

# Eachtra Journal

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## Archaeological Excavation Report E243I - Kilshanny 2, Co. Cork

### Pits







# Archaeological Excavation Report

Pits

## Kilshanny 2

Co Cork

May 2011

Client: **Cork County Council**

Project: **N8 Fermoy to Mitchelstown**

E No: **E2431**

Excavation Director: **James Lyttleton**

Written by: **James Lyttleton and Nick Garland**

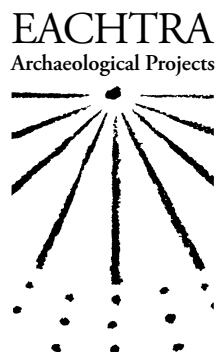




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Pits  
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**CORK**  
The Forge, Innishannon, Co. Cork  
tel: 021 4701616 | web: [www.eachtra.ie](http://www.eachtra.ie) | email: [info@eachtra.ie](mailto:info@eachtra.ie)

**GALWAY**  
Unit 10, Kilkerrin Park, Liosbain Industrial Estate, Galway  
tel: 091 763673 | web: [www.eachtra.ie](http://www.eachtra.ie) | email: [galway@eachtra.ie](mailto:galway@eachtra.ie)

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The Forge, Innishannon, Co Cork

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## Summary

The excavation of the site at Kilshanny 2 revealed five pits spread over two fields, labelled A and B. It is likely that these were post-medieval in date. A single radiocarbon date acquired for the site revealed a date for the Middle Bronze Age.

### Project Details

Road project name	N8 Fermoy to Mitchelstown
Site name	Kilshanny 2
Ministerial Order No.	A040
E no.	E2431
Site director	James Lyttleton
Townland	Kilshanny
Parish	Brigown
Barony	Condots and Clangibbon
OS Map Sheet No.	CO 10, 11, 19, 20
National Grid Reference	183350 112843
Chainage	12950-13050

## Acknowledgements

The senior archaeologist was John Tierney and the post-excavation managers were Penny Johnston and Jacinta Kiely. Administration of the project was by Choryna Kiely and Fiona Greene. Illustrations are by Ben Blakeman and Maurizio Toscano. Photographs are by John Sunderland, Hawkeye and Eachtra Archaeological Projects. Specialist analysis was carried out by Mary Dillon, Penny Johnston, Margaret Mac Carthy and the 14 Chrono Centre at Queen's University Belfast. The project was funded by the Irish Government under the National Development Plan 2007-2013 and was commissioned by Cork County Council on behalf of the National Roads Authority. The project archaeologist was Ken Hanley.

