this was a cremation, the bone wasn’t ground up afterwards.</td>
<td>0.50 x 0.50 x 0.10</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Pit/post-hole fill</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>Black in colour, soft/loose compaction. Occasional fine angular and moderate medium sub-angular pebbles. Frequent flecks and moderate medium pieces of charcoal. May be the remains of a burnt post. Not as clear as three other substantial postholes. Almost solid charcoal in this fill. Could also be a pit.</td>
<td>0.55 x 0.40 x 0.07</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Posthole cut</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Irregular in plan. Rounded corners on S and W, square on N and E. Break of slope top and base sharp on S and gradual elsewhere. Sides: concave N; gentle smooth S, steep concave E; moderate stepped W. Base circular in plan, concave in profile. Circular steep-sided posthole. Very shallow and has either been truncated or had a support function, rather than a structural function, so little digging would have been necessary.</td>
<td>0.24 x 0.22 x 0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Posthole fill</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td>Soft black silty clay. Inclusions of sub-angular stones. Occasional flecks, moderate small and frequent medium pieces of charcoal. This fill appears to be the remains of a charred/burnt wooden post (charcoal) in-situ. Above ground remains would have been destroyed by tillage, hence the shallow profile.</td>
<td>0.24 x 0.22 x 0.06</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Posthole cut</td>
<td>16, 19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Oval in plan with sharp break of slope top all around. Sides: vertical S and E; almost vertical concave N; steep concave W. Break of slope base sharp on E, gradual elsewhere. Base circular in plan, almost flat in profile. An oval posthole with steep sides and a flat base, containing the remains of an in-situ charred/burnt wooden post. Natural subsoil was packed around the post (see C:19) with evidence of stone packing. This is one of possibly four more substantial structural posts.</td>
<td>0.41 x 0.34 x 0.20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Posthole fill</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Soft black charcoal. Occasional small sub-rounded stones and pieces of ash. Lenses of light greyish brown sandy clay on the top in NE part. Fill is one piece of charcoal which appears to be the remains of a burnt wooden post.</td>
<td>0.34 x 0.28 x 0.15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Posthole cut</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sub-circular in plan with rounded corners. Sides: moderate concave E and W; steep concave N; gentle concave S. Gradual base break of slope. Base circular in plan, concave in profile. Cut of circular posthole with steep sides and slightly concave base. Contained charred/burnt remains of a wooden post and possible evidence of subsoil packing around the post. One of possibly four more substantial structural postholes.</td>
<td>0.48 x 0.46 x 0.20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Posthole fill</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Firm black charcoal. Remains of a charred/burnt post in-situ. Perhaps some subsoil packing around the post, but difficult to be certain.</td>
<td>0.48 x 0.46 x 0.20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Posthole fill</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Soft, light orangish pink sandy clay. Frequent fine angular, moderate medium and coarse sub-angular pebbles. Occasional sub-angular stones. Redeposited subsoil packing. Packed around wooden post to help hold it firmly upright. Some evidence of sorted stone within this packing fill.</td>
<td>0.41 x 0.34 x 0.08</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Context #</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Posthole cut</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Circular in plan. Gradual top and base break of slope. Sides: gentle smooth N; moderate convex S; moderate smooth E; moderate concave W. Base circular in plan, concave in profile. Moderate sided and concave base posthole. Either badly truncated or used as a supporting post, hence the shallow cut. Contained the remains of a charred/burnt in-situ wooden post.</td>
<td>0.09 x 0.08 x 0.03</td>
</tr>
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<td>Posthole fill</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td>Soft, black silty clay. Inclusions of fine sub-rounded pebbles. Moderate flecks and small pieces of charcoal. Remains of a charred/burnt post with a supporting function.</td>
<td>0.09 x 0.08 x 0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>VOID</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Irregular shape in plan. NON-ARCHAEOLOGICAL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>VOID</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Soft dark brown silt. NON-ARCHAEOLOGICAL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Pit cut</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Square in plan with square corners on S, NW and SW. Top break of slope gradual on N and E, imperceptible on S and W. Sides: all irregular. S and E moderately sloping. Base break of slope imperceptible on W, gradual elsewhere. Base square in plan and flat in profile. Remains of possible posthole, badly truncated, little else can be said.</td>
