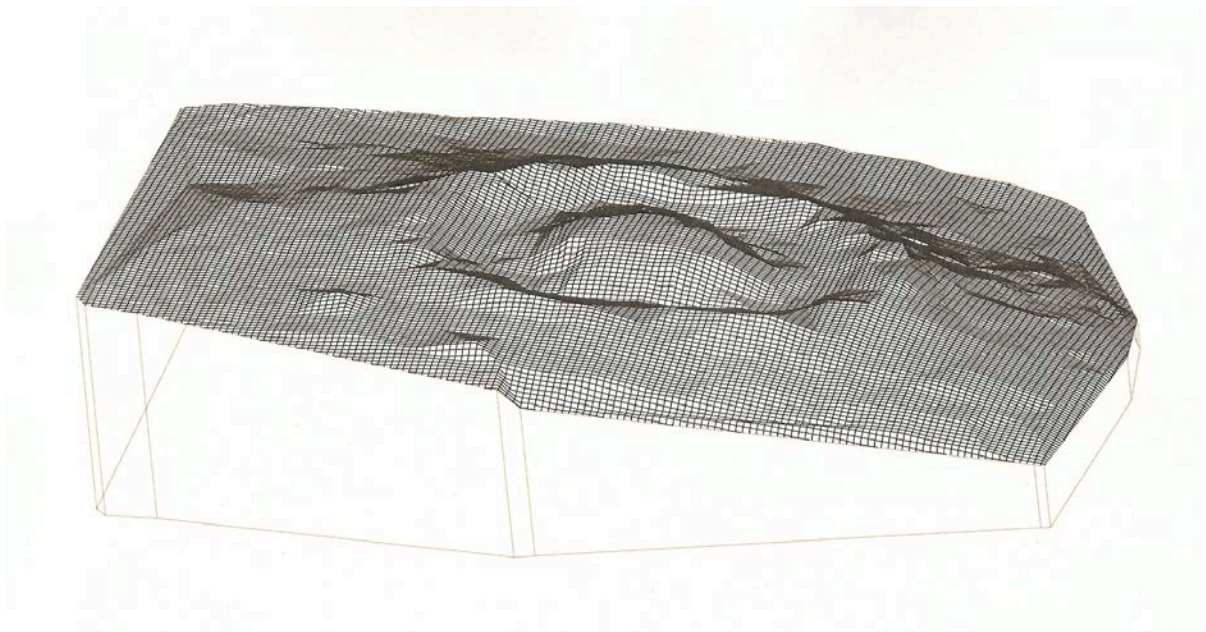


THE PREHISTORIC BURIAL MOUNDS AND RELATED MONUMENTS OF COUNTY WESTMEATH

I. PRELIMINARY ACCOUNT OF THE MONUMENTS IN THE LOUGH OWEL AREA (BARONY OF
CORKAREE AND PART OF BARONY OF MOYASHEL & MAGHERADERNON)

DAVID MCGUINNESS



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INTRODUCTION

‘There came on to the hill at Slemain Mide ... a great company, fierce, powerful, proud. I think that it numbered three thousand. At once they cast off their garments and dug up a turfy mound (*fert fótmaig*) as a seat for their leader....’

Mac Roth’s description of the encampment of the Ulster forces at *Slemain Mide* (Slane More),
from *Táin Bó Cúailnge, Recension 1* (trans. Cecile O’Rahilly)



Pl. 1. Barrows at Slane More (Sites 32-4), after Shaw (1921, Pl. XXII)

The area covered by this report falls between NGR coordinates 237000 and 246000 (Easting) and 252000 and 264000 (Northing), comprising 108 km² and including the whole of Lough Owel (Fig. 1). All barrows and mounds listed in the Westmeath Record of Monuments and Places (RMP 1996)¹ for the Barony of Corkaree were examined, along with a select number immediately to the south in the Barony of Moyashel and Magheradernon; most of these are marked on the 1:50,000 Ordnance Survey Discovery Series map, Sheet 41. These two baronies were initially chosen on account of their exceptional wealth of barrows and mounds (Fig. 2). The catalogue at the heart of this report contains descriptions of thirty-eight monuments. Although two of these sites were disqualified after examination,² several new sites were discovered and others, identified as ringforts in the RMP, were reassigned to classes of later prehistoric burial and ritual monument. In this first season, it was decided that the available time and resources would be best allocated to visiting, examining, measuring and describing all monuments in the study area. Survey-work was carried out at a select few sites.

¹ This is based on the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) database of the Archaeological Survey of Ireland.

² One of these disqualified sites falls outside the study zone, but was visited to complete the RMP list of sites for the Barony of Corkaree.

The burial mounds and related monuments of Ireland in the later prehistoric, that is to say after the heyday of megalithic tombs in the Neolithic, come in a wide variety of forms—especially the earthworks. These monuments, including royal inauguration and assembly sites, internally ditched enclosures, linear or ‘travelling’ earthworks, and a great many forms of barrow and tumulus, still remain to be adequately understood in terms of classification, distribution, siting and function, and a significant number of them have an intriguing place in the medieval Irish literature that has in general been poorly explored by archaeologists since the pioneering Ordnance Survey work of George Petrie and John O’Donovan in the 1830s (Herity 1993; Raftery 1994, 64-97; Waddell 1998, 325-54, 358-60, 365-9; Newman 1997, 45-180).

The study of the morphology of these monuments is perhaps at a comparable stage to that of megalithic tombs in the late nineteenth century, long before the systematic analysis of over 900 monuments allowed De Valéra and Ó Nualláin (1961, xii) to test and corroborate the fourfold classification expounded by Evans in the 1930s (Evans 1938). Since the 1970s and 1980s, with a move towards novel interpretative styles of archaeology and an emphasis on contextual approaches (Johnson 1999, 98-115), there has been a shift away from the more traditional practices of classification and typology, methodologies perceived to be associated with the outmoded culture-historical and processual schools. But by this stage, very little work had been carried out on Irish barrows and related monuments—in stark contrast to Britain, where both excavation and survey-work have been undertaken and various classificatory schemes proposed since the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Ashbee 1960, 17-23; Hunter 1975, 192, 199; Piggott 1989, 132). Possibly this is due to the overwhelming numerical dominance of the larger ringforts, especially the morphologically similar earthen raths, which are found across the Irish landscape in their tens of thousands (Stout 1997, Fig. 10), forming a more obvious focus for scholars’ attention. With some exceptions (e.g. Herity 1983; 1984; Waddell 1983; Timoney 1984; Farrelly and Keane 2002) work on Irish barrows and related monuments since the early 1940s—when the first edition of Ó Ríordáin’s influential *Antiquities of the Irish Countryside* contained only two short paragraphs on earthen tumuli (1942, 41)—has focused on excavation and, more recently, on equally site-specific geophysical prospection (e.g. Raftery 1981 and references therein; Newman 1997; Waddell *et al.* 2009). While these costly and time-consuming approaches have taught us much about individual sites and shown us that a rich array of features lie undetected by the naked eye, they have not provided us with a general view of the

distribution and morphology of the broad range of earthworks of the later prehistoric that might place in context the ever-growing body of more anecdotal evidence.

Of secondary interest is the place of these monuments in the voluminous medieval Irish vernacular literature. Many being of the later prehistoric centuries, it is unsurprising that they are referred to frequently in a range of literary sources composed in the monastic schools of Early Christian Ireland and in later contexts (Hogan 1910, *passim*). An extensive knowledge of the historical and literary importance of the higher status sites has been gained since the seminal work on Tara by George Petrie's topographical department of the Ordnance Survey of Ireland (Petrie 1839), and we now have a much richer understanding of the textual significance of the principal 'royal' complexes of barrows and other earthworks (Mallory 1988; 1997; Ó hUiginn 1988; Bhreathnach 1995). Petrie's aim, 'to try the veracity of our historical traditions by our existing monumental remains' (1972, 265), correct in its primary emphasis on the archaeological evidence from these prehistoric sites, is consistent with current interdisciplinary approaches. The extent to which the more numerous but less important and less well-known prehistoric mortuary sites and landscapes are referred to in these sources is poorly understood, however, and this in spite of the publication of Edmund Hogan's valuable *Onomasticon Goedelicum* over a century ago (Hogan 1910). Perhaps one of the main obstacles to this kind of work has been the dearth of archaeological information on the numbers, locations and types of such later prehistoric monuments as might be identifiable in the literature. Although this alone is not enough: it is equally important that a pre-Norman substratum of place-names be preserved alongside physical remnants if identification is to be achieved, although folklore can also be of some assistance if used cautiously.

What is required to answer some of these broader needs is a programme of survey-work undertaken with an eye to understanding questions of morphology (form and dimensions), siting, distribution and archaeological context. To an extent the SMR archive in the Dublin-based Archaeological Survey of Ireland, and the corresponding archive in Belfast, are providing the materials to answer some of these questions. These exceptionally valuable resources undoubtedly provide the foundations for any such research, and much basic material is already in print in the form of *Archaeological Inventory* volumes covering large parts of the Republic of Ireland, and on the internet for both the Republic and the North. Nonetheless, the broad ambit of a national archaeological survey, covering all kinds of field monuments from the early prehistoric

to the high medieval, does not permit the same degree of focused, problem-oriented research that, say, the more strictly circumscribed megalithic survey has facilitated for chambered tombs of the Neolithic (De Valéra and Ó Nualláin 1961 and later volumes).

The current project, of which this report is the first, preliminary instalment—in essence a pilot study—proposes to contribute to our general understanding of later prehistoric earthworks by engaging in a survey of the prehistoric burial mounds of Westmeath, a county rich in earthworks but relatively poorly studied so far, and not yet the subject of an Archaeological Survey of Ireland *Inventory* volume. This survey will provide descriptions and illustrations of all burial mounds in the county, and will examine questions of morphology and classification, distribution and siting in the natural landscape and with reference to other archaeological features, and identification of monuments in the medieval Irish literature. It is hoped that this will teach us much that is new, and provide a sound basis for more costly, detailed and site-specific excavation and geophysical prospection.

There has been little recent work carried out on the burial mounds and related monuments of Westmeath. Professor R.A.S. Macalister and R.L. Praeger published a detailed account of the royal site of *Uisneach* in the 1920s and undertook excavation at a number of sites on and around the hill, but the two principal sites explored were not burial mounds (1928; 1931). Macalister also excavated the Early Bronze Age tumulus at Rathbennett, one of the monuments in the study area covered by this report (Site 18), in 1931 (Macalister and Murray 1931-2). The following year saw the important excavation of the crowded cemetery-mound of Knockast by the Archaeological Mission of the Harvard Irish Survey (Hencken and Movius 1932-4). More recently, Macalister and Praeger's work at *Uisneach* has been reappraised and the site re-examined by Roseanne Schot (2006), and further work is being carried out there for the new Late Iron Age and 'Roman' Ireland Discovery Programme project.

MORPHOLOGY, CLASSIFICATION & COMPARANDA

This section will briefly consider the morphological range of the monuments in the study area, attempt to classify them in terms of currently recognised types (See Fig. 9B for examples of some of these) and comparative evidence, and comment on the adequacy of these received classes.

Ring-Barrows (including Embanked Ring-Ditches)

At least six monuments in the study area may be classified as ring-barrows or the apparently related embanked ring-ditches. These monuments comprise a central platform or flat-topped mound, surrounded by a ditch and an external bank; the central platform may be no higher than external ground level (embanked ring-ditch) or raised slightly above the level of the external ground, but no higher than the top of the bank (ring-barrow); in the absence of excavation it can be very difficult to distinguish between these two groups (Newman 1997, 155), so they are treated here under the one heading.

The two largest, less than 200m apart at Balrath (Sites 1-2), are remarkable in that they are almost identical in size and form, with an overall diameter of some 49m, a large central mound or platform 27m across with flattish to slightly convex upper surface, a broad deep ditch up to 4.5m (Site 1) or 5.2m (Site 2) in width, and a large external bank up to 7.5m (Site 1) or 8m (Site 2) in width. It seems very probable that these two monuments were made to the same template, and possibly at the same time. The other ring-barrows for which information is available are also quite large by the standards of this type of monument, with maximum overall diameters of 42m (Site 10), 32m (Site 20), 31m (Site 11) and 25.5m (Site 35). The maximum diameters of the central mound or platform—27m (Sites 1-2), 26m (Site 10), 18.5m (Site 11), 17.6m (Site 20) and 11.3m (Site 35)—are large by comparison with the range for ring-barrows in Sligo (Fig. 3A).

A seventh monument, at Ballynaclin, bears close comparison with this group of monuments but contains additional features and, at 115m across, is on a vastly larger scale; it is dealt with separately here (See below).

The ring-barrows on markedly sloping ground at Walshestown South (Site 35, Figs 8-9A) and Wattstown (Site 20), and on a more gentle slope at Leny (Site 10), find their best parallels in the two ring-barrows at the north-west edge of the Hill of Tara—aptly named *Clóenfherta* ('Sloping Trenches') in the medieval *Dindshenchas*—whose western sides in particular are on steeply sloping ground (Newman 1997, 115-16, 118). In all cases, the sloping ground immediately abuts a more level area where the barrow could have been located, implying that the choice of sloping ground is very much deliberate. Indeed, while space would appear to have still been available on this level area for the ring-barrows, other burial mounds are located on it in all but one instance

(Site 10³). At Tara the sites close by on the level area include a ring-barrow and up to four bowl-barrows (Newman 1997, 116-18, 125-7), at Wattstown the nearby monument is a bowl-barrow (Site 21) and at Walshestown South it is a simple mound (Site 36).