# 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, Ballinrush, Caherdrinny, Gortnahown, Ballybeg, Turbeagh, Glena-



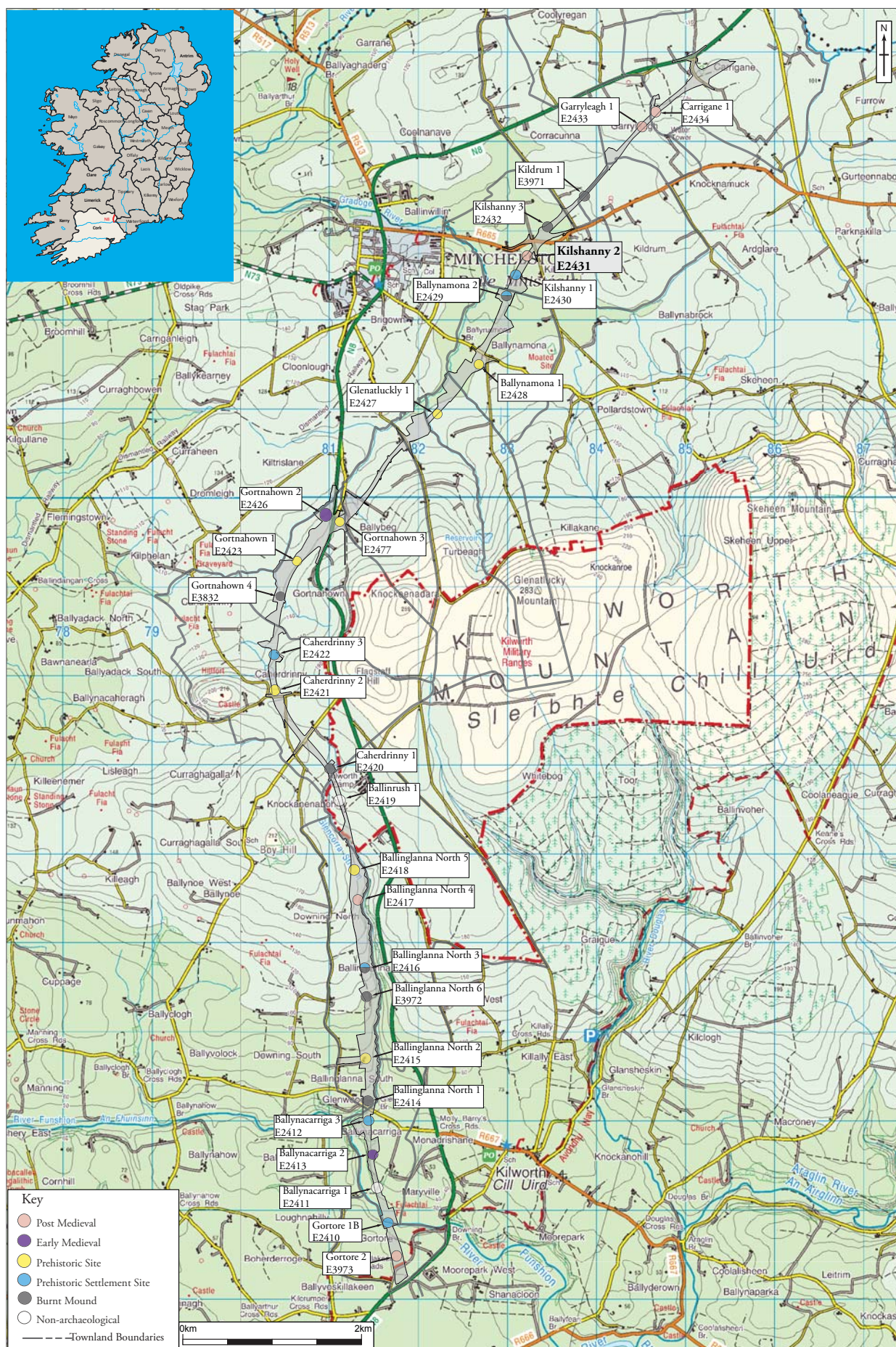


Figure 1: The route of the N8 Fermoy to Mitchelstown Bypass overlain on the Ordnance Survey Discovery Series map.



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 03E1138 (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.

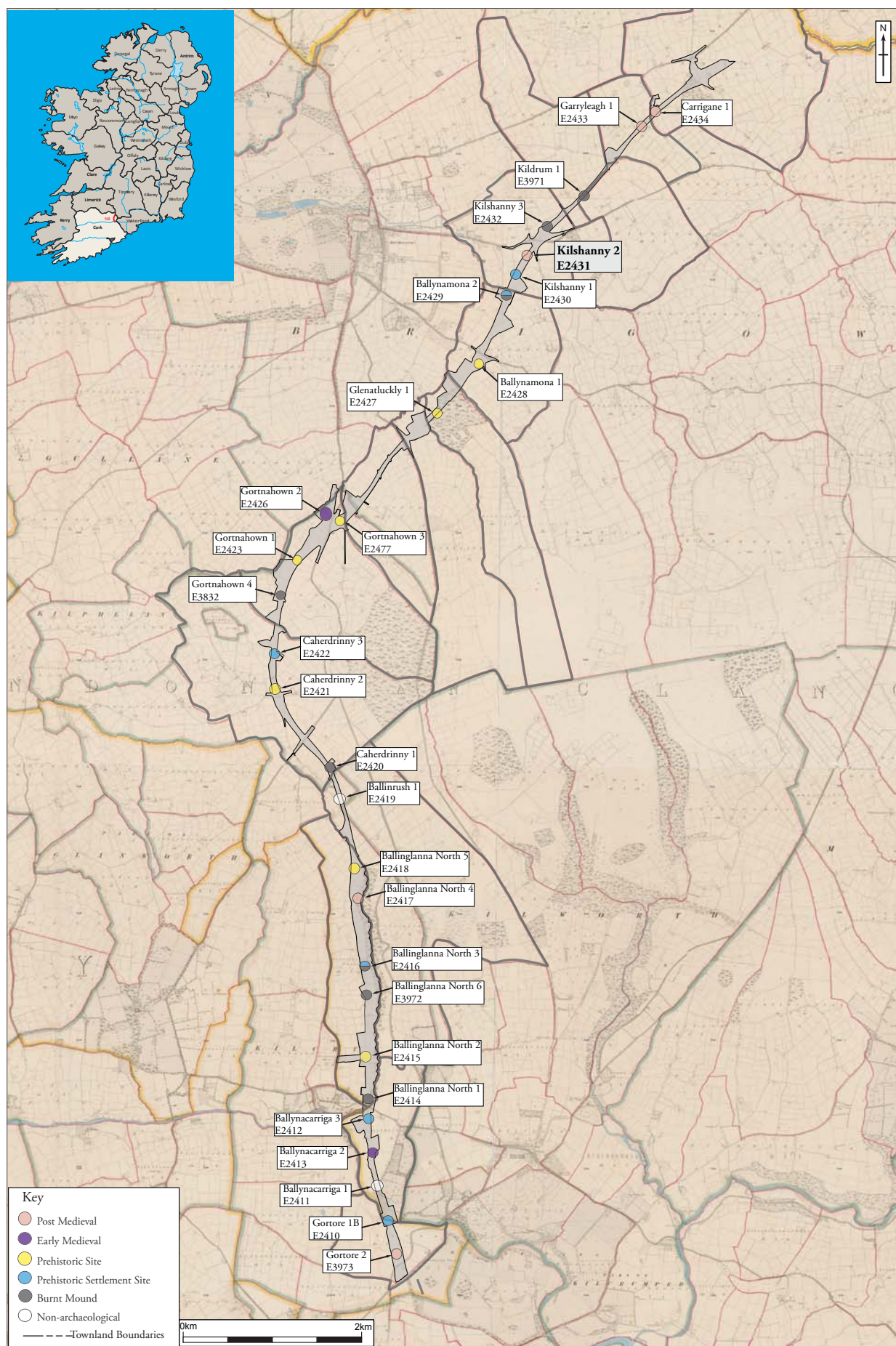


Figure 2: The route of the N8 Fermoy to Mitchelstown Bypass overlain on the first edition Ordnance Survey map CO019, 020, 027 and 028.



