Archaeological investigations were carried out on the M1 Dundalk Western Bypass from 2002-2005.

The work was undertaken by Irish Archaeological Consultancy Ltd., and Aegis Archaeology Ltd., on behalf of the National Roads Authority and Louth County Council. The route is located on low, undulating land at the head of Dundalk harbour overlooked by Slieve Gullion, the Gap of the North and the Cooley Mountains.

Due to the intensity of recent agricultural land use around Dundalk, there were relatively few recorded monuments in the immediate area. The nearby Cooley peninsula has a spectacular and visible archaeological heritage.

1. Early medieval brooch
   6th-7th century AD penannular brooch from Newtownbalregan. (Photo StudioLab)

2. Tateetra souterrain
   Detail of the Tateetra souterrain northern galleries. Note the large passage side and the (removed) capstones.

3. Early medieval altar
   Early medieval altar reused as a capstone in the Tateetra souterrain.

4. Cut ditches
   Large cut showing multiple interments and pottery vessel at Sars More.

5. Souterrain
   Intact souterrain gallery uncovered at Newtownbalregan. (Photo StudioLab)
The main enclosure was 90m across the motte consisted of a series of 14th-century defensive structures. entrance, harbour, but in the souterrain.

The Balregan henge was part of a very large prehistoric cemetery. and a cist-barrow sites comprised a henge complex with a early medieval. 'altar', containing a life-size, granite, animal sculpture, a bronze alloy penannular brooch and a series of highly decorated glass beads were found. The site also contained a 18m diameter burnt and may therefore represent a funeral ritual cleared. The 'bailey' area was roughly 80m across and included a large stone on edge exposing shallow cups and two carved stones worked with emergency lighting alcove. From this point the souterrain would have been much closer to the sea.

Aerial view of main enclosure at Balriggan showing entrance, entrance way and four stone cairns. (Photo StudioLab)

Excavations of 19th-century penannular brooch at Balriggan. (Photo StudioLab)

Oxidized red debris encircled settlement was uncovered at Balriggan. The main enclosure was 90m across and the ringfort area containing c. 45m long souterrain under excavation. (Photo StudioLab)

John Tate's monastic cist containing multiple interments. These stones had been sourced for use in the souterrain. Huge, twisted bronze pins, a probable dagger were also of early medieval date. The first is a possible altar marked with five weathered stones were split and laid out next to each other. One piece had a square face and the (removed) passage size and the (removed) corbelled chambers with associated airshafts, a strong feature in the Bronze Age was uncovered on site. Excavations at Donaghmore. Aerial view of the mass grave cist, totalling 45m long souterrain under excavation. (Photo StudioLab)

The Battle of Faughart, where Edward Bruce was killed, in AD 1318. Ties in with the unrest of the Bruce Invasions, where attacks came down from the north. Fort Hill, totalling 45m long souterrain under excavation. (Photo StudioLab)

In terms of this basin a subsidiary ringfort was excavated, outside the entrance chamber. The outer entrance area was part of a monumental structure. From this point the souterrain would have been much closer to the sea.

Excavations of Donaghmore. Aerial view of the mass grave cist, totalling 45m long souterrain under excavation. (Photo StudioLab)

Donaghmore. Aerial view of the mass grave cist, totalling 45m long souterrain under excavation. (Photo StudioLab)

The main enclosure was 90m across and the ringfort area containing c. 45m long souterrain under excavation. (Photo StudioLab)