The joining together of a ring-barrow and a bowl-barrow on Frewin Hill (Sites 20-21) by extending a bank and ditch from the ring-barrow in a great arc around the bowl-barrow (Fig. 5B) appears to be a unique arrangement. Nonetheless, there is some evidence for the incorporation of earlier burial mounds into elements of later ones probably in the Iron Age, as with the *Forradh* and the northern *Clóenfherta* at Tara (Newman 1997, 77-83, 115-16, Fig. 33, Pl. 21). Indeed, Newman observes that four of six or so incorporated burial mounds at Tara are bowl-barrows, while those incorporating them are ring-barrows—this obviously bears on the situation at Frewin—which suggests to him a deliberate strategy in the Iron Age of accommodating broadly comparable monuments of the Bronze Age (1998, 138). Respect for earlier monuments in the later prehistoric is also evident at Tara in the swerving north side of the internally ditched Iron Age enclosure known as *Ráith na Rí*, which avoids but includes the Mound of the Hostages, a Neolithic passage-tomb and Early Bronze Age cemetery-mound (Newman 1997, 71).

Bowl-Barrows

At least eight monuments, and possibly as many as twelve, can be described as bowl-barrows, comprising a central mound surrounded by a circular ditch. The central mound can vary greatly in shape, from the classic hemispherical mounds at Wattstown (Site 21) and Slane More (Site 30), through tall, truncated conical mounds at Multyfarnham (Site 13) and Portloman (Site 17) and truncated conical mounds with steps or tiers at Slane More (Sites 32-3), to tiny, barely visible mounds at Wattstown (Sites 23-4). Given that the large flat-topped mound at Leny (Site 8) is surrounded by a clear ditch—albeit a disproportionately wide one (Pl. 10)—it might too be described as a bowl-barrow. The domed or slightly pointed mound at Wattstown (Site 25) and the domed or possibly stepped mound at Fulmort (Site 4) have only possible traces of ditches around them, so it seems more appropriate to classify them as mound-barrows (See below). The third stepped mound at Slane More (Site 34) should clearly be grouped with the other two (See Pl. 1), except that there is no evidence for a ditch surrounding it—a *sine qua non* for a bowl-barrow in the usual sense. Given that the other two mounds here, which are far

³ Even here there is a possible burial mound not previously documented (See description for Site 10)

more substantial than this one, have only very faint, shallow ditches, it is hardly surprising that evidence for a ditch is lacking in the smallest. Nonetheless, this dissatisfying segregation, alongside the diversity of those monuments thrown together here as bowl-barrows, clearly shows the limitations of current classificatory schemes. The considerable variations in size are a further strain on credulity, with the tiny, barely perceptible ditched mounds with flattish upper surfaces at Wattstown (Sites 23-4)—the height of the Site 24 mound could not be ascertained due to a growth of nettles—being placed alongside the gigantic, four metre high ditched conical tumulus at Portloman (Site 17). It should be remembered that the term ‘bowl-barrow’ is an import from Britain, which has its own peculiar forms of barrow (Ashbee 1960, 24-9; Newman 1997, 155). As further fieldwork progresses it seems likely that there will be good grounds for devising a more finely tuned system of classification, better suited to the evidence on the ground.

Platform-Barrows

Two monuments at Leny (Site 9) and Slane More (Site 29) are probably best described by the term platform-barrow. They comprise a raised platform with slightly dished upper surface, surrounded by a ditch. They are both similar in size to ringforts, with maximum overall diameters of 38m (Site 9) and 50m (Site 29), and both have been classified as such in the RMP, but there is no clear evidence of an inner enclosing bank in either case. This factor, alongside their siting in very close proximity to bowl-barrows, ring-barrows and other types of burial mound (Sites 8, 10, 30-34) strongly supports their inclusion in the broad category of prehistoric ritual or mortuary site.

Mound-Barrows or Tumuli

The term mound-barrow has recently been applied by the Archaeological Survey of Ireland to many of those monuments commonly referred to as earthen tumuli, ‘circular or oval mounds with rounded, or flat tops and without fosses or banks’ (Egan *et al.* 2005, 34; see also Farrelly and O’Brien 2002, 25). If we include conical mounds in a definition of the type, and allow for the possibility of stone as well as earth in their composition, at least eight monuments in the study area fall into this category. These range from flat-topped or only very slightly convex mounds at Culleen More (Site 27), Rathbennett (Site 18), Rathlevanagh (Site 19) and Walshestown South (Site 36), through domed mounds at Knockdrin (Site 7) and Wattstown (Site 25), and the domed or possibly stepped mound at Fulmort (Site 4), to the tall conical tumulus at Irishtown (Site 28). The enormous flat-

topped mound at Wattstown (Site 22, Figs 5C, 6A), which might possibly be a cairn, probably belongs to this group. A tenth site, the broad, low mound within the enormous enclosure at Ballynaclin (Site 26, Fig. 6C), can also be included. While most of these monuments are approximately circular, the tumulus at Rathbennett (Site 18) has a markedly oval shape, possibly due to later disturbance, and if not for the cist containing Early Bronze Age pottery found during its excavation it might be questionable as a prehistoric burial mound.

There is a considerable size-range among these mounds, with maximum diameters of 33m (Site 22), 24.5 (Site 7), 18m (Site 28), 16m (Site 26), 14m (Site 4), 11m (Sites 18 and 25), 9m (Site 19), 7m (Site 27) and 6.1m (Site 36), and heights of 4.1m (Site 22), 3.9m (Site 28), 2.2m (Site 25), 2m (Site 7), 1.9m (Sites 4 and 18), 1.1m (Site 19), 0.90m (Site 26), 0.66m (Site 36) and 0.65m (Site 27). The largest both in diameter and height (Site 22) is matched in size only by the Portloman bowl-barrow. Its size, probable stony composition and prominent location on the summit of Frewin Hill, with a clear view of the Loughcrew hills in Co. Meath (Pl. 6), might indicate that it belongs to the Passage-tomb tradition of the Neolithic, although there are earthen barrows in its immediate vicinity (Sites 20-21, 23-4) and it was undoubtedly important in the later prehistoric.

These monuments, comprising simple earthen or earth-and-stone mounds of varying size and profile, are not easy to date and may not all belong to the same period. The finds from Rathbennett leave no doubt about an Early Bronze Age date for that mound and it is plausible that some of the others belong to the same period. There are parallels from across Ireland for simple mounds or cairns covering cist or pit burials dating to this period, some made for this purpose, others representing the reused or augmented tumuli of Passage-tombs and other Neolithic burials (Waddell 1998, 158-61). The remarkable hilltop cemetery-cairn of Knockast north-east of Moate, which produced over forty Early Bronze Age burials when excavated in 1932, initially appeared as 'a low, flat, grassy mound with a slight depression in the middle, [which] measured 60 feet [18.3m] in diameter and no more than 4 feet [1.2m] high at its highest point' (Hencken and Movius 1932-4, 233, Pls. X; XI, Fig. 1). It was well within the size range of the tumuli in the study area and may indicate that some of these, such as the large mounds on hilltops at Knockdrin (Site 7) and Wattstown (Site 22), also conceal cemeteries of this date.

Barrows with steps or tiers

One half of the impressive earthwork in Clanhugh Demesne (Site 3) certainly partakes of the character of a stepped-barrow, with a central mound rising above a broad step or berm (See Farrelly and O'Brien 2002, 25; Egan *et al.* 2005, 34), but the other half of the mound is surrounded by a ditch and external bank in the manner of a ring-barrow, and the entire monument is surrounded by a second ditch. It is difficult to adduce any parallels for this hybrid monument.

Probably of a different, unnamed class are the stepped conical mounds at Slane More (Sites 32-4; Pl. 1), which have very narrow berms or ledges which in two cases (Sites 33-4) produce the effect of small mounds or caps (Site 33: Diam. 3.8m x 3.5m; H. 0.65m; Site 34: Diam. 2.3m NS x 2.7m EW; H. 0.4m) on top of a larger one—there is nothing comparable to the broad berm of Clanhugh and more typical stepped-barrows. The third mound (Site 32) has a narrow, barely noticeable step less than half way up, and looks even less like the typical stepped-barrow. And we have seen that two of the mounds (Sites 32-3) are surrounded by shallow ditches, allowing them to be included in the bowl-barrow category. The large bowl-barrow at Portloman (Site 17) may also have a step, up to 0.5m high, close to its 4.5m wide, flat-topped summit, but this is only apparent on its south and south-west sides.

There are a small number of good parallels for these monuments, in particular Portloman and the central mound at Slane More (Site 33). At Aughris Head in Sligo, the upper surface (Diam. *c.* 10m) of the steep-sided, 3m high conical tumulus called 'Coggins' Hill' is capped by what FitzPatrick calls a 'small secondary mound' (Diam. *c.* 7.5m; H. *c.* 0.7m). The main tumulus, *c.* 22m in diameter, is surrounded by a ditch *c.* 3.5m wide and a low external bank *c.* 3m wide, making it a *de facto* bowl-barrow like Sites 32-3 at Slane More—albeit of the type with outer bank (See Fig. 9B). Nonetheless it is by no means a classic bowl-barrow: in addition to the secondary mound capping it, the upper surface of the main mound is delimited by a shallow ditch and external bank; and there appears to be an additional, incomplete 'bank or berm' *c.* 0.7m wide around its circumference *c.* 1m above the base (FitzPatrick 2001, 83, Figs 3-4)—a feature clearly similar to the horizontal ledge *c.* 0.5m wide, running around at least part of the circumference of the largest of the mounds at Slane More (Site 32) at a height of up to 1.16m above its base.

A second parallel is found in a much larger bowl-barrow, known as *Dumha Brosna*, at Knockadoobrusna in Co. Roscommon. This *c.* 30m wide mound, surrounded by a 4m wide ditch, is comparable in scale to Portloman (Site 17), although, at *c.* 10m in

height, it dwarfs the Westmeath barrow. On its c. 10m wide, flat upper surface is a small mound c. 3m in diameter and 0.5m high (Condit 1993, 16; FitzPatrick 2001, 83-4). Adjoining this bowl-barrow to west, giving a figure-of-eight arrangement, is a large, subcircular embanked enclosure (95m x 80m) with slightly raised centre, one of three similar henge-like enclosures in a small, barrow-rich part of Roscommon just south of Boyle (Condit 1993).

A third parallel, at Ballybough in Co. Tipperary, is described below in the context of the Ballynaclin earthwork (Site 26), and further comments on the possible significance of these steps or tiers will be made in the context of a reference to Slane More in the great medieval epic, the *Táin Bó Cúailnge*.

The Ballynaclin Earthwork (Site 26, Fig. 6C) and the Problem of Misclassification

The remarkable earthwork at Ballynaclin encapsulates the problems inherent in our understanding of the morphology of later prehistoric mortuary and ceremonial monuments. Classified as a 'ringfort' in the RMP, this site was only noticed by the writer when, while perusing the Ordnance Survey 6" map, he was struck by its great size and the presence of an internal ditch. Examination in the field showed it to be 115m across with an internal platform, broad, deep ditch and monumental external bank. Within the enclosure are a circular mound north-west of centre and a D-shaped embanked enclosure abutting the ditch on the south-east side. The immediate impression given by this earthwork is of an enormous ring-barrow, far surpassing in size even the two large ring-barrows at Balrath (Sites 1-2). Nonetheless, the additional features on the central platform suggest that it might belong to some other category. In its scale and in the presence of an internal ditch and external bank, it clearly bears comparison with the large hengiform enclosures at the royal sites of Tara (*Ráith na Rí*), Navan Fort and Knockaulin, although its flat interior is unlike the enclosed hilltops at those sites (Waddell 1998, 327, 334, 343).

The site appears to find its closest analogues in a recently identified group of monuments comprising large enclosures or platforms defined by one or more banks and ditches and containing a mound to one side of the platform; the ditch may be internal or external with reference to the bank. Estimates of the original maximum dimensions range from 108m to 210m (Herity 1993, 137-44, Figs 27-9). Although he was challenged on this subject by the archaeological fieldworker T.J. Westropp, who presciently opted for a native, pre-Norman origin, those members of this group with prominent mounds

have been commonly classified as mottes and baileys since the days of the historian G.H. Orpen a century ago. It is clear from literary references that several of these monuments were important sites in the pre-Norman period, however, functioning as royal seats and assembly areas, and two were remembered as inauguration sites in folk tradition (Herity 1993, 142-4, 147).

The monument at Sessiaghmagaroll, Co. Tyrone (Herity 1993, 143), although surrounded by two banks with a ditch in the middle, resembles Ballynaclin in that there is a D-shaped enclosure abutting the edge of the platform in the north-west quadrant (Fig. 6D). However, this enclosure is defined by a deep ditch and contains an oval mound 6m in height—in contrast to Ballynaclin, where the enclosure is embanked and the mound is outside it on the opposite side of the platform.

“Neville’s Fort” in Ballybough townland in south Tipperary (Lyons 1938) appears to be an additional member of Herity’s group. Lyons’s plan (1938, Fig. p. 289), showing a circular platform (Diam. *c.* 47.5m) with internal ditch, external bank and ditched mound to one side, broadly compares with Ballynaclin, although the plan on the OS 25” map indicates a more complex arrangement, with a second, incomplete ditch beyond the bank. At the centre of the flat upper surface of the ditched mound, which might be referred to as a bowl-barrow, Lyons documents a circular ‘boss’ or step (Diam. *c.* 1.5m; H. *c.* 0.46m) similar to those discussed above at Slane More (Sites 33-4), Portloman (Site 17), Coggins’ Hill and Knockadoobrusna (Lyons 1938, 290, Fig. p. 289; see section on barrows with steps or tiers). As with some other members of Herity’s group, “Neville’s Fort” has been identified as a motte and bailey on the Archaeological Survey of Ireland web-site (TS070-010001), although its ‘slightly unusual’ arrangement suggested the possibility that it was a ringfort modified by the Normans.