## 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 sub-divided 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 Ballynacarriaga 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. *Fulachta 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 Lisleagh I (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 Demesne 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, Ballynacarraiga 3 E2412, Gortnahown 1 E2423, Gortnahown 3 E2477 and Caherdrinny 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/early 1990s. 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

(CO019:30/01-05). 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 Glencorra 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. Cloghleagh 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 13<sup>th</sup>-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



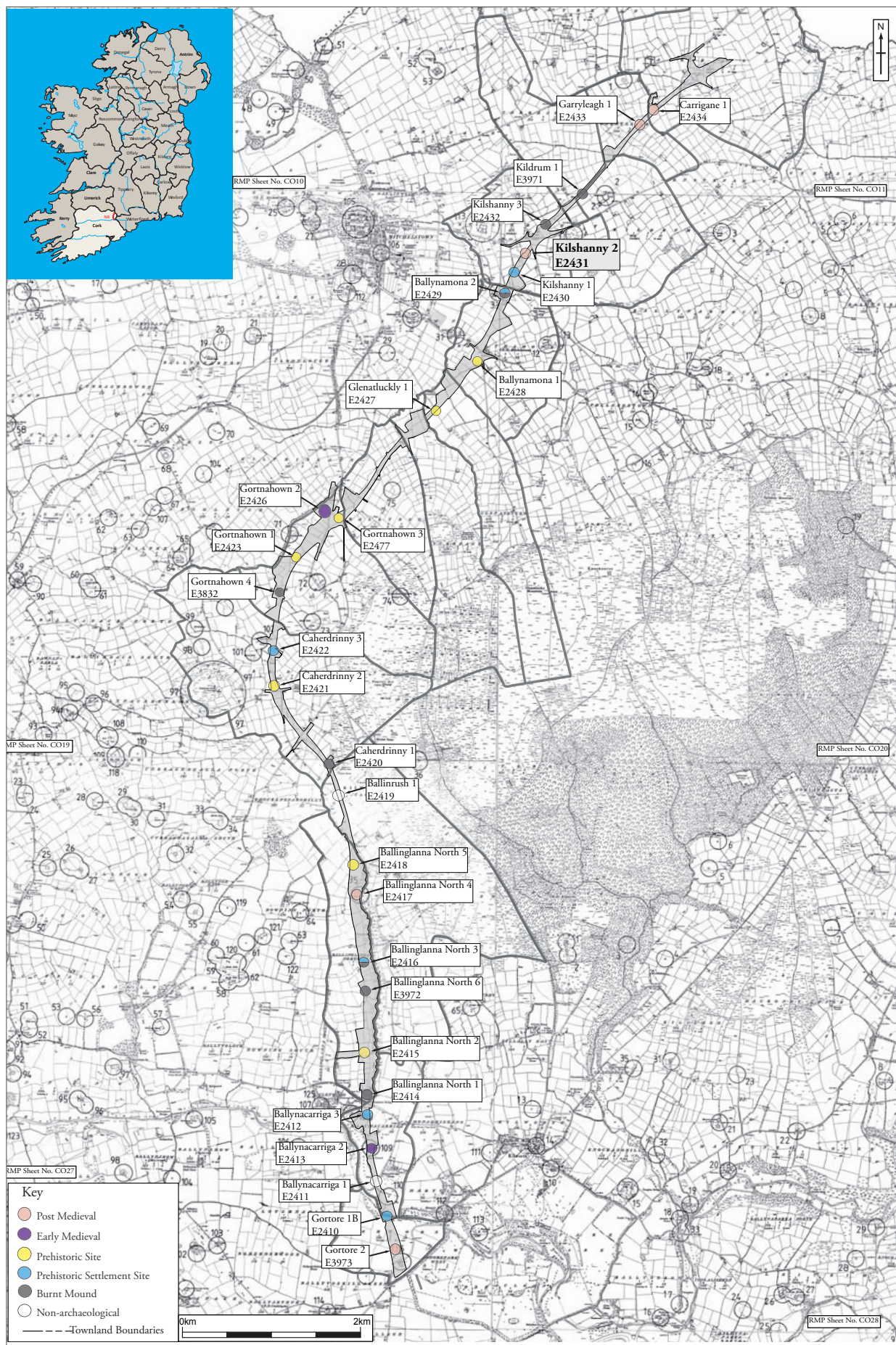


Figure 3: The route of the N8 Fermoy to Mitchelstown Bypass overlain on the RMP map CO019, CO20, CO27 and CO28. The map is based on the second edition Ordnance Survey maps.



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 at Kilshanny 2 lies east of the existing N8, east of Mitchelstown and south of the R665, the regional Mitchelstown to Ballyporeen road. The site was split into two fields, identified as A and B. Field A was located to the south of Field B and was relatively flat



Plate 1: On-going excavation at Kilshanny 2, Field A, with a view of the surrounding area (Photo: John Sunderland).

and well drained (see Plate 1). Field B was located further north, also in a flat area, but it was more prone to waterlogging.

## 6 Excavation methodology

The excavation was carried out under E-Number E2431 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.

The site was excavated over a period of 1 week, between 25/09/06 and 29/09/06 by a crew of two people. Only areas within the CPO were resolved. The full extent of the area of excavation measured 1199 m<sup>2</sup>. 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).

## 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). These features were all found within two areas of excavation (Field A and Field B).

### Field A

The archaeological remains in Field A included four pits (C.8, C.9, C.16 and C.27, see Figure 4).

The earliest phase of activity in Field A was represented by the two pits (C.8 and C.27), both were truncated by pit (C.9).

Pit (C.8) was oval in shape and measured 1.4 m in length, 1.2 m in width and 1.3 m in depth. It contained two fills (C.6 and C.7) from which a fragment of weathered cow





Plate 2: Mid-excavation view of pit (C.9) in Field A, from the south-east.



Plate 3: Post-excavation view of pits (C.8, C.9 and C.27) in Field A, from south-west.

humerus and a sherd of white glazed post-medieval pottery were recovered. This indicates a late date for this feature. The pit (C.27) was irregular in shape and measured 1.15 m in length, 0.95 m in width and 0.46 m in depth. It contained a single fill (C.19), from which charcoal was recovered. No *in situ* burning was observed on the cut of this pit indicating a dump of burnt material. Despite being the earliest phase of archaeology in this part of the site the information from these features suggests a post-medieval date. These pits were possibly used for waste disposal and dumping in recent times.