<td>0.24 x 0.22 x 0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Posthole fill</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
<td>Soft, dark greyish brown silt with moderate charcoal flecking. Occasional fine angular pebbles and moderate charcoal flecks. Fill of unclear feature, possibly a posthole.</td>
<td>0.26 x 0.18 x 0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Posthole fill</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>Soft, light orangish pink sandy clay. Moderate medium and coarse sub-angular pebbles and occasional sub-rounded stones. Frequent flecks of light brownish grey sandy clay. Occasional charcoal flecks. Redeposited subsoil, used as packing around post in posthole. Stones (40-60mm) appear to have been sorted and selected to help in packing and holding the post upright.</td>
<td>0.45 x 0.40 x 0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context #</td>
<td>Context Type</td>
<td>Fill of</td>
<td>Strat above</td>
<td>Strat below</td>
<td>Short Description</td>
<td>Dimensions (m)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Posthole cut</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sub-circular with rounded corners. Top break of slope gradual on N and E, sharp S and W. Sides: gentle smooth N; moderate concave S; steep stepped E and moderate stepped W. Base break of slope gradual all around. Base sub-circular in plan, concave in profile. Moderate sided and concave based posthole. Either shallow in nature or badly truncated. It is on the line of a South to North orientated plough furrow. Possibly a supporting post. Charcoal fill suggests an in-situ charred/burnt wooden post.</td>
<td>0.28 x 0.22 x 0.08</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Posthole fill</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Soft black silty clay. Fine sub-angular pebbles and small sub-rounded stones. Fill of shallow posthole. The charcoal present suggests the remains of a charred/burnt in-situ post.</td>
<td>0.28 x 0.22 x 0.08</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Posthole cut</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Oval in plan. Square corner on E side, otherwise rounded. Top and base break of slope sharp on S and W, gradual on N and imperceptible on E. Sides: gentle convex E; steep concave W; moderate smooth S; gentle concave N. Base oval in plan, concave in profile. Moderately sided and concave based posthole cut. Shallow cut suggests a supporting post. Fill of charcoal suggests an in-situ charred/burnt wooden post.</td>
<td>0.22 x 0.20 x 0.09</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Posthole fill</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Soft, black silty clay. Occasional medium sub-rounded pebbles and sub-angular stones. Moderate flecks and small pieces of charcoal. Remains of a charred/burnt post.</td>
<td>0.22 x 0.20 x 0.09</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Plough furrow cut</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Linear in plan. Gradual top break of slope. E and W sides gentle concave. Imperceptible base break of slope. Base concave in profile. One of a series of nine plough furrows running downhill from South to North, evenly spaced 3m apart.</td>
<td>20 x 0.40 x 0.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Plough furrow fill</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Very soft, dark brown silty clay.</td>
<td>20 x 0.40 x 0.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Deposit layer</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Stiff light pinkish white silt. NON-ARCHAEOLOGICAL - a variation in subsoil colouration.</td>
<td>2.00 x 1.00 x 0.20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context #</td>
<td>Context Type</td>
<td>Fill of</td>
<td>Filled with</td>
<td>Strat above</td>
<td>Strat below</td>
<td>Short Description</td>
<td>Dimensions (m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Small pit/posthole cut</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Oval in plan with rounded corners. Top and base break of slope sharp on N and S,</td>
<td>0.30 x 0.24 x 0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>gradual on E and W. Sides: steep concave N and S, moderate smooth E and gentle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>smooth W. Base oval in plan, concave in profile. A small, isolated, shallow</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>posthole or pit, doesn't appear related to other features by location or fill</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>type (little charcoal).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Small pit/posthole fill</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>34</td>
<td></td>
<td>Firm light brown, silty clay. Moderate fine angular pebbles. Occasional small</td>
<td>0.28 x 0.20 x 0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>sub-angular and medium angular stones. Occasional charcoal flecks. Fill of small</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>post hole or post hole. Isolated, occasional charcoal flecks, but not really</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>similar to other fills on site.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2  Site matrix
Appendix 3 Groups and subgroups