That monuments of this group have been classified as ringforts and mottes and baileys is testament to our inadequate knowledge of the range of later prehistoric earthworks. In the absence of a set of clearly defined classes of these field monuments it is hardly surprising that they have been subsumed under other, better-known and long-standing categories. Furthermore, the diversity of size and morphology in Herity’s group might be read as indicating that there was no rigid template for their construction, only the requirement of a large, clearly demarcated central area containing a mound. The similarities of Ballynaclin to the ring-barrow class and to hengiform enclosures on the great royal sites, and the resemblance of its mound to a mound-barrow, further show the potential blurring of boundaries among later prehistoric earthworks—something we

have already seen in the hybrid monument at Clanhugh Demesne (Site 3) and in the overlapping of the barrow with steps or tiers and bowl-barrow categories at Slane More (Sites 32-4). In the face of such taxonomical imprecision, it is easier to understand how more cohesive and populous classes such as ringforts and mottes and baileys have taken in many waifs and strays—even with the caveat that these additions are in some respects abnormal.

That three monuments in the study area which were classified as ringforts in the RMP (Sites 9, 26, 29) have turned out to be ring-barrows or related monuments indicates that observation of additional monuments thus classified might add to the list of these sites in Westmeath. Indeed, a brief examination of another ‘ringfort’ in Corkaree after completion of this season’s fieldwork, in Down townland (WM012-043), suggested the possibility that this tall, flat-topped mound surrounded by a much lower ditch, bank and outer ditch belonged alongside the same broad range of monuments documented in the catalogue, although its close proximity to a genuine ringfort (WM012-042)—also with a raised central area but this time surrounded by a bank—leaves some room for doubt concerning a prehistoric origin. A third monument close by, also classified as a ringfort in the RMP (WM012-044), has been destroyed.

It is not difficult to see why ringforts are commonly confused with ring-barrows or embanked ring-ditches. It is certainly easy to understand why this might be so in folk terminology, where to an untrained eye a ring-barrow might easily be called a rath. But even among professional archaeologists, the overlapping of the size range for these types, the sometimes raised platforms forming the living area of ringforts, and the presence of causewayed entrances and even multivallation in both ringforts and ring-barrows/ring-ditches allows scope for confusion, especially where a site is heavily denuded. The case is compounded still further in very low visibility or subsurface sites, where there can be almost insuperable difficulties in interpreting geophysical signatures (Newman 1997, 14-17, 160).

One useful rule-of-thumb for distinguishing between the two types is that in ringforts the bank is on the inside and the ditch is on the outside, whereas the opposite arrangement is found in ring-barrows and ring-ditches, as in the similarly non-defensive henge monuments of Britain. This is not to say that all monuments with internal banks are ringforts: a tiny monument with internal bank is classified as a ring-barrow in the Sligo *Inventory* (e.g. Egan *et al.* 2005, 50 (237)), presumably on the grounds that the monument is too small to have been a habitation site; and other, much larger sites with

internal banks, such as Longstone Rath in Co. Kildare (Weir 1980, 167) and the multivallate site of Rathra in Co. Roscommon (Herity 1991, Pl. 8), contain burial or ritual monuments inconsistent with interpretation as a ringfort. Nonetheless, it appears to have value as a general rule and can be tested against other evidence such as siting and archaeological context. Although classified as ringforts in the RMP, for instance, the monuments presented as platform-barrows at Leny (Site 9) and Slane More (Site 29) are in very close proximity to other barrows, and that at Leny is on the summit of a hill.

In attempting to assess the dimensional parameters of ring-barrows with reference to earthen ringforts, a rich body of data is available in Vol. I of the *Archaeological Inventory of County Sligo*, covering the southern part of this barrow- and ringfort-rich county (Egan *et al.* 2005). It was decided that a useful means of assessing the size of ring-barrows compared to ringforts, and one for which relevant information was available in the *Inventory*, would be to compare the maximum diameter of the central mound or platform of ring-barrows with the maximum internal diameter of ringforts, that is to say, to compare the areas enclosed by the banks and ditches. Fig. 3A shows the results of this for all 38 ring-barrows and the first 100 earthen ringforts in the *Inventory* for which measurements were available. The peak diameter-measurements for the mounds of ring-barrows fall between 5m and 15m; by contrast, those for the interior of ringforts fall between 25m and 35m, with most of the overlap in the 15m to 25m range.

Variety among the Monuments

One of the most striking results of this season's work is a demonstration of the great variety of prehistoric burial mounds and related monuments in a small part of the county. As we have seen, the monuments are not always easy to assign to distinct types and there is much overlap.

It is also clear that this variety is manifested on individual sites, with diverse groupings of monuments at Leny (Sites 8-10), Slane More (Sites 29-34) and Wattstown (Sites 20-24), and pairings of different types at Monroe (Sites 11-12) and Walshestown South (Sites 35-6). The variety can even be found at the level of individual monuments: the great enclosure at Ballynaclin (Site 26) has the appearance of an enormous ring-barrow, but also contains a simple tumulus or mound-barrow, and the unique monument at Clanhugh Demesne (Site 3) appears on one side as a double-ditched ring-barrow and on the other as a stepped-barrow. Such morphological variety and the implied

development of sites over long periods of time is a common phenomenon of the royal sites and comparable ceremonial and mortuary landscapes (Herity 1993, 146-7; Newman 1998, 135-9).

DISTRIBUTION, SITING & ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

The monuments in the study area appear to cluster around Lough Owel, especially its western side (Fig. 1), with one barrow (Site 3) virtually on the shore, setting it apart from the other Westmeath lakes around which few barrows are found. In particular the prominent Hill of Frewin, midway along its western shore, forms the focus for a group of no fewer than eleven sites (Sites 1-2, 11-12, 17, 20-25) within a radius of *c.* 1.9km—three on its summit (Sites 22-4)—and is an important location in the medieval Irish literature (See below). Its importance is perhaps unsurprising in that, while this hill reaches only 171m above sea level, its location in the low-lying Irish midlands means that a huge sweep of land is visible across the island from the Wicklow Mountains in the East to the Leitrim hills in the west. In this it compares favourably with the analogous Westmeath royal site of *Uisneach*, on a slightly higher hilltop (182m OD) from which some twenty counties are said to be visible (Macalister and Praeger 1928, 69-70, Fig. 1). Other complexes of comparable monuments, such as the royal site on the Hill of Tara in Co. Meath (155m OD), can similarly boast of outstanding views (Fenwick 1997).

While the spread of altitudes may not appear very impressive (Fig. 3B), many other monuments in the study area are on or close to hilltops in this low-lying region of Ireland and command views across broad tracts of landscape. The large mound or cairn on the summit of Frewin Hill (Site 22) is visible from no fewer than twenty sites (Sites 1-4, 7-12, 18-19, 21, 23-5, 27, 32-4), making it a visual focus for most of burial mounds in the study area. Also widely visible is Knockdrin (Pl. 7), rising to a similar altitude, although the burial mound on its summit (7) is now disguised by forestry. It is no surprise that these and a number of other sites were chosen for trigonometrical stations and spot heights by fieldworkers of the Ordnance Survey (e.g. Sites 8, 18, 27, 36).

There are further signs that the monuments on or close to the summit of Frewin Hill were of special importance. Two tiny satellite barrows (Sites 23-4) lie at a similar short distance south-west of the south-western side of the main mound (Site 22) (Fig. 5C), at the very edge of the flat hilltop. On the opposite shore of the lake *c.* 2.6km to

north-east is the impressive hybrid barrow of Clanhugh Demesne (Site 3), which also shares a north-east/south-west division, with the north-eastern half comprising a double-ditched ring-barrow and the south-western half—facing Frewin Hill—comprising a stepped-barrow. The bowl-barrow on the western shoulder of Frewin Hill (Site 21), a flat-topped ridge below the summit, was also of some importance. It is clearly visible from the main mound (Site 22) and appears to be in line with this and one of the satellites close to it (Site 24). As with the main mound, it is also visible on the skyline from the ring-barrow at Balrath (Site 2) *c.* 0.65km to north. The ring-barrow or embanked ring-ditch (Site 20) on a marked slope just west-south-west of the bowl-barrow, which is not visible from Site 22 or from the Balrath barrow (Site 2), appears to be later and was deliberately joined to the bowl-barrow through the extension of an arc of bank and ditch around the northern side of the latter (Fig. 5B). Furthermore, a linear earthwork documented in Monroe townland in the RMP (WM011-134), though not examined in the field this season, runs up the slope of the hill from south-east to north-west and appears to point directly at the east end of this curving bank and ditch. Other elements in what is plausibly a planned landscape are the ring-barrow and mound- or stepped-barrow at Monroe (Sites 11-12), *c.* 0.7km to south, which are together aligned on the summit of Frewin Hill.

The north-east/south-west axis evident in the positioning of Sites 23-4 with reference to Site 22 on the summit of Frewin Hill (Fig. 5C), in the bipartite construction of the Clanhugh barrow (Site 3) and its alignment on Frewin Hill, and indeed also on the western spur of Frewin Hill, where the unique semicircular earthwork runs from the north-eastern side of the ring-barrow (Site 20) around the earlier bowl-barrow lying to east-north-east (Fig. 5B), exemplifies a recurring feature on the better-known royal sites. A north-east/south-west axis is extremely common, being represented in the incorporation of bowl-barrows into later ring-barrows, in the positioning of Loughnashade and an artificial pond with reference to Navan Fort and nearby Haughey's Fort respectively, and in other aspects of these later prehistoric landscapes (Newman 1998, 138-9).

Further work is required to understand the relationship of the burial mounds to other archaeological sites in the area, but certain preliminary observations may be made. The presence of ringforts in very close proximity to some individual monuments, as at

Leny and Monroe,⁴ might suggest that there is nothing comparable to the apparent ritual zone of exclusion documented at the royal sites of Rathcroghan (Herity 1983, 138; 1987, 135-6) and Navan (Warner 1986, 8)—archaeological landscapes which are otherwise closely comparable. Nonetheless, the barrow-rich west side of Lough Owel, especially the vicinity of Frewin Hill, has very few ringforts compared to the densely populated east side, where burial mounds are fewer, suggesting that ritual proscriptions were in place around the west for some part of the first millennium AD. This can only be a preliminary observation given the possibility (discussed above) that at least some of these ringforts are misclassified barrows. It is also worth considering the different preferences for siting among these different kinds of monuments, with burials mounds commonly on hilltops and ringforts on somewhat lower ground.

There would appear to be some overlap in distribution with church sites of the Early Christian period. The early foundation of Portloman (Swan 1988, 10), marked by a medieval church⁵ and graveyard delimited by an embanked enclosure, lies on the western shore of Lough Owel c. 1.5km east of Frewin Hill and only 190m north-east of an enormous bowl-barrow (Site 17). This church is associated with St. Lommán of *Loch Uair* (Lough Owel), whose feast-day was February 7 and another of whose churches, *Tech Lommáin*, was located on *Inis Mór* near the south-east shore of the lake (OSL 1837, Vol. I, 176-80; Stokes 1905, 59, 69). Pilgrims visiting the stone known as *Leac Lomáin* (See Disqualified site No. 2) on the saint's feast-day sometime before 1837 would travel on their knees from there to the church, over 0.8km to the north-east (OSL 1837, Vol. I, 176-80), thereby passing close to the bowl-barrow.

Three impressive barrows lies on the plateau-like hilltop at Leny, two at the north end (Sites 8-9) and one at the south (Site 10). Downhill and c. 250m south of Site 10 is Leny Church (Fig. 4), a ruined nineteenth-century structure which is surrounded on its south-west side by the remains of a large *vallum* and appears to mark the site of an Early Christian foundation, possibly the Kilpatrick of the adjacent townland name (Wallace 1987, 27; Swan 1988, 9).

With ancient church sites located close to important royal sites, such as the Patrician foundations of Armagh and Old Kilcullen in the vicinity of *Eamhain Macha* and *Dún Ailinne* respectively (Hughes and Hamlin 1997, 30; Halpin and Newman 2006,

⁴ See the maps for earthen ringforts (raths) and various kinds of barrows in this part of Westmeath on the Archaeological Survey of Ireland website (<http://webgis.archaeology.ie/NationalMonuments/FlexViewer/>). Ringforts and related enclosures are also marked as open red circles on the OS Discovery Series maps.

⁵ The church is located on what looks like a prehistoric burial mound, possibly a stepped barrow.

314)—and there are a great many other examples of this phenomenon, down to the level of individual barrows with Early Christian cross-slabs and holy wells close by (e.g. Egan *et al.* 2005, 48-9)—the obvious conclusion is that in many cases this proximity is not coincidental, that shrines of the Christian faith were deliberately placed on or close to mortuary and ceremonial landscapes of the later prehistoric.

The ancient highway known as the *Slighe Asail* appears to have run close to the western shore of Lough Owel at least as far north as Portloman, putting it in close proximity to many of the monuments in the study area (Kane 1917, 555, Pl. XLVIII). A linear earthwork comprising a broad, sunken channel 12m in width and 0.5m in depth, runs off in a west-north-west direction from the bowl-barrow at Portloman (Site 17), roughly in the direction of Frewin Hill. This has the appearance of a trackway and was stated to be the *Slighe Asail* by the local landowner (pers. comm. Dermot Bannon).