The irregular pit (C.9) was large in size, measuring 5 m in length, 4 m in width but was only 0.75 m in depth (Plates 2 and 3). It contained five deposits none of which were archaeological. This feature truncated both earlier pits (C.8 and C.27). Both of the truncated pits appear to be post-medieval in date and, as this is the case, it is likely that the truncating, irregular pit (C.9) was also post-medieval or modern in date. However, a radiocarbon date from hazel/alder charcoal retrieved from the fill of this pit returned a Middle Bronze Age radiocarbon date of cal BC 1126 – 944 (UB – 12987). It is likely that the dated charcoal from this pit fill was re-deposited, and therefore the Middle Bronze Age date from this site is probably unrepresentative of the archaeological activity that was found.

The one remaining pit from Field A (C.16), could not be attributed to any particular period or date. The pit (C.16) was circular in shape and measured 1.2 m in diameter and 0.55 m in depth (Plates 4 and 5). It contained six fills, none of which contained archaeological material. Its slightly undercut sides and bell shaped profile possibly indicates a natural hollow, in which the fills were naturally deposited.

## Field B

A single irregular pit (C.26) was found in Field B (Figure 4). It measured 2.6 m in length, 1 m in width and 0.6 m in depth (Plate 6). It contained six fills (C.20, C.21, C.22, C.23, C.24 and C.25). No archaeological material was recovered and there was no indication of the function or date of the pit. The irregular shape may indicate a naturally occurring hollow.

## Plant remains

The plant remains from this site were examined by Penny Johnston (Appendix 4). A total of seven samples from this site were examined. No plant remains, other than charcoal, were retrieved.

## Charcoal

The charcoal from this site was examined by Mary Dillon in advance of radiocarbon dating. Hazel/alder charcoal was discovered from a fill (C.18) of the pit (C.9).





Plate 4: Mid-excitation view of pit (C.16) in Field A, from west.

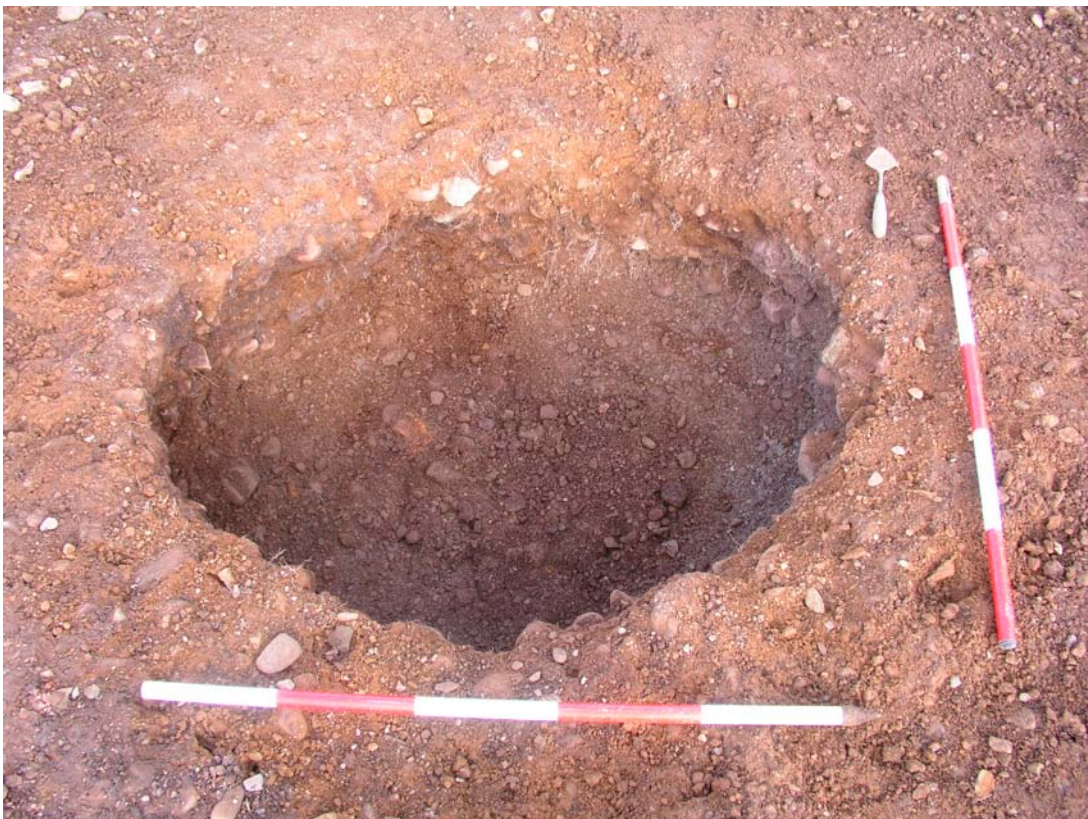


Plate 5: Post-excitation view of pit (C.16) in Field A, from east-south-east.





Plate 6: Post-excavation view of pit (C.26) in Field B, from south.

## Radiocarbon Dating

Radiocarbon analysis was carried out by the 14 Chrono Centre in Queen's University Belfast. Dates were calibrated using Calib Rev 5.0.2 (©1986-2005 M. Stuiver & P.J. Reimer) and in conjunction with Stuiver & Reimer 1993 and Reimer et al. 2004.