Group 1 Structural post-holes


Description: A total of nine post-holes formed a possible structure. The structure was sub-circular in plan, forming an almost complete circle that measured approximately 2 m in diameter. There were seven post-holes in the outer arc of the structure (C. 4, C.6, C.8, C.13, C.15, C.17 and C.27) and two internal post-holes (C.20 and C.29). The entrance to the structure may have been to the south, between two post-holes (C.6 and C.17), where two deposits containing cremated bone (see group two below) were recovered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Width</th>
<th>Depth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table of post-hole dimensions

The oval post-hole (C.4) was filled by two deposits (C.5 and C.12). The sides of the post-hole were steep and the break of slope at the base was gradual, with a tapered rounded point in profile. The deposit (C.5) was a dark brown clay with occasional sub-angular pebbles and small stones and moderate inclusions of charcoal. This was the upper fill of a post-hole. The lower fill (C.12) was almost solid charcoal with occasional pebbles. This may be the remains of a burnt post.

The sub-circular post-hole (C.6) was filled by two deposits (C.7 and C.26). The sides of the post-hole were gentle, rather than steep and the base was flat in profile. The deposit (C.7) was almost entirely charcoal, with occasional small stones. It appeared to be the remains of an *in situ* charred/burnt post. This was abutted by a packing fill (C.26) of re-deposited subsoil, a light sandy clay with occasional charcoal flecks. The post-hole was truncated by a plough furrow.

The circular post-hole (C.8) was filled by one deposit (C.9), a soft black silty clay with frequent charcoal inclusions and occasional flecks of burnt bone. The deposit was almost entirely charcoal, suggesting the charred/burnt remains of an *in situ* wooden post. Subsoil had been packed in around the edges of the post to help hold it upright (fill not recorded). The sides of the post-hole were steep and the base was concave in profile.

The irregular post-hole (C.13) was filled by one deposit (C.14), a soft black silty clay with frequent charcoal inclusions. It appeared to be an *in situ* charred/burnt wooden...
The oval post-hole (C.15) was filled by two deposits (C.16 and C.19). This steep-sided post-hole had an almost flat profile. The upper fill (C.16) was charcoal-rich with occasional small stones and pieces of ash. It represented the probable remains of a burnt wooden post. The lower fill (C.19) was a light clay that represented re-deposited subsoil that was used as packing for the wooden post. This post-hole was truncated by a plough furrow.

The sub-circular post-hole (C.17) was filled by one deposit (C.18), a deposit of firm black charcoal which represented remains of a post that was burnt in situ. There was no definite indication of packing in this post-hole. The sides of this post-hole were steep and the base was slightly concave.

The circular post-hole (C.20) was filled by one deposit (C.21), a soft, black clay with moderate charcoal inclusions. This small post-hole may have supported some of the larger post-holes in the arc. The sides of the post-hole were moderately sloped and the base was concave in profile.

The sub-circular post-hole (C.27) was filled by one deposit (C.28), a black charcoal-rich clay. The charcoal suggests the remains of a post that was burnt in situ. The sides of the post-hole were steep at the east and stepped at the west and the base was concave in profile. It is possible that this was a support post. The post-hole was truncated by a plough furrow.

The oval post-hole (C.29) was filled by one deposit (C.30), a soft, black clay with moderate charcoal inclusions. It probably represents the remains of a charred/burnt post. The sides of the post-hole were steep and the base was concave in profile. The shallow nature of the post-holes suggests that it was a support post-hole.

Five of the postholes (C.4, C.6, C.8, C.15 and C.17) were noticeably larger in diameter and deeper, ranging from 0.31 m to 0.56 m diameter by 0.10 m to 0.20 m in depth. They contained the remains of in situ burnt wooden posts. Packing with re-deposited subsoil was found in four of these postholes (C.6, C.8, C.15, and C.17). The large posts were spaced approximately 1 to 1.5 m apart, suggesting that these represent a rudimentary structure. The smaller, shallower post-holes were either badly truncated, or that they had a supporting function for the larger post-holes.