John O'Donovan refers to an Inquisition of the reign of James I in which the townland of Balrath, c. 1km north of Portloman, is named as 'Balrathnaslee', the 'Rathtown of the way or pass' and suggests that the *Slighe Asail* ran in this direction and gave its name to the townland (OSL 1837, Vol. II, 183). Balrath contains two enormous ring-barrows (Sites 1-2), over one of which (Site 2) and close to the other (Site 1) runs a large, flat-topped bank flanked on one side by a ditch, which serves as a field boundary and in places as a modern trackway. While it is possible that this is part of the *Slighe Asail*, it bears a close resemblance to stretches of an earthwork identified by Kane as the Black Pig's Dyke, in his view the oldest and southernmost of three fortifications marking the border of an ever-shrinking Ulster (Kane 1917, 550-63). Clear traces of this earthwork, comprising one or two banks with associated ditches, still remain at the north end of Lough Owel, running as far as Lough Derravaragh, and to the south-west of Lough Owel, just north of the Slane More barrow group (Sites 29-34) (Wallace 1987, 21-3, Pl. p. 22; pers. comm. Tommy Cassidy). Until this earthwork is mapped, it is impossible to say how exactly it relates to the burial mounds in the study area.

MEDIEVAL LITERATURE & FOLK TRADITION

Preliminary indications are that several of these sites have a significant place in medieval Irish literature. The focal site in the study area, Frewin Hill [pron: Frey-win], on or close to which are eleven burial mounds (Sites 1-2, 11-12, 17, 20-25) and which is visible from

many others all around Lough Owel, has since the time of John O'Donovan been identified as the ancient *Frémainn* or *Frému* of the annals and other medieval literature (OSL 1837, Vol. I, 172-3; Vol. II, 164-5). This site, reputedly the location of a palace, *Dún Frémann*, built by seven divisions of the men of Ireland for the legendary high king Eochaidh Aireamh to descend to his own family independently of Tara, is referred to in the tale called *Sluaghid Dathi co Sliabh n-Ealpa* in the *Book of Leinster*, in the metrical *Dindshenchas* and in other early sources (O'Curry 1861, 285-6; Gwynn 1906, 2-3; 1913, 114-15, 350-53; Hogan 1910, 431-2; Dames 1996, 240-42). References in the annals name it as the site of an important battle in which an Uí Néill prince was defeated by the Leinstermen in AD 509 (Wallace 1987, 28).

Another site of equal importance in the literature is the hill of Slane More, which has six burial mounds on or beside it (Sites 29-34), the three on its summit (Sites 32-4) being clearly intervisible with the main mound on Frewin Hill (Site 22). This is the *Slemain Mide* of the medieval literature (Hogan 1910, 604). It was the site of an important battle between Ulster and Leinster documented in the annals under the year AD 498, eleven years before the two sides fought again at Frewin (Wallace 1987, 28). It also appears in the metrical *Dindshenchas*, where it is linked to the archaeologically analogous royal site of Tara in an unusual way: the king of Meath was under a *geis* to hold the feast of *Samhain* on the hill of *Slemain Mide* while this feast was held by the king of Ireland at Tara, and it was a violation of a *geis* for the king of Ireland if the king of Meath did not do so (Gwynn 1924, 296-9).

Slemain Mide is referred to frequently in the *Táin Bó Cúailnge* as the spot where the Ulster army assembled after their march from the north (Shaw 1921). Remarkably, when the men of Ulster arrived on the hill, they immediately 'cast off their garments and dug up a turfy mound as a seat for their leader....' (O'Rahilly 1976, 109, 221), suggesting to Shaw (1921, 134) that one of the mounds on the hilltop was being described. The first part of the term O'Rahilly translates as 'a turfy mound'—*fert fóhmaig*—appears to be such as we find used to describe barrows in the medieval literature (Herity 1993, 144, 146). But more interestingly, two of the Slane More barrows (Sites 33-4) have small, flat, seat-like platforms forming an upper tier or step on their summits. The analogous step on the summit of the Coggins' Hill bowl-barrow in Co. Sligo (See section on barrows with steps or tiers), which, based on literary and traditional accounts of assemblies in its vicinity, FitzPatrick argues is *Carn Inghine Briain*, inauguration mound of the Uí Dhubhda chieftains in the fourteenth century, has similarly been regarded by her as of a suitable

shape and size for a seat or throne (FitzPatrick 2001, 77-84). Herity's group of assembly sites, discussed above in the context of the Ballynaclin earthwork (Site 26), have mounds that he identifies as the royal seat or *forad* on the basis of archaeological and literary evidence (1993). We have seen that a newly recognised one of these at Ballybough in Co. Tipperary has, at the centre of the flat upper surface of the mound, a circular 'boss' or step similar to those at Slane More, Coggins' Hill, Knockadoobrusna and possibly Portloman (Site 17) (See section on the Ballynaclin earthwork). The dimensions of these circular, seat-like platforms do not vary too greatly in size and they plausibly represent circular benches (Table 1). The possible additional step 1m above the base of the Coggins' Hill bowl-barrow, which can be paralleled in the largest mound at Slane More (Site 32), suggested to Fitzpatrick the possibility of 'a third tier or extra standing place for those participating in an inauguration ceremony' (2001, 79).

<i>Site</i>	<i>Diameter of 'seat'</i>	<i>Height of 'seat'</i>
Slane More, Co. Westmeath (Site 33)	c. 3.8m	c. 0.65m
Slane More, Co. Westmeath (Site 34)	c. 2.7m	c. 0.4m
Portloman, Co. Westmeath (Site 17)	Not available	c. 0.5m
<i>Dumha Brosna</i> , Knockadoobrusna, Co. Roscommon	c. 3m	0.5m
'Coggins' Hill', Kilrusheighter, Co. Sligo	c. 7.5m	c. 0.7m
'Neville's Fort', Ballybough, Co. Tipperary	c. 1.5m	c. 0.46m

Table 1: Dimensions of steps or tiers, each possibly a 'seat' or *forad*, on top of barrows and mounds at Slane More and comparable sites.

Although these are only preliminary observations, they do show the potential for dialogue between archaeologists and students of early Irish literature. Some interesting observations may also be made on the surviving folklore, though this is not nearly so rich as the literature—as might be expected in a county heavily planted since Norman times.

Given the significance of Slane More in the *Táin*, and the possibility that many other burial mounds farther west in the county may be placed in the context of that great epic (Shaw 1921), it is of interest that Macalister and Murray refer to a local tradition that the Rathbennett tumulus (Site 18) 'belongs to the *Táin Bó Cúalnge* period or later'

(1931-2, 311). Similarly, the man on whose land two of the nearby Leny sites lie mentioned that one of these, the platform-barrow (Site 9), was known as 'The Holding Fort' and reputedly dated back to the times of cattle-rustling. The stretch of the Black Pig's Dyke at the north end of Lough Owel, about 1km east of Leny, was known as 'Boreen na tauna' or 'Boher na tauna', which suggested to Kane a link with the *Táin* (Kane 1917, 554-5).

The early 19th century saw the tail-end of a *Lughnasa* tradition, whereby horses were raced in Lough Owel by young men (Macneill 1962, 245-9). Given that these races appear to have been held in the vicinity of Frewin Hill (pers. Comm. Peter Wallace and Dermot Bannon), it is intriguing that the *Dindshenchas* mentions a meeting for horse-racing held by the legendary king Eochaidh Aireamh at *Frému* (Gwynn 1913, 350-1). A *Lughnasa* connection for an archaeological landscape like Frewin or the barrow-rich Lough Owel area as a whole would not be unusual. At Teltown (*Tailtiú*) in Co. Meath, since ancient times the setting for a famous *Lughnasa* assembly with horse-racing and other activities, is a great complex of later prehistoric earthworks, including barrows, linear earthworks and a large monument, *Ráth Airthir*, broadly comparable with Ballynaclin (Site 26) and arguably associated with royal inaugurations (Macneill 1962, 311-38; Herity 1993, 142-3; Swan 1998). Two headland heights visited at *Lughnasa*, Aughris Head in Co. Sligo and Downpatrick Head in Co. Mayo, have barrows comparable with those in the Lough Owel area (Macneill 1962, 107-13; FitzPatrick 2001⁶). The *Lughnasa* mountain pilgrimage sites at Slieve Donard in Down and Church Mountain in Wicklow are capped by great passage-tomb cairns (Herity 1974, 229-30, 258; Macneill 1962, 84-101; Manning 2002), possible analogues for the large cairn on the summit of Frewin Hill (Site 22).

FUTURE RESEARCH

The results of this season's work are very promising and suggest further research that might be undertaken in subsequent seasons. As additional parts of the county are explored it is expected that a greater sense of the morphological range of later prehistoric burial mounds and related earthworks in Westmeath will be gained, which in the context of comparative material from other regions should allow a much clearer

⁶ The SMR numbers for the two Mayo barrows are MA007-077001/002.

understanding of the different types of burial monument in use during the Bronze and Iron Ages.

In light of this season's work, it is also hoped that all of the upstanding monuments classified as ringforts and enclosures in the RMP for a single barony of Westmeath will be inspected in the field in an attempt to see what proportion of them might represent misclassified barrows or other prehistoric earthworks. By extrapolation, the results should give some sense of the situation in a much larger region.

The proximity of the Black Pig's Dyke and the *Slighe Asail* to many of the burial mounds in the study area demands that these are mapped out as fully as possible in this area and across the county in order to discern the precise relationship between these different monuments, particularly in view of a likely Iron Age date for the Dyke at least (Raftery 1994, 83-97). The presence of these routeways and boundaries and the frequent intervisibility and apparent alignments between many of the burial mounds suggest some kind of large-scale planning of the later prehistoric landscape, albeit over many centuries—a phenomenon also apparent at the great royal sites of Navan, Rathcroghan and Tara (Herity 1983; 1984; Newman 1997; Waterman 1997).

It is important that these and other archaeological features—monumental and artefactual (i.e. stray finds)—be plotted with reference to different, clearly defined types of burial mound using specialist map software. Initial impressions here, and from comparative material elsewhere in Ireland, are that there may be a close association between some of these prehistoric ceremonial and mortuary sites and landscapes and the earliest stratum of the ecclesiastical landscape.

The initial impression created by the wealth of early literary references to the two most important groups of barrows, at Frewin Hill and Slane More, in addition to the voluminous and better-known references to the comparable group on the Hill of *Uisneach* (Schot 2006, 39-41), strongly suggests that a detailed, specialist examination of these sources in conjunction with surviving archaeological remains would pay considerable dividends.

It is also anticipated that Seamus O'Brien of Westmeath Archaeological and Historical Society will be looking at the geomorphological background of the county in the context of the siting of its burial mounds.

CATALOGUE OF MONUMENTS

The first line of each catalogue entry contains the site number, followed by the name of the townland in which it is located, its suggested classification in the opinion of the writer and, in parentheses, references to any figures or plates. The second line contains the number of the monument, where this exists, in the Record of Monuments and Places for Co. Westmeath (RMP 1996), followed, in parentheses, by the classification assigned to it in that source. This is in turn followed by a 10-figure map coordinate for locating the monument on the national grid (which may conveniently be used on the map reproduced in Fig. 1) and the height of the monument above Ordnance Datum (i.e. sea level) to within 10m. The remainder of the catalogue entry includes a fresh description of the monument; information from earlier accounts where these are considered important; information on its location in the natural landscape and with reference to other, related monuments; and, where available, information on local traditions. Unless otherwise stated, diameter measurements refer to the overall diameter of the monument, rather than to, say, the central mound of a ring-barrow. Given the generally imprecise boundaries between different elements of earthworks, and the difficulties in distinguishing between peripheral features and the natural ground, it should be taken that the majority of measurements are only approximations. This seems preferable to cluttering the text with use of the abbreviation 'c.' (i.e. *circa*).

BARONY OF CORKAREE

1. BALRATH, RING-BARROW

RMP: WM011-104 ('Ring-barrow'); NGR: 23787/25935; 130-140m OD

Very large, high relief, roughly circular ring-barrow (Diam. 49m NE-SW x 46m NW-SE), situated in pasture on broad summit of hill (133m OD). Monument is mostly well preserved, although parts of outer bank have been removed, and except for SW and NE sides, its perimeter is covered by trees and bushes. Monument comprises a central, steep-sided platform with flattish to slightly-convex upper surface, surrounded by a ditch, from 4-4.5m in width and mostly flat-bottomed except where mound and bank have partly slipped in on N side; and an outer bank, ranging from 6-7.5m in width where best preserved at N, NE and SW. On N side, bank rises 0.8m above external ground level and 2m above base of ditch. At E, W and SW, stretches of outer bank 1m, 6m and 5.5m in length respectively have been removed or severely damaged; the bank is also quite poorly preserved for an arc of 12m on SE side, and parts of its outer edge on N and S sides have been shorn off by passing farm vehicles. At the damaged SW part, the bank has been much reduced in size and, for 0.7m, entirely breached; and about 2.5m to W of this gap the bank bulges both inside and out—by as much as 4m on outer, SW side—and reaches its greatest width (8.5m) and height above external ground level (1.1m). This bulge, much larger than the adjoining, well-preserved stretch of bank on same (SW) side of monument and apparently not original, may be composed of spoil from damaged bank to E. At numerous spots where cattle have eroded the bank, it can be seen to be composed of exceptionally stony earth. Maximum depth of ditch below and perpendicular to a line joining top of bank to upper surface of platform on NE and SW sides is 1.17m and 1.15m respectively. Central platform appears to rise little, if at

all, above surrounding ground. Its basal diameter is 25m N-S x 27m E-W, the slightly greater length of the E-W axis being due to partial slippage of platform into ditch; it rises up to 1m above base of ditch.

