The N8 Cashel to Mitchelstown Road Project is 41 km long and runs across two different landscapes. From the north it cuts through rolling agricultural limestone lowlands from Cashel-Cahir, taking in a portion of the N24 which is being realigned east of Cahir.

Investigations were started in 2005 by archaeological consultants Margaret Gowen & Co Ltd who completed the site works in 2006 on behalf of the National Roads Authority and South Tipperary, Limerick and Cork County Councils. In 2005 a complete geophysical and aerial survey of the route was conducted in order to identify all archaeological and potential archaeological sites on the route. These were followed by archaeological test excavation along the route and by full excavations in 2006 between Cahir and Mitchelstown. Around 90 new archaeological sites were identified and investigated during the works.

Excavation of the sites to the north of the Galtees and along the new N24 revealed an array of settlement (round houses/structures and burnt mounds), burial (unmarked cemeteries and ring-ditched enclosures) and ritual activity (hengiform post circles enclosing backfilled pits). The excavated sites date from the late Neolithic through to the later Bronze Age together with three well-presented Late Iron Age/early medieval ring-barrows, one early medieval settlement site, some limited evidence for medieval land use and settlement activity and one post-medieval weaver’s cottage.

An increase in site recovery rates was found around the River Suir area and northwards toward historic Cashel—hardly surprising for such important route ways in the past. The post-excavation analysis will incorporate a significant emphasis on the landscape and topographic context, site location and distribution and the chronology and inter-relationships of the sites revealed.

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A few kilns and smithies were found in Cashel, from which another blue glass bead was retrieved. A number of finely made early Bronze Age flint arrowheads were recovered two of which were found during the excavation of the Knowth cremation deposits. One, a tanged arrowhead is very tiny and is burnt. The burnt state is notable as it is possibly a result of being embedded in the body of the deceased at the time of cremation. This, of course, suggests that it might have been the cause of death.

Results from the investigations between Caher and Cashel extend the trend of Bronze Age activity noted elsewhere (e.g. 27 sites), but these are more sparsely distributed, perhaps due to the relatively poor condition south of Cashel. Early examination of the late Neolithic cremation data from the late Neolithic through to the later Bronze Age, with late Iron Age and early Medieval pottery represented.

Near the southern end of the route in Co. Limerick, a late Iron Age/early Medieval ring-barrow site produced iron slag, burnt bone and two small blue glass beads from the fill of its enclosing ditch. Early examination of these finds suggests that it might have been a出炉 furnace for iron working. Nearby, a 7 m diameter ring-barrow site produced iron slag, burnt bone and two small blue glass beads from the fill of its enclosing ditch.