These clustered features were interpreted as a funerary pyre, possibly for a single cremation. All of the archaeological activity was confined to a small area and some of the larger post-holes may have been used to limit and contain the fuel used for the cremation. The smaller posts, which mostly had shallow cuts, may have had a support function, possibly it held the body off the ground horizontally on wooden planks or logs.

**Group 2 Cremation deposits**

Contexts: Possible cremation pit C.24 (filled by C.25) and deposit of burnt bone C.11
Description: All the post-holes and cremation deposits were all located within 3 m of each other. The cremation deposits appear to be shallow perhaps suggesting that either they were not subsequently interred and may have been left where they lay or that the majority of the material was removed for burial elsewhere.

The deposit C.11 appeared to sit on the ground surface and it was found between the post-hole (C.17) and the pit (C.24). The deposit was 0.5 m in diameter and it was 0.1 m deep. The deposit was a firm black clay-silt with frequent charcoal and burnt bone inclusions. One fragment of burnt bone was 0.1 m in length, but was fragmentary when lifted. The cremation deposit (C.11) was sitting directly on the ground surface, suggesting that it was either deliberately placed there or that it was simply left where it fell after a fire, it may also have been the displaced remains of the truncated cremation pit (C.24) which was present immediately beside it.

The pit (C.24) was filled by a deposit of charcoal and flecks of burnt bone (C.25). The pit was 0.24 m in length, 0.22 m in width and 0.04 m in depth. The sides were all irregular and the base was flat in profile. It contained a small deposit (C.25), a brown silt with moderate charcoal flecking and occasional flecks of burnt bone. The pit was found between large post-holes (C.6 and C.17). It appeared badly truncated. Given the paucity of bone, it is not clear whether this was a true cremation deposit.

**Group 3 Isolated pit**

Contexts: C.34 (C.35)

Description: This isolated pit (C.34) was 5 m to the south of the main group of post-holes and cremation deposits. The pit (C.34) was 0.3 m in diameter by 0.05 m in depth. It is likely that it was truncated. The fill (C.35) was a light brown, silty clay with occasional stones and charcoal flecks. The pit was probably truncated. The isolated location of this pit suggests that it was not related to the other features.

**Group 4 Furrows**

Contexts: C.31 (C.32)

Description: A total of nine furrows traversed the site. Only one of these was given a context number for the cut (C.31) and a context number from the fill (C.32). These ran downhill from south to north and they were evenly spaced, 3 m apart. The fill (C.31) was a very soft dark brown silty clay. The measured furrows were 20 m long and continued beyond the limit of excavation. They were 0.4 m wide and 0.1 m deep.

**Group 5 Topsoil and subsoil**

Contexts: C.1, C.2
Subgroup 5a Topsoil
Description: The topsoil (C.1) was a dark brown silt topsoil which covered the entire site. The topsoil contained occasional medium sub-angular and sub-rounded pebbles and some post-medieval pottery.

Subgroup 5b Subsoil
Description: The subsoil (C.2) was a light pinkish-orange clay, hard in compaction. This is commonly known as ‘boulder clay’ or glacial till and contains moderate small and medium subrounded limestone stones. Above this subsoil lay a layer of light orange silty-clay, stiff in compaction. It had a maximum depth of 0.22 m, with most of the features being cut into this soil, with some of the deeper cut features cutting through into the boulder clay underneath.
Appendix 4  Plant remains

By Penny Johnston

Introduction

This report presents the results of plant remains analysis from Caherdrinny 2, Co. Cork (E2421). The site comprised a cluster of ten pits and post-holes associated with a deposit of cremated human remains. It was interpreted as a pyre site.

Methodology

The samples were collected on site as bulk soil and were processed using machine-assisted floatation (following guidelines in Pearsall 2000). The floating material (or ‘flot’) from each sample was collected in a stack of geological sieves (the smallest mesh size was 250mm). When all the carbonised material was collected the flot was then air-dried in paper-lined drying trays prior to storage in airtight plastic bags. The samples were scanned under low-powered magnification (x 10 to x 40) using a binocular microscope.