A second, almost identical ring-barrow (Site 2) lies less than 200m to SW. Running N-S c. 64.5m to WSW is a very large field fence, comprising a flat-topped bank 4m in width up to 1m high on E side and up to 1.5m high on W side. About 61.5m to ENE of second ring-barrow (Site 2) this field fence kinks sharply, running (with ditch on NW side) in a SW direction and cutting through SE side of Site 2, where it has been partly converted into a trackway. This bank and associated ditch appear to be a part of the monument identified by Kane (1917, 550-57) as the 'Black Pig's Dyke', based on an interpretation of place-names, folklore and medieval literary sources. But for trees, Frewin Hill (Sites 22 and 25) would be visible to S and Lough Owel to SE.

2. BALRATH, RING-BARROW (PLS 16-17)

RMP: WM011-103 ('Barrow'); NGR: 23774/25917; 120-130m OD

Very large, high relief, roughly circular ring-barrow (Diam. 49m NE-SW), situated in undulating pasture to SW of broad summit of hill. Monument is fairly well-preserved except at W and SE sides where outer bank has been severely damaged and partly removed; overall diameter on NW-SE axis has consequently been shortened to 44m. Monument comprises a central, steep-sided, mound or platform with flattish to slightly-convex upper surface, surrounded by a ditch, from 3.8-5.2m in width and mostly flat-bottomed except where mound and bank have partly slipped in on N side; and an outer bank, 8m in width where best preserved. Bank is best preserved at N and SW sides, where it rises 1.1m and 0.7m respectively above external ground level, and 2.05m and 1.45m respectively above base of ditch. There is a gap of 20m where bank has been mostly removed on W side; and, where a trackway cuts through monument at SE side, bank appears to have been removed for 16m from NE to SW, and for another 11m in a SW direction has been greatly reduced in size. Maximum depth of ditch below and perpendicular to a line joining top of bank to upper surface of platform on N and SW sides is 1.45m and 1.3m respectively. Central mound appears to rise above external ground level from W through N to NE side. Its basal diameter is 26m N-S x 27m E-W and it rises up to 1.4m above base of ditch at NW and SE sides.

A second, almost identical ring-barrow (Site 1) lies less than 200m to NE; a low but well-formed knoll begins to rise only 16m to NNW, but there are no upstanding traces of any monument on this. The 'trackway' that cuts through SE side of monument is in fact the reused upper surface of a large flat-topped bank, running NE-SW, with ditch preserved on NW side (See Site 1). This bank and associated ditch appear to be a part of the monument identified by Kane (1917) as the 'Black Pig's Dyke' (pers. Comm.. Tommy Cassidy), based on an interpretation of place-names, folklore and medieval literary sources.

Mound or cairn on summit of Frewin Hill (Site 22) is very prominent c. 0.65km to S, and bowl-barrow on western spur of Frewin Hill (Site 25) is prominent on skyline a similar distance to SSW. Lough Owel is visible to SE.

3. CLANHUGH DEMESNE, STEPPED-BARROW

RMP: WM011-150 ('Barrow'); NGR: 24002/25985; 90-100m OD

Large, roughly circular, stepped barrow, comprising a central mound or platform, beyond which lie, on NE half of monument, a ditch, outer bank and second ditch, and on SW half of monument, a broad ledge and outer ditch identical to second ditch on NE half. Overall diameter of the monument is 40.4m N-S x 40.2m E-W. It is located at edge of state forestry plantation in grounds of the old Clanhugh Demesne, and there are mature deciduous trees associated with the demesne along its perimeter; in addition, SE half is densely overgrown with brambles and difficult to examine. The central platform (Diam. 20m N-S x 21.5m E-W) is slightly dished, especially on NE side, and rises up to 0.70m above inner ditch on NNE side. The inner ditch, which is raised well above external ground level, is up to 3m in width, flattish to flattened V-shaped in section, and, on NE side, reaches a maximum depth of 0.45m below and perpendicular to a line joining top of bank to upper surface of platform. On S and W sides, where external ground level is much lower than elsewhere, central platform drops in a broad, shallow sweep down to a surrounding step or ledge. On SW side, it rises 1.5m above this ledge and 3.2m above outer ditch. At its broadest, on W side, the ledge is 7m in width and it reaches as high as 1.4m above ground level beyond outer ditch. The shallow outer ditch, 2.2m in width, is best preserved on S and SW sides, but further traces are visible on E and NW sides. Bank on NE half of monument varies in width from 3.5 to 6.8m. Where not obscured by vegetation, its height above inner ditch varies from 0.10m on N side to 0.43m on NE side. It rises up to 1.15m above outer ditch on NW side. Ground around monument slopes down sharply to W, though much less so on other sides.

Monument lies 21m N of NE shore of Lough Owel. Frewin Hill (Site 22) is prominent to SW from adjacent lakeshore, and the sites would be mutually visible across the lake but for the trees at Clanhugh Demesne. There is an enormous, monumental bivallate ringfort (WM011-109) in the forest c. 0.45km to NNE.

4. FULMORT, MOUND-BARROW/?BOWL-BARROW (PLS 12-13)

NGR: 23800/26380; 130-140m OD

Severely eroded sub-circular tumulus (Diam. 14m N-S x 12.8m E-W) in pastureland on or close to flattish summit of hill (140m OD). Site has been greatly damaged by grazing cattle: four large chunks have been removed up to a depth of 0.70m, two on E side and two on W side, showing the monument to be composed of earth with stones of various sizes, some very large. On N and NW sides, mound appears to be in a slight hollow, as if its constituent material was scraped from a broad ditch, 11m in width, curving around it. Mound reaches a greatest height of 1.9m on W side. Although the mound is more likely to have had a domed profile originally, it might possibly have been stepped, with a broad horizontal ledge surrounding a central cap; the damage, however, makes this very difficult to establish.

Barrows on N end of hilltop of Leny (Sites 8-9) are clearly visible to SW and Frewin Hill (Site 22) is clearly visible on horizon to S. Loughs Derravarragh and Iron are visible to NE and SW respectively.

This barrow is not listed in the RMP and was brought to the writer's attention by Mr Peter Wallace (See Wallace 1987, 18).

5. KNIGHTSWOOD, RING-BARROW

RMP: WM012-030 ('Ring-barrow'); NGR: 24205/26088; 90-100m OD

Site, identified as a ring-barrow in RMP but marked as a simple mound on OS 6" sheet, was bulldozed many years ago (pers. comm. Peter Wallace and Jim Sheridan, who live locally) and no trace of it remains. It was located on summit of low ridge overlooking a tiny lake (kettle-hole?) immediately to SW.

6. KNIGHTSWOOD, MOUND

RMP: WM012-031 ('Mound'); NGR: 24239/26119; 60-70m OD

This 'mound' documented in RMP, and a cairn a short distance to S (WM012-032), were not located after a thorough search by the writer. They may have been destroyed like the ring-barrow in the same townland (Site 5).

7. KNOCKDRIN, MOUND-BARROW

RMP: WM012-183 ('Barrow'); NGR: 24576/25753; 160-170m OD

Large circular mound (Diam. 24.5m N-S x 24.5m E-W) with low, rounded profile, capped by a trigonometrical station (168m OD), in coniferous plantation on flattish summit of prominent hill of Knockdrin. Site is well-preserved but covered with mature fir trees, several stumps of larger, much older trees, and a thick, springy layer of pine needles; a slight depression near centre of mound may indicate a collapsed chamber. Height of mound above surrounding ground ranges from 1.7m on SE side to 2m on SW side. Given its size and location, this may be a passage-tomb, although it is unclear whether it is composed primarily of earth or stone, and no kerbstones or other diagnostic features are visible. Frewin Hill (Site 22) would be visible across Lough Owel to W but for trees.

8. LENY, ?BOWL-BARROW (PLS 10-11)

RMP: WM011-021 ('Barrow'); NGR: 23741/26288; 140-150m OD

Large, steep-sided, roughly circular mound (Diam. 21.5m NS x 20.5m EW) with well-defined edges at base and at junction between sides and upper surface. Upper surface of mound was apparently flat-topped originally (Diam. 12m NS x 12.8m EW) but centre has been hollowed out irregularly to a depth of up to 0.75m, possibly by people attempting to find a burial. Mound is composed of earth and stone, visible where animals have worn away parts of the edge. Surrounding the mound is a very broad, shallow, circular ditch, which varies from 11-13m in width and reaches up to 0.40m in depth below external ground level; mound rises up to 2.4m above ditch on NE side. A segment of ditch runs into adjacent field to NW; and, about 9.5m to SSE of mound, line of ditch joins onto, and may even swerve outwards to incorporate, a tiny lake or pool, which is not visible on all OSI aerial photographs and is therefore not always flooded. Given its breadth, the ditch might perhaps be better described as a circular area from which the material for the mound was scraped. Overall diameter of the monument including this 'ditch' is 47.5m NNE-SSW.

Mound, capped by a trigonometrical station (147m OD), is located at N end of broad, flattish summit of hill which runs in a N-S direction. Also on summit are a platform-barrow (Site 9), only 31m to ESE, and a ring-barrow (Site 10), at opposite end of summit c. 250m to S. Ground falls away gradually to NE, but flattish summit of hill continues as a spur to NW, before dropping away sharply to W, NW and N. Frewin Hill (Site 22) would be visible to SSE but for trees. Barrow at Fulmort (Site 4) is prominent on ridge to NE.

9. LENY, PLATFORM-BARROW

RMP: WM011-022 ('Ringfort'); NGR: 23748/26286; 140-150m OD

Low, circular dished platform (Diam. 38m N-S x 38m E-W), surrounded by ditch varying from 2.5-3.5m in width, giving an overall diameter of 43.5m on the N-S axis where ditch is clearly visible. Dished appearance of platform is most pronounced in SW quadrant, but even here there is no trace of a bank around edge of platform that might justify its classification as a ringfort in the RMP. Ditch is best preserved from SE clockwise to S, after sudden rise in external ground level to SE; and also on N side, due to external ground level being slightly higher than adjacent parts. On SE side, where ditch is well preserved, it reaches a depth of 0.68m below platform. Ground surrounding monument is fairly level on all sides but ESE, where broad summit of hill drops away sharply; on this side the ditch is barely visible, although the platform rises 1.6m above external ground level.

According to the landowner, Mr Eddie Tormey, monument was locally known as 'The Holding Fort', dating back to the times of cattle-rustling—a tradition suggestive of the *Táin* like that recorded by Macalister and Murray (1931-2, 311) at Rathbennett (Site 18) about 1km to S. At NW edge of monument are foundations of a rectangular house (10m x 5.5m) with long axis running NW-SE; there is a pile of rubble at its SE end, abutting the platform, which has been heightened here due to disturbance. Mr Tormey remembers this to have always been a ruin, but it was traditionally regarded as a house or hut connected with 'The Holding Fort'. There may be a causeway leading from NW side of platform, just SW of house, roughly in direction of Site 8 (See below), but this may be the result of disturbance connected with the house.

A flat-topped mound surrounded by a ditch (Site 8) lies on flattish summit of hill 31m to WNW; a ring-barrow (Site 10) lies at opposite end of elongated summit c. 250m to S. Frewin Hill (Site 22) is prominent to S, and barrow at Fulmort (Site 4) is prominent on ridge to NE.

10. LENY, RING-BARROW (FIG. 4)

RMP: WM011-026 ('Barrow'); NGR: 23743/26260; 140-150m OD

Very large, low-relief ring-barrow (Diam. 42m NW-SE) on ground sloping down gently to E, at ESE end of flattish, plateau-like hilltop. Monument comprises a low central platform (Basal Diam. 26m) surrounded by a flat-bottomed ditch, 3m in width at well-preserved NE side, and a low, denuded outer bank, 4.5-6m in width. Central platform rises 0.35m above ditch. Where bank is best preserved, on NE side, it is 0.5m above ditch. At this same point, perpendicular depth of ditch below a line joining top of bank to upper surface of platform is 0.34m. SW side of site has been greatly disturbed and is difficult to make out: what appears to be a disused, grassed-over, slightly raised trackway, 4m in width, runs across the barrow from NW to SE, continuing to SE roughly in direction of Leny church which lies downhill to SSE (See below); and immediately beyond this 'trackway' to SW is an old field boundary. Just NE of the barrow but not touching it is another slightly raised linear feature, also with the appearance of a disused trackway 4m in width, running for 92m in a SW-NE direction to edge of field, but not clearly visible in adjacent field. An inspection of the vertical aerial photograph on the National Monuments website strongly suggest that these features are old field fences predating the 1st edition OS 6" map (Fig. 4).

In adjacent field 16m to NW is a low, oval-shaped eminence clipped by an old quarry at its N end and currently measuring 12.5m NW-SE x 10m NE-SW. There are what may be traces of a ditch on NW side, suggesting the possibility that this is an artificial mound. Close by in adjacent field to SW, the RMP documents a standing stone (WM011-027). This sharp-angled rectilinear piece of slate or shale is deeply embedded in the ground, recumbent and barely visible; its maximum visible length and width are 1.06m and 0.30m respectively and its thickness is 0.11m. It is unclear whether it was ever standing upright. A second 'standing stone' (WM011-025), a sharp-angled rectilinear piece of slate or shale 2.7m long, 0.25-0.36m wide and 0.17m thick, lies recumbent in a field c. 130m to NW. If it was ever standing it must have fallen down some time ago, as the sod has encroached over its S end.

At opposite end of hilltop c. 250m to N are two closely positioned monuments, a flat-topped mound surrounded by a broad ditch (Site 8) and what appears to be a platform-barrow (Site 9). Leny church and burial ground, with evidence of a large, curvilinear Early Christian monastic *vallum* on SW side (Swan 1988, 9), lie at foot of hill c. 250m to SSE. Frewin Hill (Site 22) is prominent to S, the barrow at Fulmort (Site 4) is prominent on hilltop to N, and Knockdrin (Site 7) appears to be visible to SE.

