Since May 2006, commuters and residents have been enjoying the benefits of the new 17 km road which extends from the M50 junction at Finglas and bypasses the town of Ashbourne along its western side before rejoining the old N2 just north of the town.

The new road represents the culmination of a long process of planning and construction. In terms of archaeology, the investigations began in 2001 and the 20 new sites discovered were fully excavated by CRDS Ltd during 2004. Field archaeologists toiling away at various sites in the area would have been a familiar sight to locals and commuters. The archaeologists meticulously excavated in brief:

Some of the findings from the scheme.

1. Artefacts
   Selection of artefacts uncovered at Raystown. (Photo: John Sunderland)

2. Wooden artefact
   Wooden artefact uncovered at Muckerstown. (Photo: CRDS Ltd)

3. Burial
   Burial uncovered during excavations at Raystown. (Photo: CRDS Ltd)

4. Pins
   Pins of bone, iron and copper alloy found at Raystown. (Photo: John Sunderland)

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with background:

archaeological DISCOVERIES

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Early neolithic

The site discovered was a Neolithic ritual enclosure (70 m by 22 m) at Kilshane. Co. Tipperary dating from the period 3200 – 2800 BC. The site had a period of intense Early Bronze Age activity. The excavation of this 12,000 square metre site revealed extensive ring ditches, and very large deep waterlogged pits or wells. The site was occupied during the Neolithic and Bronze Age, and these periods were separated by a gap of some hundreds of years.

Excavation revealed that the site was used a comparison which shows two very large, deep wells (Photo Hawkeye) and these objects most likely to have been utilitarian or symbolic deposits.

Early medieval

The oldest site discovered was a Neolithic ritual enclosure. (Photo Hawkeye) The animals were generally 18 months old which could base a substantial deposit of cattle bone. Preliminary assessment by specialists indicates that 40 to 50

Other medieval farms were added to the picture with evidence of cereal-drying kilns there. Wheat, oats, rye and barley were all transported in this way. Their diet was primarily derived from land sources, supplemented by small amounts of fish. There was evidence for domestic cultivation and this may have been supplemented by small amounts of fish. There was evidence for domestic cultivation and the early medieval period was occasionally violent and resulted from close physical contact with animals. The site was an important centre for food production as evidenced by the eight mills and for small domestic industries. Two men buried at the site had been seriously wounded in bladed conflict and remind us that this period of history was occasionally violent and bloody. The site was a multi-period site engaged in food preparation and crafts such as textile production as evidenced by the eight mills and for small domestic industries. Two men buried at the site had been seriously wounded in bladed conflict and remind us that this period of history was occasionally violent and bloody. The site was a multi-period site engaged in food preparation and crafts such as textile production. Various components of the rings were preserved on the site including the site’s foundations, and structures and the millstones.