Results

A single sample from this site was examined. No plant remains were present in the samples (see the results of scanning in Table 1). No further analysis is required.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Charcoal</th>
<th>Seeds</th>
<th>% scanned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Scanned samples from Caherdrinny 2, Co. Cork (E2421)

References

Appendix 5  Osteoarchaeological Report

Linda G. Lynch

Introduction

Background to Project

Archaeological excavations were undertaken at the site known as Caherdrinny 2 (E number E2421) in Co. Cork by Eachtra Archaeological Projects in 2007 as part of the archaeological resolution associated with the construction of the N8 Fermoy to Mitchelstown bypass (Jacinta Kiely, pers. comm.). The site comprised a cluster of ten pits and post-holes and a series of plough furrows. The site is interpreted as representing a cremation pyre, probably for a single cremation event (ibid.). Two deposits of cremated bone were recovered and both were identified in post-excavation as being human in origin.

Scope of Study

This report details the analysis of the cremated bone recovered from two contexts at Caherdrinny 2. One deposit was recovered from within the topsoil [C.1], while another sample of cremains was recovered as a small deposit between a post-hole and a pit (ibid.). The materials and methods utilised in this study are described in Section 1.3 and Section 1.4 respectively. The results of the analysis are described in Section 2, while a synthesis and discussion are provided in Section 3.

Materials

The cremated bone recovered from Caherdrinny 2 was processed and separated from the soil matrix by the client and forwarded to the writer for analysis. The actual weight of bone recovered is detailed in Section 2. Just two samples of cremated bones were recovered and both were human in origin.

Methods

The fragments of cremated human bone were identified and analysed to determine the minimum number of individuals (MNIs). The fragments were too small to determine either the age-at-death or the sex. No pathological lesions or dental diseases were observed on the fragments.

All of the cremated bone was weighed, the condition of the fragments was described, and the sizes of the fragments recovered were examined. These processes allow for the examination of a cremation deposit in terms of methods of cremation and possible associated ritual. All percentages have been rounded off to one decimal place.
All of the raw osteological data on the cremains recovered from Caherdrinny 2 are housed with the writer. The cremains will presently be returned to the client, and the curation will be determined by the National Museum of Ireland.

Analysis

Sample 4 [c.11]
A total of 45g (166 fragments) of cremains were recovered as a deposit between a posthole [C.17] and a pit [C.24]. All of the fragments appear to be human in origin. It is possible to identify 32g or 71.1% to bone type. These are listed in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Skeletal Division</th>
<th>Identified Skeletal Elements</th>
<th>Total weight (g)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cranium and mandible</td>
<td>5 cranial vault fragments</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torso</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limbs</td>
<td>43 long bone shaft fragments</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unidentified fragments</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. List of identified human cremains in deposit [c11], including weights of main skeletal parts

There is no evidence of duplication of skeletal elements, and neither is there any indication of other individuals of different ages-at-death in the sample, such as a child and an adult. The cremains are those of a single adult individual. It is not possible to determine a more accurate age-at-death, and it is not possible to determine the sex of the individual. No dental conditions and/or skeletal pathological lesions are present on the cremains.

The largest fragment is from a long bone and it measures 31.05mm in length. The volume of bone recovered is too low to assess the overall fragment size.

The cremains are all white in colour. There is no significant twisting evident but there are concentric fractures. The edges of many of the fragments are very smooth.

Sample 14 [c.1]
A total of 27g (100 fragments) of cremains were recovered from the topsoil [c1]. All of the fragments appear to be human in origin. It is possible to identify 20g or 74.1% to bone type. These are listed in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Skeletal Division</th>
<th>Identified Skeletal Elements</th>
<th>Total weight (g)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cranium and mandible</td>
<td>1 cranial vault fragments</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torso</td>
<td>2 rib fragments</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limbs</td>
<td>31 long bone shaft fragments</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unidentified fragments</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. List of identified human cremains recovered from topsoil [c1], including weights of main skeletal parts

There is no evidence of duplication of skeletal elements, and neither is there any indication of other individuals of different ages-at-death in the sample, such as a child and an
adult. The cremains are those of a single adult individual. It is not possible to determine a more accurate age-at-death, and it is not possible to determine the sex of the individual. No dental conditions and/or skeletal pathological lesions are present on the cremains.