11. MONROE, RING-BARROW

RMP: WM011-137 ('Barrow'); NGR: 23789/25780; 110-120m OD

High-relief ring-barrow in low-lying, undulating pastureland c. 60m SW of two tiny and sometimes conjoined, seasonally flooded lakes (kettle-holes?). Stony bank of old field-fence, running c. N-S, cuts through W side of monument, and approximately one-quarter of monument has been removed or severely damaged from field to W of this. Monument comprises a central flat-topped mound surrounded by a flat-bottomed or gently curved ditch, from 3-4.4m in width where intact, and an outer bank 3.5-4m in width where intact. Bank has been partially eroded on E side and mostly leveled on N side; an entire arc to W of later field-fence, except for slight traces at SW, has been removed. Overall diameter of monument (NNW-SSE) is 31m; the E-W diameter is only 22m on account of the damage done to W side. Basal diameter of central mound is 18.5m from N to S, but only 13m from E-W; it is clear that parts of W and NW sides of mound have been shorn off, possibly at same time as field-fence was constructed. Edge of upper surface of mound rises up to 1.25m above base of ditch (at SSE side), and highest point of mound rises up to 1.6m above base of ditch. Mound rises well above surrounding ground level and, on SE side, well above outer bank. Where bank is best preserved on S and NE sides, it rises 0.58m and 0.68m respectively above base of ditch; its greatest height above external ground level is 0.75m at SE side, where ditch is actually higher than external ground level. Maximum depth of ditch below and perpendicular to a line joining top of bank to upper surface of platform on S and NE sides is 0.86m and 0.66m respectively. There appears to be a very low-relief, approximately circular mound (Diam. 4.2m N-S x 4.5m E-W) on upper surface of central mound.

A second barrow or mound (Site 12) lies 17m to SSE. Frewin Hill (Site 22), c. 0.7km to N, is prominent on horizon and the present site and Site 12 are aligned on the mound or cairn on its summit.

12. MONROE, MOUND-BARROW/?STEPPED-BARROW

NGR: 23789/25780; 110-120m OD

About 17m to SSE of Site 11 is an unrecorded monument, comprising what appears to be a natural hillock, rounded in appearance (Diam. 20m N-S) and clearly defined on all sides but S, where it blends into natural slope. This hillock is capped by a roughly circular, flat-topped mound (Diam. 5m N-S x 5.5m E-W), poorly defined at W side, which rises 0.5m above upper surface of hillock where highest on E side. The hillock itself rises up to 1.1m above surrounding ground. Overall impression is of a stepped barrow with upper surface of natural hillock forming a broad circular shelf around the artificial mound. Same field fence that cuts through Site 11 also runs roughly N-S through this monument. This monument and Site 11 are aligned on the mound or cairn on summit of Frewin Hill (Site 22).

13. MULTYFARNHAM, BOWL-BARROW

RMP: WM007-075 ('Burial Mound'); NGR: 24129/26385; 80-90m OD

Tall, flat-topped and steep-sided conical mound (Diam. 15.5m N-S), heavily overgrown with thorn trees and brambles, situated on brow of low ridge that runs NW-SE along NE side of River Gaine. Where measurement is possible on NE side, mound is 2.1m in height. Mound is surrounded by shallow ditch, best preserved on SSW side, where it reaches 0.16m below ground level. Part of NW edge of mound has been shorn off, showing it to be composed of earth with some stone. A piece of SW side also appears to have been removed, but this area is heavily overgrown.

Visibility from the monument is quite poor on account of its low-lying position, being best to SW and W. The RMP lists two other 'Burial Mounds' and a 'Mound' in fields close by (Sites 14-16), but these were not located by the writer.

14/15/16. MULTYFARNHAM

RMP: WM007-073/074/076 ('Mound', 'Burial Mound', 'Burial Mound'); NGR: 24119/26385, 24122/26390, 24147/26385; 80-90m OD

Not located. The grass was high in these fields, possibly obscuring low-visibility features, although the local landowner claimed to know of no sites other than the bowl-barrow (Site 13).

17. PORTLOMAN, BOWL-BARROW

RMP: WM011-144 ('Barrow'); NGR: 23898/25806; 100-110m OD

Enormous circular mound (Diam. 34.5m N-S x 35.5m E-W) with rounded, almost conical profile and flat-topped, irregular-shaped summit (Diam. 4.5m N-S x 4.5m E-W), surrounded by relatively shallow ditch, up to 0.3m in depth below external ground level, that is best preserved at SE and running from S to SW. Height of mound above ditch ranges from 3.06m on S side to 4.04m on N side. It is possible that apex of mound may be stepped, as at Slane More (Sites 32-4): this effect is most pronounced at S and SW, where there is a clear drop of 0.5m. On SE side, the well-defined ditch has what appears to be a counterscarp bank, but this effect seems to be created by a falling off of natural ground-surface just beyond ditch to SE, a topographical feature that can be traced running off from the barrow in a NE direction. Width of ditch ranges from 2.5m at ESE to 5.5m at N, where it is broad, shallow and indistinct, so that overall diameter of monument is 44m N-S x 44m E-W. Even allowing for erosion, size of ditch is completely insufficient to account for the mass of earth in the mound, which might possibly represent a modified kame or other sort of glacial hillock

common in this area. Profile of mound is irregular on E and NE sides, as if material has been removed, and it has suffered recent erosion in places due to grazing sheep. There are two mature deciduous trees on E and S edges of mound and others close by, all probably planted in the 18th century.

Monument is situated in low-lying pasture c. 250m to SW of Lough Owel. Beginning 20m to WNW of the barrow is a broad, sunken channel 12m in width and 0.5m in depth, which runs off in a WNW direction. Mr Dermot Bannon, a local landowner, identified this as the ancient road known as the *Slighe Asail*. The ancient, embanked curvilinear enclosure surrounding the ruined medieval church of Portloman, site of an early foundation (Swan 1988, 10, Fig. 1:2), lies 190m to ENE on shore of Lough Owel; the church may itself be situated on a stepped barrow or tumulus. The RMP documents two standing stones in the vicinity of the barrow: one less than 200m to SW (WM011-146), now apparently removed but modern according to a local landowner Mr Dermot Bannon; the other stands fixed in cement over 300m to SE (WM011-147), and comprises a narrow, angular pillar rubbed smooth by animals, which Mr Bannon also plausibly regards as recent.

18. RATHBENNETT, MOUND-BARROW (FIG. 5A)

RMP: WM011-056 ('Barrow'); NGR: 23705/26167; 140-150m OD

Monument currently presents as a markedly oval to subrectangular mound (8m N-S x 11m E-W) with long axis running E-W, ranging from 1.65-1.9m in height with steep sides and flat top; from cattle erosion, it appears to be composed mostly of soil with some stone (but see summary of excavation below). Although it looks similar to the single view published by R.A.S. Macalister and Ruby Murray (1931-2, PL. XII), its oblong shape would be unusual for an Early Bronze Age burial mound (see below for dating evidence) and Macalister gives his own measurements as 34 ft 8in. (c. 10.6m) N-S and 37 ft 10 in. (c. 11.5m) E-W, suggesting that the elongated N and/or S sides of the tumulus have been trimmed by several metres since the early 1930s. Monument has been extensively damaged around edges by cattle in recent times, and this may partly account for its unusual shape, although it had apparently already been altered by Macalister and Murray's time—probably when an Ordnance Survey bench-mark was established on it:

To the south and east there is an appearance suggesting a late spreading of the material, and it is highly probable that the summit was lowered by casting down some of the component stones and earth upon those sides, when the mound was adapted for the purposes of the survey. On the north sides the tumulus abuts on the boundary ditch and hedge of the field, and its sides are steeper and have a more original appearance (1931-2, 308).

The mound was excavated by Macalister and Murray with five labourers in a single day in 1931, and although 'restored' afterwards, there are no indications that they did anything but dig down from the upper surface, their trench being c. 3m in diameter. Underneath the 'superficial sods and grass', they found the mound to consist 'chiefly of small field stones ... [with] much earth between them'; in this matrix they found a cow's tooth and a single quartz pebble. About 0.76m below the summit they found three slabs resting on one another, underneath which was the capstone of a N-S oriented rectangular cist (0.63m x 0.36m). The E and W walls of the cist extended beyond the end wall on the S side, forming an extension

paved with a single, neatly fitting slab, beyond which—outside the extension—was another rectangular paving-slab as wide as the whole cist (Fig. 5A); nothing was found under these slabs. On their sides at the NE and SE corners of the cist were two Early Bronze Age Food Vessels of the bowl tradition, one tripartite, the other ribbed. Throughout the fill of the cist, and to some extent above the capstone, were tiny scattered fragments of an unburnt human skeleton. Also found were bones of rat and frog and two jet beads. On account of the small size of the cist, the character of the human bones and the presence of animal bones, the excavators argued that a defleshed and disarticulated skeleton was reburied here (Macalister and Murray 1931-2; Waddell 1990, 151-4, Fig. 117; Ó Ríordáin and Waddell 1993, 141-2, Figs 213-214).

Mound is on flat hilltop, which begins to slope down quite steeply 37m to SSE, so that when site is approached from this side it is mostly invisible until the summit is reached. From the hilltop, Frewin Hill (Site 22) is visible to S, Lough Owel and Knockdrin (Site 7) to SE, and Lough Iron to W.

Macalister and Murray (1931-2, 311) refer to a 'local belief that the monument belongs to the Táin Bó Cúalnge period or later'. A few fields downslope to W is the townland of Farra or Farrow, identified by Shaw (1921, 145) as the spot called 'Forrach', where Fiachra, brother of Niall of the Nine Hostages, died and was buried after being wounded on an expedition into Munster, according to the *Book of Leinster* (Wallace 1987, 25).

19. RATHLEVANAGH, MOUND-BARROW (PL. 8)

RMP: WM012-093 ('Barrow'); NGR: 24207/25991; 130-140m OD

Roughly circular and apparently flat-topped mound on low eminence with excellent views in all directions except to N, where higher ground rises a few fields away; ground drops away sharply to W and SW, but only slightly to N, E and SE. Site is in a small, disused triangular patch of land at WNW edge of large field that has been heavily ploughed in recent years to within c. 2m of mound. This patch of land, overgrown with gorse and brambles close to the mound, is matted with long, thick, ungrazed grass, and part of the mound is covered by a pile of disused fencing and other rubbish, so that its edges and upper surface cannot be clearly seen or felt. As such, its diameter and height can only be crudely estimated as 9m N-S x 8.5m E-W and up to 1.1m respectively, and, although there appears to be no ditch surrounding it, faint traces of one might not be currently discernible. Frewin Hill (Site 22) is clearly visible across Lough Owel to SW and Knockdrin (Site 7) to SE.

20. WATTSTOWN (FREWIN HILL), RING-BARROW (FIG. 5B)

RMP: WM011-130 ('Barrow'); NGR: 23744/25852; 140-150m OD

Fairly well preserved, roughly circular ring-barrow (Diam. 32m N-S) on ground sloping markedly down to W; W side of monument is heavily overgrown. Monument comprises a low central platform (Basal Diam. 17.6m N-S) surrounded by a broad, flat-bottomed ditch, 2.5-4m in width, and an outer bank, 4-4.5m in width from base of ditch to ground level outside. Platform rises from 0.48m above base of ditch on E side up to 0.94m above base of ditch on SW side. E side of platform appears flattened as if partly shorn off, and the adjacent ditch is wider here; this alteration appears to be related to a semicircular earthwork that adjoins NE side (See below). Where bank is well-preserved on NNE side it rises up to 1.3m above base of ditch, although on SW side, where it is fairly well-preserved, it rises only 0.6m above base of ditch; where

bank is very low on E side, it nonetheless rises up to 1.7m above base of ditch. Maximum height of bank above external ground level reaches 1m on WSW side. Maximum depth of ditch below and perpendicular to a line joining top of bank to upper surface of platform ranges from 0.57m at SSE side to 0.96m at E side.

There is a bowl-barrow (Site 21) in adjacent field 27m to ENE. Running approximately in a semicircle from NE side of the present monument around N side of the bowl-barrow, at a distance of no less than 10m from the latter, is a complex earthwork that appears to have been intended to link both monuments together. This earthwork is closely connected with the ring-barrow and either forms part of its original design or, when constructed, necessitated significant alterations to the pre-existing barrow. Bank of ring-barrow has been cut through on NE side by a low, V-shaped ditch, 7-7.5m wide, which joins onto ditch of ring-barrow 0.8m above its base. Where this broad ditch joins onto ditch of barrow, the latter continues its curve and appears to have been widened at the expense of the central platform, which has had its E side shorn off and flattened. On N side of ditch of semicircular earthwork is a low, flat-topped bank 2.5m in width and 0.45m in height, which runs for 40m into the next field, where it ends 12m to NW of the bowl-barrow; opposite side of the ditch appears to be formed by scarping the slightly higher ground to SE. At point where bank ends to NW of bowl-barrow, it curves in towards scarp, greatly narrowing the ditch. From this point onwards, ditch below scarp is far narrower, being 4.5m across and 1m deep to N of bowl-barrow, and there are only slight traces of a counterscarp bank beyond it; it runs in an ESE direction for 35m, where, about 16m ENE of the bowl-barrow, it ends, while the scarp itself kinks to E, running for another 17m before swerving to SSE and blending into the natural slope. Ground falls away sharply immediately to NE of this semicircular earthwork and, just beyond end of ditch and scarp, falls away quite steeply to E. Distance from start of earthwork at ring-barrow to E end is *c.* 75m and, with the ring-barrow at one end, its appearance in aerial photographs is not unlike the profile of an Iron Age brooch.

