

# what we found

## in brief:

Some of the findings in and around Youghal.



### 1. Fulacht fiadh

Burnt spread from exposed *fulacht fiadh* uncovered at **Muckridge**. (Photo A.C.S. Ltd.)



### 2. Corn-drying kiln

Corn-drying kiln revealed during the excavation of an early medieval enclosure at **Ballynacarriga**. (Photo A.C.S. Ltd.)



### 3. Early medieval enclosure

Aerial view of early medieval enclosure uncovered at **Ballynacarriga**. (Photo A.C.S. Ltd.)



### 4. Circular house

Circular house within the main early medieval enclosure uncovered at **Ballynacarriga**. (Photo A.C.S. Ltd.)

# background

The 6km route of the N25 Youghal Bypass was archaeologically investigated during 2001 and 2002.

Site investigations involved pre-development testing in advance of construction and archaeological monitoring of topsoil stripping during construction.

A total of 35 sites were investigated, ranging in date from the Early Bronze Age to the early modern period. The work was carried out by **Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd.**, (A.C.S. Ltd.) on behalf of the **National Roads Authority** and **Cork County Council**.



Aerial view of early medieval enclosure uncovered at **Ballynacarriga**. (Photo A.C.S. Ltd.)

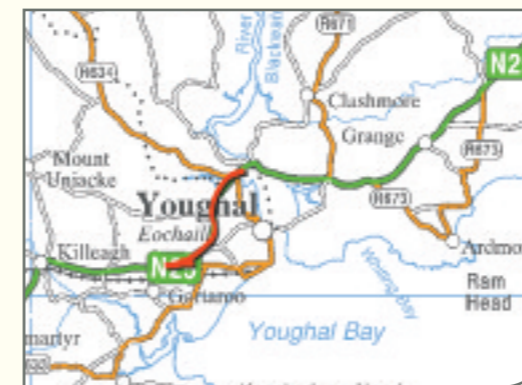


Aerial view of early medieval enclosure uncovered at **Ballynacarriga**. (Photo A.C.S. Ltd.)

N25 YOUGHAL BYPASS,  
County Cork



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# archaeological DISCOVERIES

## front cover images

LEFT: Corn-drying kiln revealed during the excavation of an early medieval enclosure at **Ballynacarriga**. (Photo A.C.S. Ltd.)  
RIGHT: Circular house within the main early medieval enclosure uncovered at **Ballynacarriga**. (Photo A.C.S. Ltd.)  
MIDDLE TOP: Aerial view of early medieval enclosure uncovered at **Ballynacarriga**. (Photo A.C.S. Ltd.)  
MIDDLE BOTTOM: Trace outlined of Iron Age structure uncovered at **Muckridge**. (Photo A.C.S. Ltd.)



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# bronze age

## Fulachta fíadh



Burnt spread from exposed *fulachta fíadh* uncovered at **Muckridge**. (Photo A.C.S. Ltd.)

Three *fulachta fíadh* were uncovered along the route. One particularly early example from **Muckridge** has been dated to the transitional period between the Late Neolithic and the Early Bronze Age period (c. 2620 BC-2280 BC). This site was located to the west of the Blackwater River and just north of **Youghal** town. The excavation revealed two large timber-lined troughs in association with an apparently random array of stake-holes. Another example from **Clashadunna East**, dated to 1130-1030 BC, revealed three circular stake-holes cut into the base of the trough. A single fragment of flint was recovered from this site. Another *fulachta fíadh*, dated to 940-860 BC, was excavated in the townland of **Propoge**. This consisted of a thin spread of burnt stone material and an unlined circular trough.

## Habitation sites



Dense cluster of Bronze Age settlement features uncovered at **Ballyvergan West** after excavation. (Photo A.C.S. Ltd.)

A cluster of Bronze Age activity was uncovered at **Ballyvergan West**, nestled between the River Blackwater and Womagh River, 2km to the east of **Youghal** town. The main area of activity centred on an unenclosed area measuring 10m x 10m, which contained a large number of pits, stake-holes and post-holes. These features represented the remains of several timber-built structures (including at least one oval house structure), fence lines and a possible lean-to structure. These secondary structures are thought to have been used as animal huts with a surrounding post-and-wattle fence. The post and stake-holes were found in association with a high concentration of hearths and large refuse pits, which

# bronze age

produced courseware pottery, whetstones, rubbing stones, fragments of saddle querns, burnt bone and burnt hazelnut shells. The evidence suggests that the site was domestic in nature and the presence of rubbing stones and quern stones indicate that its inhabitants practised arable farming. This substantial Bronze Age settlement site has been radiocarbon-dated to 1190-1070 BC.

To the south-east of the main settlement was a large structure (11m in diameter), which survived as a sub-circular ring of 20 post-holes. Internally, two shallow pits were uncovered. It was not clear if the structure was roofed or whether it was contemporary with the main settlement. A heavily corroded iron object and a piece of copper-alloy were found, along with sherds of prehistoric pottery in a later drainage ditch.

