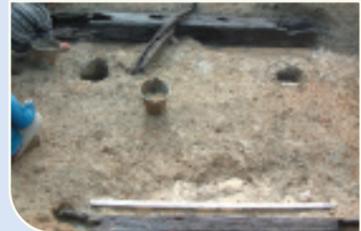


what we found

in brief:

Some of the findings in and between **Enniscorthy to Clonroche**.



1. Timber base plates

Timber base plates of the entrance structure for the **Coolamurphy** moated site. (Photo Valerie J Keeley Ltd.)



2. Copper-alloy dividers

Detail of copper-alloy dividers found in a pit within the **Coolamurphy** moated site. (Photo Valerie J Keeley Ltd.)



3. Medieval pottery

Rimsherd of medieval pottery vessel found in the ditch of the **Coolamurphy** moated site.



4. Fulacht fiadh

A trough from the *fulacht fiadh* in **Coolamurphy**. The reddened soil in the background marks the location of the hearth.

background



Aerial view of enclosure ditches in the vicinity of **Rosdroit Church** during excavation.

The N30 Enniscorthy to Clonroche scheme is located in County Wexford approximately 3km west of Enniscorthy Town.

The total length of the scheme is 5.3km, and the associated archaeological works were carried out by **Archaeological Development Services Ltd.**, and **Valerie J. Keeley Ltd.**, on behalf of the **National Roads Authority** and **Wexford County Council**.

The scheme runs through rich agricultural land that is particularly suitable for tillage crops. This area is situated between 50-60m above sea level and is drained by the Boro River, a tributary of the River Slaney. The foothills of the Blackstairs Mountains rise up to the north of the scheme. Archaeologically this area is notable for the large number of surviving

ringforts (defended farmsteads dating between the 5th and 11th-centuries AD), which are mostly found on the higher land to the west and north. There are also many monuments dating to the period of the expansion of the Norman colony in the 13th and 14th-centuries. A small number of Bronze Age burials and *fulachta fiadh* are evidence for prehistoric settlement in this area.

Initial archaeological investigation to assess the impact of this scheme on the archaeological heritage involved the compilation of a desk-based archaeological assessment and a walkover survey. One known archaeological site, a medieval church (Rosdroit Church) was identified that lay in close proximity to the scheme. Subsequently, **Archaeological Development Services Ltd.**, carried out a programme of test excavation along the length of the scheme.

A total of ten previously unknown sites of archaeological potential were identified as a result of this work. **Valerie J. Keeley Ltd.**, undertook the excavation of these ten sites in 2004 and to date preliminary analysis of the excavation results has been carried out. This work is still ongoing.

The sites uncovered span a significant period of County Wexford's history and prehistory, dating from as recently as the eighteenth century and as far back as several thousand years BC.

N30 ENNISCORTHY TO CLONROCHE SCHEME, County Wexford



N30 ENNISCORTHY TO CLONROCHE SCHEME, County Wexford



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For more information please contact:

Archaeology Section
National Roads Authority
St. Martins House
Waterloo Road, Dublin 4

Tel: +353 | 660 2511
Fax: +353 | 668 0009
Email: info@nra.ie
Web: www.nra.ie



archaeological DISCOVERIES

front cover images

LEFT: An archaeologist recording the metalworking site in **Coolamurphy**.

RIGHT: Excavating stake-holes of probable prehistoric date in the vicinity of **Rosdroit Church**. The 18th-century St. Peter's parish church is visible in the background.

MIDDLE TOP: Detail of copper-alloy dividers found in a pit within the **Coolamurphy** moated site. (Photo Valerie J Keeley Ltd.)

MIDDLE LEFT BOTTOM: Rimsherd of medieval pottery vessel found in the ditch of the **Coolamurphy** moated site.

MIDDLE RIGHT BOTTOM: Timber base plates of the entrance structure for the **Coolamurphy** moated site. (Photo Valerie J Keeley Ltd.)



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fulacht fiadh

coolamurry townland

The earliest site identified, located at the base of a low rise in the townland of **Coolamurry**, is a *Fulacht fiadh* or Bronze Age cooking place. Here, hot stones were used to boil water.

possible kiln with two flues. A cobbled surface lay to the east, which may have been a pathway or work surface for the kiln. Although at present the date of this activity is unknown it is possible that it is contemporary with the adjacent *fulacht fiadh* and that hot water was required for whatever activity was being carried out upslope. A sherd of prehistoric pottery was found associated with the possible kiln.