21. WATTSTOWN (FREWIN HILL), BOWL-BARROW (FIG. 5B; PLS 2-3, 18)

RMP: WM011-131 ('Barrow'); NGR: 23751/25856; 150-160m OD

Roughly circular mound (Diam. 9m N-S x 9.4m E-W) with shapely rounded profile, surrounded by shallow ditch, situated on flattish, gently N-sloping summit of spur of Frewin Hill. Where best preserved in NE quadrant, ditch is up to 3.2m in width with a depth of 0.1m below external ground level; mound rises up to 1.34m above ditch on this side. If ditch were well-preserved all round, overall diameter of monument would be somewhere in the vicinity of 15m.

Ring-barrow (Site 20) lies on sloping ground 27m to WSW, on opposite side of a recently constructed double-fence, over 4m in width, with trees planted in the middle. Running approximately in a semicircle from NE side of ring-barrow around the present monument is an earthwork comprising a scarp, ditch and outer bank (See Site 20). Large cairn or tumulus on summit of Frewin Hill (Site 22) is prominent to E, and ring-barrows at Balrath (Sites 1-2) would be visible to N but for trees.

22. WATTSTOWN (FREWIN HILL), MOUND-BARROW/?CAIRN (FIGS 5C, 6A; PL. 4, 18)

RMP: WM011-133 ('Barrow'); NGR: 23771/25850; 160-170m OD

Enormous, roughly circular mound (Diam. 33m NNW-SSE x 32m ENE-WSW) capped by trigonometrical station on flat-topped summit of Frewin Hill overlooking Lough Owel to E. Mound appears to have had a

flattened top (Diam. 9.6m N-S), though only the SE and particularly the NW ends of this are preserved on either side of a later field-fence, comprising a bank flanked by ditches, which runs over and cuts into the mound from WSW to ENE; large number of stones taken from ditches to form this bank suggests that the mound may be either a cairn or a very stony tumulus, and probing through the sod would appear to confirm this. Height of mound above surrounding ground ranges from 3.3m on W side to 4.1m on E side. Given its size and location, this may be a passage-tomb, although it is uncertain whether it is composed primarily of earth or stone, and no kerbstones or other diagnostic features are visible. ENE edge of mound appears to have been disturbed when an enclosure surrounding a recent mobile-phone mast was constructed.

Two other tiny, satellite barrows lie 8m to SW (Site 23) and 10m to WNW (Site 24) respectively. Nearby bowl-barrow (Site 21) is clearly visible on spur of Frewin Hill to NW, though ring-barrow (Site 20) on W-facing slope 27m to W of bowl-barrow is not visible. Ring-barrow at Monroe (Site 11) is visible to S and ring-barrows at Balrath to N (Sites 1-2) would be visible but for trees. Farther afield, barrows at Slane More (Site 32-4) are clearly visible to S, Knockdrin (Site 7) is visible on horizon to E, and barrows at Rathbennett (Site 18) on hilltop to N and Clanhugh Demesne (Site 3) on far shore of Lough Owel to NE would be visible but for trees. The Loughcrew hills in Co. Meath, site of an important Passage-tomb cemetery, are clearly visible to NE.

23. WATTSTOWN (FREWIN HILL), BOWL-BARROW (FIGS 5C, 6B)

RMP: WM011-132 ('Barrow'); NGR: 23770/25847; 160-170m OD

Small, low, roughly circular mound (Diam. 4.5m N-S x 4.4m E-W) with traces of shallow ditch, 1.5m wide, around base on S and SE sides, situated on flattish summit of Frewin Hill. Ground slopes down sharply immediately to SW and more gradually to SE, so that mound reaches a maximum height of 0.4m on SW side. Large cairn or tumulus (Site 22) lies 8m to NE, and 10m to WNW of this is a second tiny barrow (Site 24).

24. WATTSTOWN (FREWIN HILL), BOWL-BARROW (FIG. 5C)

NGR: 23770/25850; 160-170m OD

Small, low, roughly circular mound (Diam. 3.4m N-S x 3.5m E-W) with traces of shallow ditch, 1.5m wide, most clearly visible on SSW side, situated on flattish summit of Frewin Hill. Site was overgrown with nettles when examined, apparently following line of ditch but making this low-relief monument difficult to see; as such, height of mound could not be ascertained. Large cairn or tumulus (Site 22) lies 10m to ESE and 8m to SW of this is a second tiny barrow (Site 23). Barrow appears to lie on line between large tumulus (Site 22) and bowl-barrow (Site 21) to ENE. As with nearby Site 23 to S, ground slopes down sharply immediately to W.

25. WATTSTOWN, MOUND-BARROW/?BOWL-BARROW

RMP: WM011-139 ('Bowl-Barrow'); NGR: 23880/25833; 100-110m OD

Steep-sided, roughly circular earthen and stone mound (Diam. 11m N-S x 11m E-W) with domed or slightly pointed profile, up to 2.2m high at highest, ENE side. Mound composed of large amounts of stone mixed

with earth, but this is not a cairn *per se*, as some thick (c. 0.4m) layers of soil are exposed where cattle have eroded edge of mound on E side. There are very faint traces of what may be a broad, shallow ditch around base of mound on SE side. Mound is situated in low-lying pastureland c. 300m W of shore of Lough Owel. It has not been positioned on highest local elevation: there is a more prominent rise to SSW in same field and a N-S running ridge immediately NE of mound. Knockdrin (Site 7) is visible to E and Frewin Hill (Site 22) would be visible to W if there were no trees to obstruct the view.

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26. BALLYNACLIN, ?RING-BARROW/?HENGE/?ROYAL INAUGURATION SITE (FIG. 6C; PL. 9)

RMP: WM018-134 ('Ringfort'); NGR: 23787/25223; 110-120m OD

Enormous circular enclosure (Diam. 115m ENE-WSW) comprising a flat-topped central platform surrounded by a broad, deep ditch and a large, flat-topped external bank, with a circular mound and embanked enclosure on the central platform. There are many minor undulations on surface of platform and, given the extensive growth of nettles when examined, it is possible that there are other, unnoticed features here. Except for parts of NE and NW, perimeter of site is covered in trees and bushes; where these are present, bank and ditch are very well preserved on account of the roots creating a rigid mesh which keeps the earth from eroding, and the canopy lessening the impact of precipitation. In places, central platform appears to rise above external ground level, suggesting that the low hilltop has been scarped. Its upper surface measures 89m N-S x 82m E-W; the corresponding measurements for base of platform are 97m N-S x 90.5m E-W. Where well preserved, platform has clearly defined edge with steep drop into ditch, although in some places, such as WSW side, edge of platform is indistinct and ditch silted up due to movement of cattle. On well-preserved NW side, platform rises up to 2.6m above base of ditch. Where best preserved, ditch is flat-bottomed, up to 5m in width, and, where deepest at NW side, maximum depth below and perpendicular to a line joining top of bank to upper surface of platform is 2.5m. On NW side width of upper part of ditch from upper edge of platform to inner edge of top of bank is 14.2m. Where best preserved, such as SW side, bank is up to 8.5m in width, has a broad, flat upper surface, 2-3.5m in width, reaches up to 1.5m above external ground level and up to 2.6m above base of ditch. Its width varies greatly around the site, being quite narrow at more exposed and consequently more eroded N side and much wider at tree-covered S side. There are various minor, modern breaches in the bank due to movement of cattle.

Mound lies to NW of centre of enclosure, 13.5m from NW edge of platform. Although its edges are difficult to make out in places, especially under summer vegetation, it appears to be subcircular (Diam. 13.5m N-S x 16m E-W) with greatest height of 0.90m above level of platform on NW side due to platform sloping gently downwards from S to N.

Embanked enclosure is located 29.5m to SE of mound, on SE edge of platform abutting the ditch, and comprises a roughly D-shaped area (33m N-S x 19m E-W) defined on E side by ditch of main enclosure and on W side by a flat-topped bank, 2.6m wide at base and 0.67m high above external ground level. The overall impression is that the enclosure is curvilinear, but—aside from where it abuts ditch of main enclosure—it is really constructed of four straight or only slightly curved stretches of bank. Moving

anticlockwise from N to S, these are 8m, 6m, 17m and 20m in length respectively. There is a clear, neat entrance, 2m in width, in the first of these, at N end of enclosure. Ground within enclosure is irregular, though generally higher than level of platform on which it rests, with what appear to be several raised mounds to S of centre.

Site is on low hilltop in lush pastureland; a kettle-hole lake lies in field to NE, in hollow at base of eminence on which monument is sited.

27. CULLEEN MORE, MOUND-BARROW

RMP: WM019-013 ('Barrow'); NGR: 24311/25656; 130-140m OD

Small, flat-topped subcircular earthen mound (Diam. 7m NS x 5.5m EW), up to 0.65m above surrounding ground on high SW side, on top of low ridge running NE-SW but carved through by the N4 road. There is an Ordnance Survey benchmark on upper surface of mound. There is an earthfast boulder, possibly a kerbstone, on WSW side; a second earthfast boulder on N side might also be a kerbstone, although it is currently 0.6m beyond edge of mound. Running downhill to SE directly from mound, and then up onto a second ridge to SE, is what appears to be a faint, slightly raised trackway 2.2m in width. At base of ridge 25m to SE of mound, W side of trackway appears to have been built up with stones to form a terrace over lower ground to W. This 'trackway' is possibly the remains of an old field-boundary, and this is supported by the presence of a linear arrangement of large boulders along it on slope just SE of mound. Barrow at Irishtown (Site 28) is clearly visible to SW. Frewin Hill (Site 22) is visible to W and Knockdrin (Site 7) to E.

28. IRISHTOWN, MOUND-BARROW (PLS 14-15)

RMP: WM019-030 ('Barrow'); NGR: 24234/25558; 110-120m OD

Tall, steep-sided conical tumulus (Diam. 16.5m NS x 18m EW), situated on low, natural eminence in kame and kettle-hole landscape, with a kettle-hole lake close by to NE (pers. comm. Seamus O'Brien). Ground level varies greatly around monument, so that its height ranges from 3.1m on SW side to 3.9m on NE side; ground falls away sharply to SE, making it difficult to distinguish between slope of mound and the natural slope, but it appears to have been highest on this side. Mound apparently had a rounded top originally, although there may have been a very small, flattened apex. The top has been dug into at some stage, possibly by treasure-hunters: an area c. 1.5m x c. 1.2m has been dug to a depth of c. 0.35m. There is some recent cattle-erosion around edges of mound, showing it to be composed of very stony earth. Various ledges or steps are also visible around its circumference, but none appears to run continuously around. While the clear steps on the Slane More barrows suggest the possibility that these ledges are original features, their irregular character and the smooth, elegant profile surviving on the SSW side strongly suggests that they are paths made by cattle climbing the mound or terraces resulting from soil-flow.

There is a old, overgrown quarry just N of mound. Mound at Culleen More (Site 27) is just visible to NE and Knockdrin (Site 7) is very prominent to ENE.

29. SLANE MORE, PLATFORM-BARROW

RMP: WM018-079 ('Ringfort'); NGR: 23746/25548; 130-140m OD

Large subcircular earthwork, comprising a slightly dished platform (Diam. 39.5m NNE-SSW x 43m ESE-WNW) surrounded by a ditch (Diam. 49m NNE-SSW x 50m ESE-WNW), with traces of an external bank. Despite dished appearance of platform, there is no clear trace of a bank around its edge that might justify its classification as a ringfort in the RMP. A field fence marked by mature deciduous trees crosses ESE end of site from NE to SW, so that the monument extends over two fields, with only the smaller segment on ESE side showing traces of a low, external bank, 4m in width, below level of central platform. If bank originally extended into adjacent field, around the entire monument—and there is no reason to doubt that this was the case—overall diameter would be *c.* 58m. Where best preserved on SW side, ditch is approximately flat-based, 2-2.5m in width at base, and up to 0.44m in maximum depth below and perpendicular to a line joining upper edge of platform to external ground level, although this measurement must be regarded as minimal given that outer bank is no longer visible in this area. Central mound rises up to 0.64m above base of ditch and appears to be raised above surrounding ground.

Monument lies in broadly SW-sloping pastureland, 8m to NE of a bowl-barrow (Site 30) and *c.* 100m to NE of another, possible prehistoric burial mound (Site 31). Further upslope, on hilltop *c.* 150m to NE, are three further barrows (Sites 32-4). All six sites form an approximately linear arrangement from NE to SW.

30. SLANE MORE, BOWL-BARROW

RMP: WM018-080 ('Barrow'); NGR: 23742/25544; 130-140m OD

Poorly preserved, low-relief, subcircular bowl-barrow, comprising a domed central mound (Diam. 14m N-S x 12.5m E-W) surrounded by a poorly preserved ditch (practically invisible in NW quadrant) with an estimated overall diameter of 21.5m N-S x 19m E-W. Where best preserved at ESE side, ditch is roughly 2m in width, although it appears to be broader and more flattened out elsewhere; it reaches a maximum depth of 0.30m below and perpendicular to a line joining the mound to external ground level.

Barrow lies on a kind of flattish ledge or low eminence 8m SW of, and slightly lower than, a platform-barrow (Site 29) in pastureland that slopes down to SW. Immediately S and SW of barrow, ground falls away sharply. Another possible prehistoric burial mound (Site 31) lies in field across road *c.* 50m to SW. Further upslope, on hilltop to NE, are three additional barrows (Sites 32-4). All six sites form an approximately linear arrangement from NE to SW.