The largest fragment is from a long bone and it measures 39.67mm in length. The volume of bone recovered is too low to assess the overall fragment size.

The cremains are all white in colour. There is no significant twisting evident but there are concentric fractures. The edges of many of the fragments are very smooth.
Synthesis and Discussion

Summary of Analysis

A summary of the weights of cremated bones recovered from each feature and the MNI (minimum number of individuals) is provided in Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample No.</th>
<th>Context No.</th>
<th>Feature type</th>
<th>Weight of cremains (g)</th>
<th>MNI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Deposit between posthole and pit</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1 adult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Deposit within topsoil</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1 adult</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Summary of cremains weights and MNI, Caherdrinny 2

No dental conditions and/or skeletal pathological lesions were present on any of the remains. In general the bone was well cremated. There was little twisting but concentric fractures were evident. The edges of the fragments in both deposits were smooth.

Discussion

The archaeological remains excavated at Caherdrinny have been interpreted as a probable pyre site, possibly just used once (J. Kiely, pers. comm.). However, no distinct burial of the cremated remains were recovered from the site, which suggests that they were disposed of, or deposited in, a different location and/or were utilised in some other manner.

Human cremated bone or cremains were recovered from two contexts. One was a small deposit of 45g of bone, recovered between a post-hole and a pit. The other smaller deposit, of just 27g of bone, was recovered from the topsoil. It is possible that the latter (sample 14, [C.1]) is actually a redeposit from the possibly truncation of the cremation deposit that was recovered between the post-hole and the pit (sample 4, [C.11]. Technically, each cremation sample represents a minimum of one adult each. However, in reality there is no osteological evidence to indicate that there are the remains of two adults at this site. There is no duplication of bone elements between the two samples of cremains and it is entirely possible that both deposits are from a single adult cremation.

All of the fragments of bone were split and cracked due to the intensity of the cremation pyre. Concentric fractures were also present in both cremains samples. Concentric fractures are U-shaped fissures in long bones and concentric fissures in the proximal heads of the femora and humerus (McKinley 2000, 405). That fracturing can only occur in fresh, typically fleshed bones, as the lack of an organic content in dry bones militates against the occurrence of such fractures in dry bone samples (ibid.). This indicates that a complete fleshed body or bodies, or indeed body parts, were being cremated. In general, the cremains recovered from Caherdrinny 2 were white in colour. This indicates complete cremation at pyre temperatures of between 654°C and 1200°C (after Mays 1998). This further indicates that those who carried out the cremations were entirely familiar with the complex process, as incomplete cremation can result in multi-coloured fragments.

Modern studies have indicated that the weight of the cremated remains of a complete adult can range from approximately 1600g to 3500g (McKinley 1989). Even if, as sug-
A number of factors need to be considered when assessing the disparity between the actual weight of bone recovered and the expected weight of the cremains of an adult individual. The cremains were scientifically excavated and recovered, therefore loss of bones during the excavation and post-excavation stage may be dismissed. It is possible that a significant volume of bone has disintegrated in the soil through time. However, studies have indicated that — primarily through changes in the chemical properties of bone during the cremation process — cremated bone tends to survive very well in most soils, including acidic environments (Mays 1998, 209).

It is more likely that only a selection of cremains were deposited at Caherdrinny 2. The question then arises as to whether these samples of cremains were removed from a primary, larger cremation sample, or were only selected body-parts cremated to begin with? Unfortunately, the volumes recovered are too small to assess if specific body parts are within the deposits. In a typical adult individual, the bones of the cranium will weigh approximately 18.2% of the total skeleton, the torso bones 23.1%, and the limb bones 58.7% (McKinley 1989). This can often provide a useful comparison for studies of complete archaeological cremations. It is not possible to assess whether only selected body parts are represented in the deposits from Caherdrinny 2 or whether the cremains were taken from a main cremation deposit.