Lab code	Context	Material	Un-calibrated date	$\delta^{13}\text{C}$	2 sigma calibration	1 sigma calibration	Period
UB-12987	C.18, fill of pit C.9	Hazel/alder charcoal ( <i>Corylus/Alnus</i> )	2872 $\pm$ 23	-26.1	cal BC 1126-975 953-944	cal BC 1111-1101 1085-1064 1057-1006	Middle Bronze Age

Table 1: Radiocarbon dates from Kilshanny 2

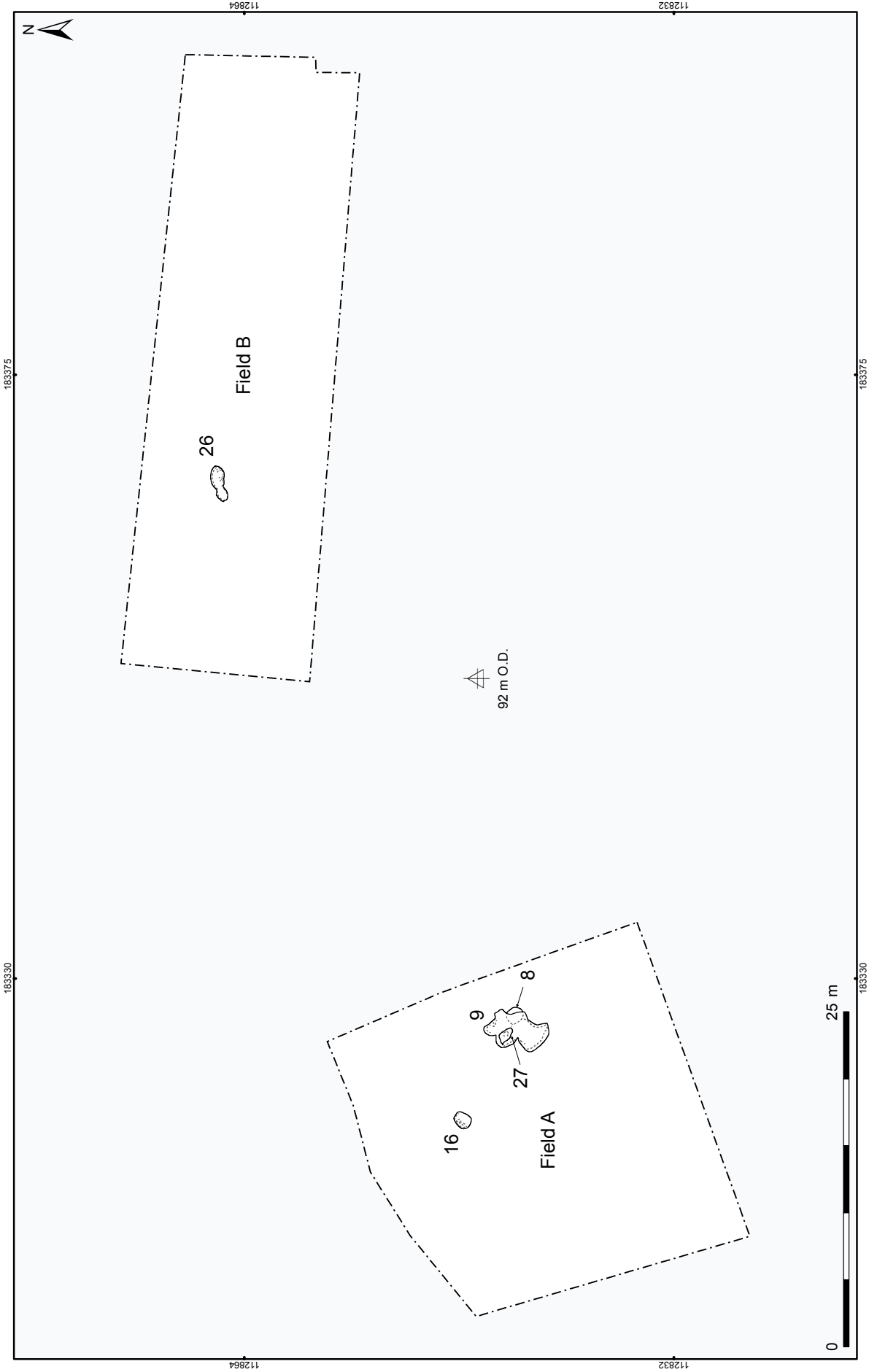


Figure 4: Post-excavation plan of Kilshanny 2 E2431.

## 8 Discussion

This site comprised five pits found in Fields A and B. The pits from Field A appear to be post-medieval in date (based on stratigraphic relationships and post-medieval pottery recovered from the fill of one pit). The pit from Field B was irregular and there is a possibility that it was natural in origin. There is no obvious evidence for the function of these pits and they are of limited archaeological significance.

The radiocarbon date from this site was one of 8 Middle Bronze Age radiocarbon dates returned from sites excavated along the route of the N8 Fermoy to Mitchelstown. Most of the radiocarbon dates were from the settlement site at Ballynamona 2, less than 1 km to the south of Kilshanny 2. Since the radiocarbon date from Kilshanny 2 appears to be from re-deposited material, the results suggest that the area around the townlands of Ballynamona and Kilshanny was perhaps a focus for Middle Bronze Age activity.

The paucity of Middle Bronze Age sites from this scheme is a stark contrast to the results from the road scheme immediately to the north, the N8 Cashel to Mitchelstown, where Middle Bronze Age sites were more common than activity for any other part of the Bronze Age recorded. A total of 16 Middle Bronze Age sites were excavated (McQuade et al. 2009, 84). Middle Bronze Age sites were also very common along the route of the gas pipeline to the west (Grogan et al. 2007, 22).

All of the Middle Bronze Age activity from the N8 Fermoy to Mitchelstown road scheme was found towards the northern part of the N8 Fermoy to Mitchelstown. This appears to mark an edge to Bronze Age/Middle Bronze Age occupation in this part of north Cork and south Tipperary since the first 19 km of the next stretch of the road, from Mitchelstown to Cashel, did not have evidence of Bronze Age activity. The suggested explanation for this is that the thin peaty soils just north of Kilshanny were unattractive for Bronze Age settlers (McQuade et al 2009, 84).