A trough from the *fulacht fiadh* in **Coolamurry**. The reddened soil in the background marks the location of the hearth. Stones heated in the hearth could easily have been rolled into the trough to heat the water.

Fulachta fiadh typically consist of one or more wood, stone or clay-lined troughs to hold water; hearths to heat stones, and low mounds of discarded burnt and broken stone. It is thought that these sites were used for cooking meat; in folklore *fulachta fiadh* are associated with hunting exploits of Fionn and the Fianna. However, it is quite possible that the hot water was used for a variety of other activities, such as bathing, brewing, textile production, leather working and so on. Located close by and upslope of this *fulacht fiadh* is an area of possible industrial activity. A curvilinear slot-trench partially enclosed a hearth and

vicinity of rossdroit church



Excavating stake-holes of probable prehistoric date in the vicinity of **Rossdroit Church**. The 18th-century St. Peter's parish church is visible in the background.

The remains of a medieval church stand in the graveyard of St. Peter's Church (built 1795), the Church of Ireland parish church of **Rossdroit**.

Excavations to the north of the church and graveyard revealed at least three phases of human activity. The earliest phase of activity was represented by four groups of post-holes representing the remains of wooden structures possibly dating to the prehistoric period. The lack of finds from these structures makes it difficult to make an immediate estimation of date, however, further specialist analysis of soil and charcoal

samples collected during excavation may throw light on their date. Further analysis may also clarify the function of all four structures. The second phase of activity was represented by a ditch over 120m in length; this ditch probably demarcated the extent of Rossdroit church lands in the medieval period. Several other ditches have also been uncovered that represent old field boundaries. One of these ditches underlay the remains of a probable 18th-century house which consisted of a stone wall footing enclosing a beaten earth floor. This house would have fronted onto the Enniscorthy-Clonroche road.



Recording the foundations of a probable 18th-century house across the road from **Rossdroit Church**.

moated site

coolamurry townland

A moated site dating to the Anglo-Norman period was discovered in **Coolamurry** townland. This site consisted of a large perimeter ditch (3-4m wide) enclosing a rectangular area (c. 35 x 27m).

In their lifetime these large ditches would have been filled with water from a nearby stream and along with an internal bank and palisade (closely-set upright posts) would have enclosed the settlement of a single family unit. The enclosed area was divided into almost two equal halves by a shallow ditch, it is thought that

the ditch separated the living area from the area which may have been used for livestock and other farming activities. Shallow trenches uncovered in the living area suggest that the house would have been constructed on large timber base plates. Large worked timbers uncovered in the base of the ditch represent the remains of the entrance to the site; it is possible that this entrance would originally have been by way of a drawbridge. A cobbled path led from the entrance to the south-western corner of the site. Locally made medieval pottery has been recovered from the ditch and internal habitation area, and other finds include a possible copper coin, a copper-alloy dividers and an object of twisted lead of unknown function.



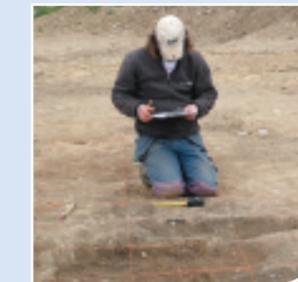
Timber base plates of the entrance structure for the **Coolamurry** moated site. (Photo Valerie J Keeley Ltd.)



Aerial view of **Coolamurry** moated site during excavation.

metalworking site

coolamurry townland



An archaeologist recording the metalworking site in **Coolamurry**.

Another site discovered in **Coolamurry** was an iron-working site, which consisted of three bowl-shaped furnaces containing material associated with metalworking. One of the furnaces was partially enclosed by a trench, which may be the remains of a foundation trench for a wall or windbreak. Elsewhere on the site spreads of soil containing iron slag appear to be consistent with material discarded subsequent to metalworking activity. Over 76kg of metal slag was recovered from the site.

post-medieval settlement

templescoby townland

A post-medieval settlement site that may be associated with structures marked on the first edition Ordnance Survey map (1841) was discovered in **Templescoby**. This consisted of the remains of a possible house and related field boundaries. In addition, several features have been identified along the scheme that relate to post-medieval agricultural practices and woodland clearance activity.



Aerial view of the enclosure ditches in the vicinity of **Rossdroit Church**. The 18th-century St. Peter's parish church is visible in the background. (Photo Valerie J Keeley Ltd.)