Due to the small size of the fragments it is not possible to comment on the overall fragment sizes of the samples. If the volume of bone recovered is large enough then it is often possible to assess whether a cremation has been processed by pounding or grinding. A generalized study of cremation burials in Britain found that, on average, 50% of the fragments were greater than 10mm in size (McKinley 1994, 340). In ideal archaeological circumstances, cremated bone fragments may be in excess of 30mm and can be up to 140cm in size (McKinley 1994, 342). In that study, McKinley found no substantial evidence of deliberate post-cremation fragmentation of the deposits.

As noted earlier, it is possible that the two deposits of cremains may represent a single individual. This premise is somewhat confirmed by the evidence of the similarity in the condition of the fragments between the two cremation deposits. It was noted during the analysis that the edges of the fragments in both deposits were smooth. This indicates that the fragments are worn. When bone is cremated it often takes on an almost glass-like quality, and typically has sharp edges where the bones shatter. It will naturally lose some of the sharpness as time passes. McKinley (1994) has noted that unprotected cremations (that is, those not contained within a vessel) may be more prone to destruction. It is entirely possible that the wear present on the fragments from Caherdrinny 2 may be due to post-depositional taphonomic factors. However, it is possible that the small deposits were retained for some time prior to deposition. That was the premise put forward for a cremation burial excavated by E. Dennehy in Greyabbey, in Kildare town (Dennehy 2005). This tiny deposit of just 16g of the cremains of a young human juvenile appears to have been retained for some time after cremation and prior to deposition, as evidenced by the smoothened edges of the bone fragments (Lynch and O’Donnell 2007, 110).
It is also entirely possible that, if this is a pyre-site, that the two cremation deposits are not actually from the cremation that was undertaken here. They may be from another, early cremation, which would concur with the evidence that the cremains may have been retained for some time before deposition. In an Early Bronze Age cist cremation burial recently excavated by Tempus Archaeology in Ballysallagh (Dowling and Wilkinson 2006), a single worn piece of white cremated bone was recovered in the uppermost levels of the main cremation deposit (Lynch 2009). This single fragment of bone was from an earlier cremation (of an adult), had been retained by somebody, who perhaps kept it on their person, and was later deposited with the main cremains of another adult in the cist (ibid.). Burial is but one option for cremated bones (see Aspeborg 2005; Williams 2008). We should be careful making the modern assumption that disposal in a pit or cist was the ultimate important fate for the cremation. Perhaps scattering cremains on the surface was more important. Perhaps the cremains recovered from Caherdrinny 2 were ritually deposited here before the cremation of another individual. Suffice to say that the nature of cremations and their antiquity in the record ensure that we will always have more questions than answers.

The process of cremation is a highly complex issue in prehistoric contexts. Who was chosen for cremation and why? Where individuals cremated immediately after death or were the bodies processed in some fashion prior to cremation? Associated with this is whether complete fleshed bodies were being cremation or perhaps only certain body parts. It is also clear, from modern examples from India for example (Lynch and O’Donnell 2007, 105), that complex rituals may have been undertaken in association with the cremation process. In archaeological contexts there is a huge disparity in the contexts of recovery of human cremated bone. These can range from immediately visually-impressive cist burials to the apparently casual deposition of a handful of bone on the ground surface. We should not assume that one process is of greater significance than the other.

Conclusions

Two small quantities of cremated human bone were recovered from Caherdrinny 2. Technically, each deposit represents one adult individual. However, it is possible that the two deposits originated from a single cremated adult. The site is interpreted as a possible pyre-site. While these deposits may represent accidental deposition of cremains it is also possible that the deposition was deliberate. The fleshed bodies/body or body parts had been well cremated. The worn nature of the fragments in both deposits suggests they may have been retained for some time prior to deposition. It is also possible that the remains represent the ritual deposition of older cremated bone at a new cremation site.
References


