**background**

The M8 Rathcormac/Fermoy Bypass is 17.5 km long and extends from the north end of the new N8 Glanmire-Watergrasshill Bypass, passing to the west of Rathcormac and to the east of Fermoy, tying into the existing M8 Cork-Oughterard road at Knockdrum. Extensive archaeological investigations were carried out in pre-construction by Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd (ACS Ltd) on behalf of the National Roads Authority and Cork County Council. During construction, additional investigations were carried out by Eachtra Archaeological Projects on behalf of the construction company Direct Roads (Fermoy) Ltd. A combined total of 50 sites were archaeologically investigated.

**late glacial/early holocene**

Giant Irish Deer

At Ballyoran, in an area of fen bog nestled between the summits of Corrin and Ballyoran, the remains of six adult male Giant Irish Deer (Megaloceros giganteus) were discovered. They were buried about 1.5 m into soft clay, underlying peat. The clay was formed by a lake that existed towards the end of the last ice age. The Giant Irish Deer remains were dated to 11139 – 10962 BC. These magnificent creatures (now extinct) would have been almost 6.5 feet high (1.98 m), with antlers spanning about 6 feet wide (1.82 m). Nearby, in the overlying bog, a separate piece of Giant Irish Deer antler was found, with tool chop marks. It was found immediately beneath a deposit of wood (Willow/Poplar), which was dated to 8280 – 7965 BC, making it possibly the oldest evidence of human activity in Munster!

**in brief:**

1. Neolithic pottery
   Western Neolithic pottery uncovered during excavations at Curraghprevin.
   (Photo ACS Ltd)

2. Corn-drying kiln
   Early medieval corn-drying kiln uncovered at Scartbarry.
   (Photo ACS Ltd)

3. Kiln
   Post-medieval kiln uncovered at Lisnagar Demesne.
   (Photo ACS Ltd)

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At Curraghprevin, investigations revealed a spread of hearths and three associated pits. A series of isolated pits were revealed compelling evidence that the site may have been used as a cooking site or a burning area.

The ditch’s width is one of the earliest excavated in County Cork. It was dated to 1130 – 830 BC. At Fermona, two entranceways were identified along a retaining wall and a sub-circular trough lined with five oak timber planks. Two large planks measuring 0.50 m by 2 m and 0.70 m by 2 m were placed horizontally filling the base of this trough. The site was dated to 1030 – 810 BC.

The main kiln is thought to date to the 17th/18th century. Externally, to the north-east, a third kiln (of later date) was built. A stoke-hole was constructed to the south-west to provide heat. The kiln house was elevated on a platform of stone and mud walls, with two entrances. It had an internal hearth towards the end of the structure, a common design in cherry hearth and internal room settings.

At Burnacott, the shape of the house was polygonal, with a large sub-circular pit, about 7.5 m in diameter and 3.8 m deep. A stoke-hole was constructed to the south-west to provide heat. The kiln house was elevated on a platform of stone and mud walls, with two entrances. It had an internal hearth towards the end of the structure, a common design in cherry hearth and internal room settings.

At Ballybrowney Lower, an early medieval enclosure was located to the north of an upstanding furnace. This site was dated to AD 710 – 1020. At Gneau, a parallel site of similar construction wasexcavated. The site was dated to AD 350 – 750. At Ballybrowney, the ditch was dated to AD 430 – 800.

At Mondaniel, an early medieval enclosure was located to the north of an upstanding furnace. This site was dated to AD 690 – 820. A later enclosure. Radiocarbon dates this ditch at AD 490 – 820.

At Post-medieval kiln uncovered at Mondaniel. The main purpose of this type of kiln is to process a large scale, rectangular kiln about 7.5 m in diameter and 3.8 m deep. A stoke-hole was constructed to the south-west to provide heat. The kiln house was elevated on a platform of stone and mud walls, with two entrances. It had an internal hearth towards the end of the structure, a common design in cherry hearth and internal room settings.

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