Site	Date	Site type
Kilshanny 2	cal BC 1126 - 944	Pits (charcoal probably re-deposited)
Ballynamona 2	cal BC 1380-1131	Pit within round house
Ballynamona 2	cal BC 1259-1046	Post-hole in arc of post-holes, possible structure 4 m to the north of a round house
Ballynamona 2	cal BC 1258-1029	Post-hole in round house
Ballynamona 2	cal BC 1393-1135	Charcoal from trough fill
Ballynamona 2	cal BC 1492-1316	Charcoal from burnt mound
Ballynamona 2	cal BC 1386-1212	Post-hole in round house
Caherdrinny 2	cal BC 1493-1394	Deposit of burnt bone

Table 2: Table of Middle Bronze Age radiocarbon dates from sites excavated along the route of the N8 Fermoy to Mitchelstown

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## Appendix 1 Stratigraphic Index

Context #	Context Type	Fill of	Filled with	Strat Above	Strat Below	Short Description	Area
1	Topsoil	n/a			2	Top soil of surrounding fields including areas G and H. Mid brown silt. Soft in compaction. Occasional to moderate inclusions of fine, medium and coarse-sized pebbles and small stones, sub-angular and sub-rounded. 0.35m in depth	A
2	Subsoil	n/a		1		Natural subsoil in areas A and B - some variations in composition. In area A it consists of a mid brownish orange pebbly and stony sand. Loose in compaction with frequent inclusions of fine, medium and coarse-sized pebbles. Sub-angular and sub-rounded. Also moderate inclusions of small and medium sized stones sub-angular and sub-rounded. Occasional inclusions of large stones - 0.2-0.3m in size. Sub-angular and sub-rounded. In area B the natural subsoil consists of two types: 1) mid brownish orange silty sand. Loose in compaction. Frequent inclusions of fine, medium and coarse-sized pebbles, sub-angular and sub-rounded. Also moderate inclusions of small and medium-sized stones, sub-angular and sub-rounded. 2) In area of Cut 26 mid grey, pebbly and stony sand. Loose in compaction. With frequent inclusions of fine, medium and coarse-sized pebbles, sub-angular and sub-rounded and occasional inclusions of sub-angular and sub-rounded small stones.	A,B
3	Fill	9		1	4	Dark yellowish-brown silty, pebbly sand. Moderate inclusions of sub-rounded medium and sub-angular coarse-sized pebbles. 0.25m in maximum depth.	A
4	Fill	9		3	5	Dark brown silt. Compact with occasional inclusions of coarse sized sub-angular pebbles. 0.3m in maximum depth.	A
5	Fill	9		4	18	Dark grey stony and sandy silt. Moderate inclusions of medium and coarse sized sub-rounded and sub-angular pebbles. Also moderate inclusions of small sized, sub-angular stones. 0.45m in depth.	A
6	Fill	8		9	7	Fill of pit 8, consisting of a dark black silt. Soft in compaction. Occasional inclusions of charcoal flecks, 1m in depth.	A
7	Fill	8		6	8	Fill of pit 8 consisting of mid grey clayey sand and pebbles. Weakly cemented. Occasional flecks of charcoal. 20cm in maximum depth.	A
8	Cut of Pit		6, 7	7	2	Oval pit, 1.4m in length and 1.2m in width. 1.3m in depth. Break of slope top gradual to sharp. Break of slope base gradual to sharp. Base is oval and concave in profile.	A
9	Cut of Pit		3, 4, 5, 17, 18	17	6, 27	Pit of irregular plan, 5m in length, 4m in width and 0.75m in depth. Break of slope top gradual to sharp. Break of slope base imperceptible. Base is irregular in plan and concave in profile.	A
10	Fill	16		1	11	Dark, greyish black clayey sand. Compact with occasional inclusions of medium sized rounded pebbles. 0.30m in length, 0.15m in width and 0.08m in depth.	A
11	Fill	16		10	14	Light grey clayey sand, loose in compaction. Moderate inclusions of small and medium sized angular stones. 0.30m in depth.	A