## Miscellaneous Bronze Age features

In the townland of **Propoge**, a small sub-circular pit with a large, flat stone at the centre of the base was uncovered. This was dated to 2140-1870 BC. The pit produced the partial base of an upturned prehistoric pottery vessel believed to be a cooking pot. There was no evidence of cremated bone in the pit. The function of the pit is unclear but it is considered likely that the pit was used as a temporary cooking pit. Two further pits were identified at **Ballyvergan West** containing small amounts of charcoal with sub-angular, heat-shattered stones. Both pits have been tentatively interpreted as cooking pits. Similar pits, possibly used for cooking, were also discovered at **Clashadunna East**. All of these sites represent isolated, single event activity.

# iron age

## Settlement

Archaeological investigations in **Muckridge** revealed an oval-shaped arrangement of ten post-holes, the surviving imprint of what would have been a timber-built structure measuring 6m x 6m. A hearth located at the centre of the structure consisted of a circular, bowl-shaped cut, which contained a fragment of blue glass bead. Next to the hearth was an oval, stone-lined storage pit. Several pits and a hearth were located in the area around the house. Two flakes, a blade, a concave scraper and a side scraper were found in association with one of the nearby pits. A sample from a structural pit produced a radiocarbon date of AD 20-350.

# medieval

## Early medieval settlement

At **Ballynacarriga** excavations revealed an uncharacteristic example of a multi-phased farming settlement dating to the early medieval period. Two large conjoined sub-rectangular enclosures were located on the northern slope of the small valley in Ballynacarriga. The main enclosure, which dated to AD 420-670, measured 35m by 40m. It was formed by a large enclosing ditch, the profile of which varied from a wide U-shape on the lower slope to the south to a narrower V-shape on the higher slope to the north.

The function of the ditch was primarily defensive and it would have been augmented by an internal earthen bank, upon which there may originally have been a wooden palisade or fence. The site appeared to have been entered via the southwest. Many features were uncovered inside the enclosure, including a large

roundhouse (surviving as a tightly-packed circular row of stake-holes), two souterrains (underground passages), large sub-circular cooking pits and a corn-drying kiln.

Sometime during the 7th-century the site was extended by the construction of a second enclosure to the north of the main enclosure. Two house structures with slot-trench foundations, averaging 5m in diameter, were uncovered. A third possible house/hut structure was uncovered, however, its form differed from the previous two. This was circular in shape, with double slot-trench foundations, and the southern section of the structure was missing. It was located in close proximity to three corn-drying kilns and may have functioned as a semi-permanent wind break. Fragments of quern stones, an iron knife, worked flint and some exquisite glass work, in the form of colourful beads, were discovered associated with the settlement.



Aerial view of early medieval enclosure uncovered at **Ballynacarriga**. (Photo A.C.S. Ltd.)



Corn-drying kiln revealed during the excavation of an early medieval enclosure at **Ballynacarriga**. (Photo A.C.S. Ltd.)



View of northern extension to early medieval enclosure uncovered at **Ballynacarriga**. (Photo A.C.S. Ltd.)

# medieval

The radiocarbon dates for this settlement span from AD 420 to AD 700, indicating the potential for continuous occupation from the early 5th-century to the 8th-century. Stratigraphic evidence shows that both enclosures were in use together for a period, around the mid 6th to 7th-century.

Externally, another corn-drying kiln was uncovered nearby. The kiln consisted of a linear flue-like cut, leading into a chamber, bound by a number of post-holes, which may have been part of a timber-supported superstructure. This kiln was dated to between AD 650 and 890.

# post-medieval

A rich variety of post-medieval structures were noted along the route scheme. At **Rincrew** three buildings including a workshop, a boat house and a wooden jetty, were recorded by the banks of the Tourrig River. At **Muckridge** a single-storey stone-built farm labourer's house was recorded. These sites provide a snapshot of 19th-century settlement in the Muckridge and Rincrew area.

Industry thrived in the post-medieval period with advances in engineering, architecture and transport. The manufacture of bricks was one element of this industrial activity which has been rediscovered by the archaeological investigations connected with the scheme. In the townland of Muckridge elements of the Muckridge brick works were recorded. The area

was marked on the Ordnance Survey maps as the 'Old Brick Field'. Excavations unearthed an area of brick paving interpreted as the floor of a drying shed.

At **Rincrew**, site clearance works revealed a lime kiln structure, which was recorded on the first edition of the Ordnance Survey maps. The lime kiln was cut into the face of a steep bank on the northern side of the River Tourrig. The kiln was roughly square, built of random mortar-bonded rubble sandstone with very rough quoins. The upper eastern part of the kiln had been heavily damaged and undermined by tree root activity. While such discoveries might appear to be mundane, they constitute important physical evidence of forgotten industries that once preoccupied the lives of many people.