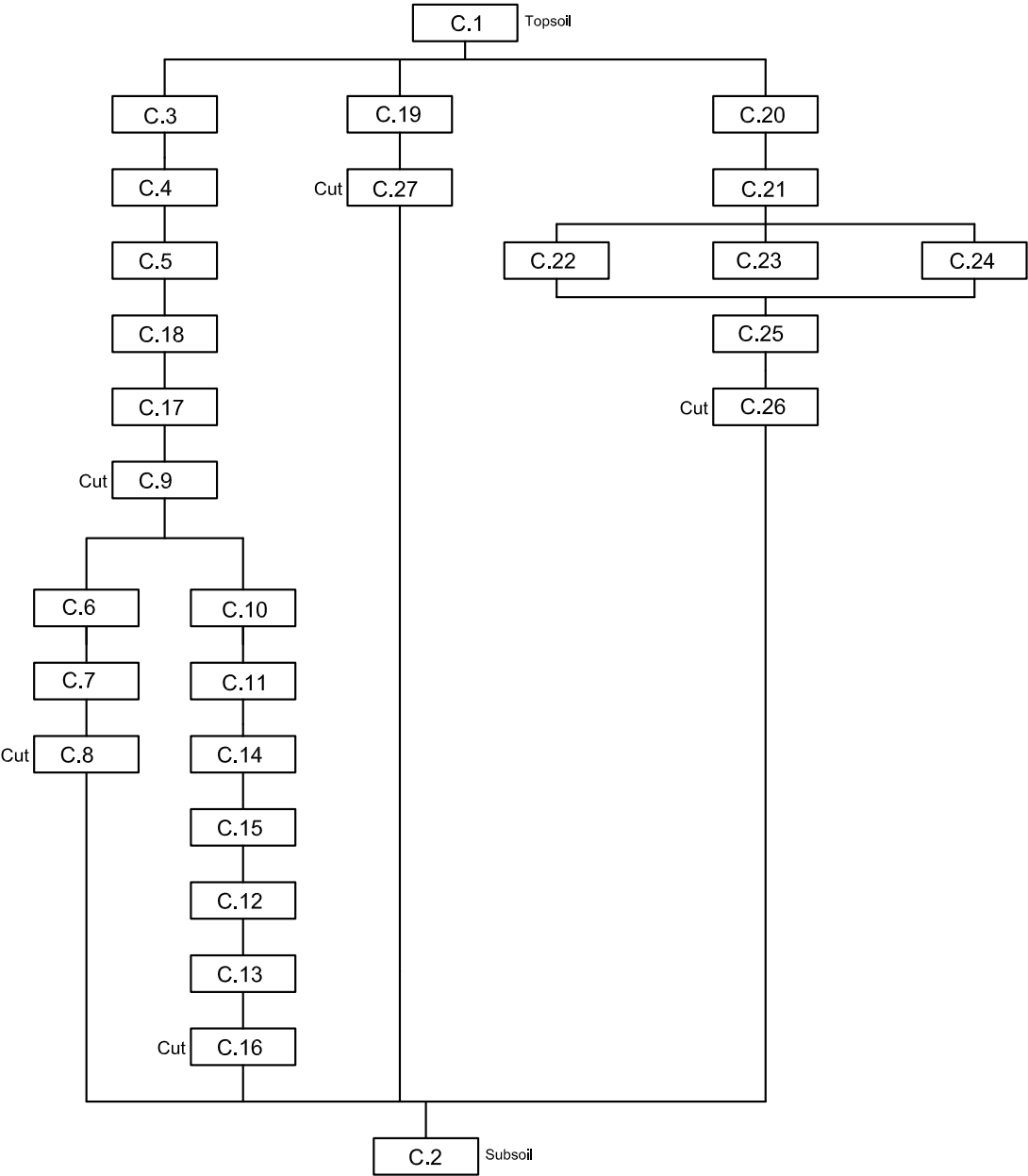


Context #	Context Type	Fill of	Filled with	Strat Above	Strat Below	Short Description	Area
12	Fill	16		15	13	Mid red sand. Loose in compaction.	A
13	Fill	16		12	16	Dark reddish brown sand and pebbles. Loose in compaction. Frequent occurrence of fine pebbles, angular, sub-angular and rounded. 0.42m in depth.	A
14	Fill	16		11	15	Dark red sandy pebbles and stones. Compact. Pebbles are fine in size and angular. Stones are small in size and angular. 0.2m in depth.	A
15	Fill	16		14	12	Light grey sandy pebbles. Compact. Pebbles are fine in size and are angular, sub-angular, sub-rounded and rounded. Stones are medium in size and angular. 0.20m in depth.	A
16	Cut		10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15	13	2	Circular pit with rounded corners. 1.30m in length, 1.20m in width and 0.55m in depth. Break of slope top is sharp. Slope of sides is vertical with a concave shape. Break of slope base is sharp. Base is circular in plan and flat in profile.	A
17	Fill	9		18	9	Mid pinkish grey clayey sand, weakly cemented. Moderate to frequent inclusions of small and medium-sized rounded stones. 0.6m in depth.	A
18	Fill	9		5	17	Mid orangish brown sand with moderate inclusions of coarse-sized pebbles (sub-rounded) and moderate inclusions of small stones (sub-rounded). 0.6m in depth.	A
19	Fill	27		9	27	Mid brownish grey sand and pebbles. Compact. Sub-angular, fine and medium sized pebbles. Occasional inclusions of small to medium sized fragments of charcoal as well as moderate inclusions of larger fragments of same. 0.7m in depth.	A
20	Fill	26		1	21	Mid brown clayey silt. Soft in compaction. 0.13m in depth.	B
21	Fill	26		20	22, 23	Dark grey black sand. Compact. 0.18cm in depth.	B
22	Fill	26		21	25	Light greyish sand. Compact with frequent inclusions of fine sized angular pebbles. 0.10m in depth	B
23	Fill	26		21	25	Light greyish clayey sand. Compact. 0.20m in depth.	B
24	Fill	26		25	26	Mid brown pebbly sand. Loose in compaction with frequent inclusions of fine-sized, angular pebbles. 0.20m in depth.	B
25	Fill	26		23	26	Dark black pebbles, stones and sand. Strongly cemented. Moderate inclusions of sub-angular stones. Approx. 0.35m in depth.	B
26	Cut 26		20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25	24	2	Irregular shape in plan. Rounded corners. 2.6m in length, 1m in width and 0.60m in depth. Break of slope top varies from gradual to sharp. Sides are mostly steep and concave in shape though west side bears a gentle slope, irregular in shape. Base of this cut is irregular in plan and both flat and concave in profile. Orientated E-W.	B
27	Cut		19	19	2	Irregular shape in plan. Rounded corners. Sharp break of slope top. Sides are steep and stepped. Sharp break of slope base. Shape of base is irregular in plan and in profile. Base is flat.	A



# Appendix 2 Site matrix

Kilshanny 2 Matrix



## Appendix 3 Groups and subgroups

### Group 1 Natural Deposits

This group describes the natural geological deposits identified across the two areas of excavation.

#### Subgroup {1001} Natural Topsoil

List of Contexts; C. 1

##### *Description*

This subgroup describes the layer of topsoil covering the archaeological features both in Field A and B. In both fields the topsoil was a mid brown silt with occasional sub-angular and sub-rounded pebbles and small stones.

#### Subgroup {1002} Natural Subsoil

List of Contexts; C. 2

##### *Description*

This subgroup describes the natural sub-soils that have formed across the area of excavation both in Field A and B. In Field A the natural sub-soil was a mid brownish orange pebbly/stony sand with frequent amounts of sub-angular and sub-rounded pebbles and stones. In Field B the subsoil was a mid brownish orange silty sand with frequent amounts of sub-angular and sub-rounded pebbles and moderate amounts of sub-angular and sub-rounded stones.

### Group 2 Primary Phase Of Pits In Field A

This group describes the primary phase of pits uncovered from Field A.

Plates: 100-0007, 100-0008, 100-0009, 100-0010, 100-0011, 100-0012, 100-0030, 100-0031, 100-0032, 100-0033, 100-0039.

List of Contexts; C. 6, 7, [8], 19, [27]

##### *Description*

This subgroup describes two pits that have been truncated by later pit [9] as described in group 3.

The smaller of the two pits [27] was located on the east side of Field A. It measured 1.15 m in length, 0.95 m in width and 0.46 m in depth. It was irregular in shape with steep and stepped sides and a flat base. It was filled by a mid brownish grey sand (19) with occasional amounts of small and medium pieces and moderate amounts of large pieces of charcoal.

The larger of the two pits [8], was located 0.7 m to the east of pit [27]. It measured 1.4 m in length, 1.2 m in width and 1.3 m in depth. It was oval in shape with steep sides and a concave base. It was filled by two deposits. The primary deposit was a mid grey clayey sand (7) with occasional flecks of charcoal inclusions. Animal bone was recovered from

this fill. The secondary deposit was a dark black silt (6) with occasional flecks and large pieces of charcoal inclusions. A single sherd of post-medieval white glazed pottery was recovered from this context.

#### *Interpretation*

These pits represent stratigraphically earlier cuts in this area due to the fact they have been truncated by a later cut [9]. However, despite these features representing the primary phase of features, the finds from the fills of these features suggest a fairly modern date. post-medieval pottery from the fill of pit [8] and well preserved animal bone from the fill of pit [27] indicate a recent period of backfilling of these pits. An abundance of charcoal inclusions but lack of in-situ burning from within the fill of pit [27] indicates a dump of burnt material that must be related to this modern date. The exact function of these pits, however, is difficult to determine.

### Group 3 Pits In Field A

This group describes two pits uncovered in Field A.

Plates: 100-0004, 100-0005, 100-0006, 100-0009, 100-0013, 100-0014, 100-0015, 100-0018, 100-0030, 100-0031, 100-0032, 100-0033, 100-0039.

List of Contexts; C. 3, 4, 5, 17, 18, [9], 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, [16].

#### *Description*

This subgroup describes two pits from Field A that cannot be related to the same period as the pits described in group 2.

The smaller of the two pits [16] was located towards the north of Field A. It measured 1.3 m in length, 1.2 m in width and 0.55 m in depth. It was circular in shape with vertical sides and a flat base. It was filled by six deposits. These fills ranged from a light grey to a dark reddish brown in colour, and from a clayey sand to sandy pebbles in composition. No finds were recovered from any of these fills.

The larger of the two pits [9] was located 6 m to the south. It measured 5 m in length, 4 m in width and 0.75 m in depth. It was irregular in shape, had gently to steeply sloping sides and a concave base. It was filled by 5 deposits. These fills ranged from a dark yellowish brown to a mid pinkish grey in colour and from a silty sand to a clayey sand in composition. No finds were recovered from the fills of this pit. This pit truncated the earlier phase of pits, [8] and [27], as described in group 2.

#### *Interpretation*

These features represent two irregular pits uncovered in Field A. No archaeological evidence was recovered from the fill of either of these pits making their function and date difficult to determine. While Pit [9] does truncate the two pits described in Group 2 indicating a more recent date for its construction, a period of time cannot be easily attributed to pit [16]. However, Pit [16] was bell shaped in section and therefore may represent a natural hollow, in which the fills have been naturally deposited.

## Group 4 Pit In Field B

This group describes the single pit uncovered in Field B.

Plates: 100-0019, 100-0020, 100-0040.

List of Contexts; C. 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, [26].

### *Description*

This subgroup describes the only feature uncovered in Field B. It was located to the west end of this field. It measured 2.6 m in length, 1 m in width and 0.6 m in depth. It was irregular in shape with moderately steep sides and a flat to concave base. It was filled by six deposits. These fills ranged from light grey to dark black in colour and from a clayey silt to a pebbly sand in composition. No finds were recovered from these deposits.

### *Interpretation*

This pit represents the only feature uncovered in Field B. The lack of archaeological evidence from within any of the fills of this pit makes a function or period of use difficult to determine for this feature. While fill (25) represented a dark black stony layer, no charcoal was observed within this fill to indicate any human interference.

## Appendix 4 Plant remains

By Penny Johnston

### Introduction

This report presents the results of plant remains analysis from Kilshanny 2, Co. Cork (E2431). The site comprised five irregular pits, possibly post-medieval in date.

### 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 total of seven samples 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.

Sample	Context	Charcoal	Seeds	% scanned
1	6	Absent	Absent	100
4	12	Low	Absent	100
7	10	Low	Absent	100
10	5	Absent	Absent	100
12	18	Medium	Absent	100
13	19	High	Absent	100
19	9	High	Absent	100

Table 1: Scanned samples from Kilshanny 2, Co. Cork (E2431)

## References

Pearsall, D. 2000 *Paleoethnobotany: a Handbook of Procedures*. New York, Academic Press.