31. SLANE MORE, UNCLASSIFIED

RMP: WM018-081 ('Barrow'); NGR: 23739/25540; 130-140m OD

Greatly damaged and densely overgrown monument on ground sloping down to SW, roughly circular (Diam. 25-30m) in plan with NE side removed during road-widening *c.* early 1980s (pers. comm. Tommy Cassidy of Slane More). Monument is raised above surrounding ground, though its centre is irregularly hollowed out to varying depths (due in part to cattle), and is surrounded by a bank in varying states of preservation. At E side, the clearly defined bank is 5.2m in width; at N side it is 7.3m in width and more massive. At N side bank is raised 1m above external ground level and 1.3m above deepest part of hollowed area inside. N and E stretches of bank end with a sheer cut just inside modern field boundary, clearly showing where the monument was damaged by road-widening. The bank is very stony, most clearly visible

on N side where cattle have worn away the sod; there are many stones in the hollowed interior, especially at the cattle-worn N side, although some of these may have slipped from the bank. It is also to be wondered whether the varying levels of interior of monument might relate to disturbances from time of road-widening project.

In its current state, monument is difficult to classify, although given its appearance—a raised area apparently surrounded by a stony bank—it is difficult to accept its classification as a barrow in the RMP. If a burial mound at all, it might be a hollowed out cairn or mound-barrow. In support of its interpretation as a burial monument, there are two barrows *c.* 50m (Site 30) and *c.* 100m (Site 29) uphill in field across road to NE, and on hilltop *c.* 250m to NE are three further barrows. All six sites form an approximately linear arrangement from NE to SW.

32/33/34. SLANE MORE, BOWL-BARROWS/STEPPED-BARROWS (FIG. 7; PLS 1, 5)

RMP: WM018-078 ('Barrow - Group'); NGR: 23761/25560; 140-150m OD

Three roughly circular, flat-topped earthen mounds (Sites 32-4, 'A-C' here) on elongated, flattish hilltop running NE-SW. Westernmost mound (A), on highest part of hilltop, is the largest of the three and easternmost mound (C) is by far the smallest. The mounds are not positioned on a straight line, centre of Mound B being slightly to N of a line joining centres of Mounds A and C. Mound B is 6m from Mound A and Mound C is 11.5 m from Mound B. The mounds have been severely eroded by cattle in recent times, Mound A and especially Mound B having lost large pieces on the perimeter. This is most striking when they are compared with the photograph published by Shaw in 1921 (See Pl. 1).

Mound A: Tall, steep-sided, roughly conical mound with flat top (Diam. 15.7m N-S x 17m E-W) on ground sloping down to E and SE, so that its height above surrounding ground varies from 2m on SW side to 2.7m on SE side. Flat top of mound measures 4.1m N-S by 4.6m E-W and slopes down gently from S to N, with a drop of 11cm, and from E-W, with a drop of 16cm. Between one-third and half way up the sides of the mound is a thin ledge (0.5m in width where best preserved at NE) running horizontally around its circumference in contrast with the varying ground level, and reaching a height of 1.16m above ground level where most clearly defined at NE. This ledge also marks a break in slope in the mound's profile, the upper part being slightly steeper. Traces of a shallow ditch, 2.8-3.1m in width are visible on W side of mound; ground naturally dips down on E and SE sides, between Mounds A and B.

Mound B, centrally positioned and again roughly conical (Diam. 11.7m N-S x 11.1m E-W), is 1.74m in greatest height. As with Mound A, there is a ledge or step running around its circumference, 0.50-0.80m wide, being widest at SSE, but here it is just below top of mound and much more clearly defined, giving the appearance of a smaller, flat-topped mound (Diam. 3.8m x 3.5m) up to 0.65m high, on top of a larger one (See Pl. p. 1). Traces of a shallow ditch 3-4m in width are visible on N and NW sides of mound; ground naturally dips down on SW side, between Mounds A and B.

Mound C (Diam. 9.3m N-S x 7.1m E-W), subcircular in shape, is 1.3m in greatest height. Upper part of mound appears to have been disturbed: in Shaw's photograph, published in 1921 (See Pl. p. 1), it appears to have been stepped at the top like Mound B, with an approximately flat-topped, subcircular cap (Diam. 2.3m NS x 2.7m EW), up to 0.4m high at highest SE side, and surrounded by a broad shelf or ledge.

To N of the mounds, 24m from Mound A, 14.5m from Mound B and 11.5m from Mound C, is a ditch 2.5m wide, immediately outside of which is a bank, 1.8m in width, which rises 0.36m above ditch and 0.95m above ground level to N. This ditch and bank run roughly E-W from a N-S running hedgerow at W end, curving outwardly to N in a gentle arc around the flattish hilltop, but, 70m to E of the hedgerow, ditch is no longer apparent and bank swerves to NE, or rather appears to join onto a second bank which runs in a NE-SW direction. The NE stretch of this bank is 2.5m in width and 0.50m in height and runs for 6.7m to NE from its point of junction with the E-W running bank and ditch before reaching a gap 2.5m in width, apparently an entranceway, and then continuing for another 24m downhill to NE where it abruptly ends just 1m before joining at a sharp angle onto a N-S running bank and ditch. The SW stretch of this bank is separated from NE stretch by a gap of 2m. It runs for 23m to SW, with two slight but clear kinks, until it joins onto or runs along N side of Mound C and then continues in SW direction for another 19m, before finally kinking to S and running for another 3.5m.

The S side of the hilltop is delimited by a roughly E-W-running ditch with hedgerow on its S side, which swerves S to curve around Mound A at a distance of 2.7m. To S of Mound C there is a gap in the ditch that serves as a modern passage between fields, beyond which it runs off in a straight line to E. At E side of gap, a further bank and ditch, again forming a modern field boundary, run downhill to N, almost intersecting with NE stretch of bank described in previous paragraph.

Within *c.* 250m to SW are two further barrows (Sites 29-30) and a third possible prehistoric burial mound (Site 31). All six sites form an approximately linear arrangement from NE to SW. Frewin Hill (Site 22) is clearly visible to N.

35. WALSHSTOWN SOUTH, RING-BARROW (FIGS 8-9A & COVER ILLUSTRATION)

RMP: WM018-08501 ('Ring-barrow'); NGR: 23951/25459; 120-130m OD

Very well preserved, roughly circular ring-barrow (Diam. 25.5m N-S x 25m E-W) composed of very stony earth, situated on upper E-facing slope of low hill. Monument comprises a central mound (Basal Diam. 11.3m N-S x 10m E-W) surrounded by a flat-bottomed ditch, 2.7-3.2m in width, and a very stony outer bank, 3.5-4m in width from base of ditch to ground level outside. On S side is an irregularly shaped gap in the bank 5m in length, apparently due to later disturbance. Central mound, which appears to be raised slightly above level of surrounding ground, rises up to 1.5m above base of ditch on E side, being higher on N and E sides than S and W sides. Bank rises up to 1.4m above base of ditch on W side, being higher on S and W sides than N and E sides. Maximum depth of ditch below and perpendicular to a line joining top of bank to upper surface of platform is 0.95m, and the distribution of such depths (N: 95cm; S: 85cm; E: 94cm; W: 95cm) indicates a fairly uniform depth around its circumference.

Running SW from W side of barrow is a scarp or possibly a low bank 1.8m wide, the ground to NW of it being lower than that to SE; at 15.5m from the barrow it kinks to SSE, running as a scarp for another 10.5m to another barrow on summit of hill (Site 36) 20m to WSW of ring-barrow. Running E from this mound in a very gently S-curving line for 20m is another low scarp, the ground to S being 0.30m lower than that to N and dropping down quite steeply. E end of this scarp is 7m SW of ring-barrow. These two scarps or low banks are identified as an 'Enclosure' in RMP (WM018-08502), and although the second

scarp does not join onto the ring-barrow, the overall effect is that the flattish summit of this low hill has been defined by a scarp, linking the mound at highest part of hill to the ring-barrow on slope of hill to ENE.

36. WALSHSTOWN SOUTH, MOUND-BARROW

RMP: WM018-08503 ('Mound'); NGR: 23951/25459; 120-130m OD

Subcircular, approximately flat-topped earthen mound (Diam. 4.5 N-S x 6.1 E-W), on summit of low hill 20m to WSW of ring-barrow (Site 35) and site of OS benchmark on older editions of OS 6" map. S side of mound has been heavily eroded by cattle in recent times, so that it currently has a D-shape, and difference between N-S and E-W diameters—over 1.5m—suggests that a substantial piece of the mound may have been removed. The curve of the mound suggests an original N-S diameter of up to 6.5m. Projecting from eroded S side is the end of a flat, horizontal slab 0.23m in width. Height of mound on intact sides is up to 0.66m.

Mound appears to be linked by scarps to nearby ring-barrow (See Site 35).

DISQUALIFIED SITES

1. BALLINALACK

RMP: WM006-048 ('Mound'); NGR: 23487/26475

There is a raised and flattened, irregular shaped area of ground here, much better defined on N side than S, but no discrete mound is visible, certainly nothing that could be classified as a burial monument.

2. MONROE

RMP: WM011-142 ('Barrow'); NGR 23853/25760

This site, marked *Lack Loman* (*Leac Lomán*, St. Loman's Stone) on OS 6" map, has been identified as a barrow in the RMP. It comprises a naturally shaped, dished flagstone, surrounded by an oval, penannular bank (Diam. 7m NE-SW x 6m NW-SE) up to 0.5m high, fenced off from the surrounding field and heavily overgrown with thick grass. An entrance passage 0.6m in width runs for a distance of 1.8m from NW perimeter to flagstone at centre of monument. There are no grounds for identifying this monument as a barrow, tumulus or any other kind of prehistoric burial. The penannular bank, which probing shows to contain much stone beneath the sod, surrounds what was an important station for pilgrims visiting church of Portloman in 1830s (OSL 1837, Vol. I, 176-80) and has the appearance of a pilgrims' cairn. According to local information gathered by the writer, travellers used to visit the stone up until c. 10 years ago and there was a tradition of pilgrims leaving stones at it.

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JRSAI *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*

PRIA *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*

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Fig. 1: Map of the study area, from OS Discovery Series sheet 41. Most of the barrows and mounds in the catalogue are marked in red.

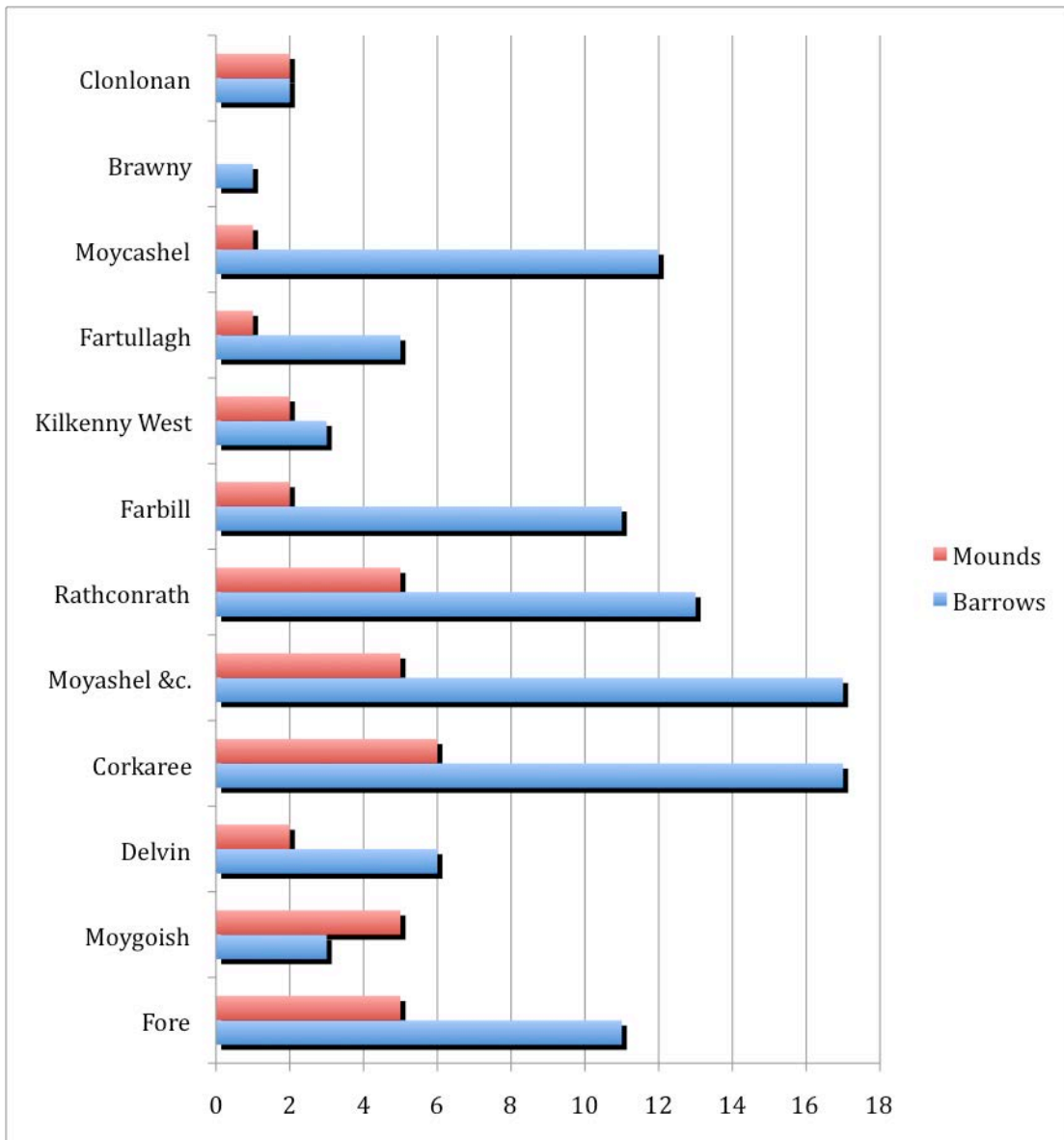
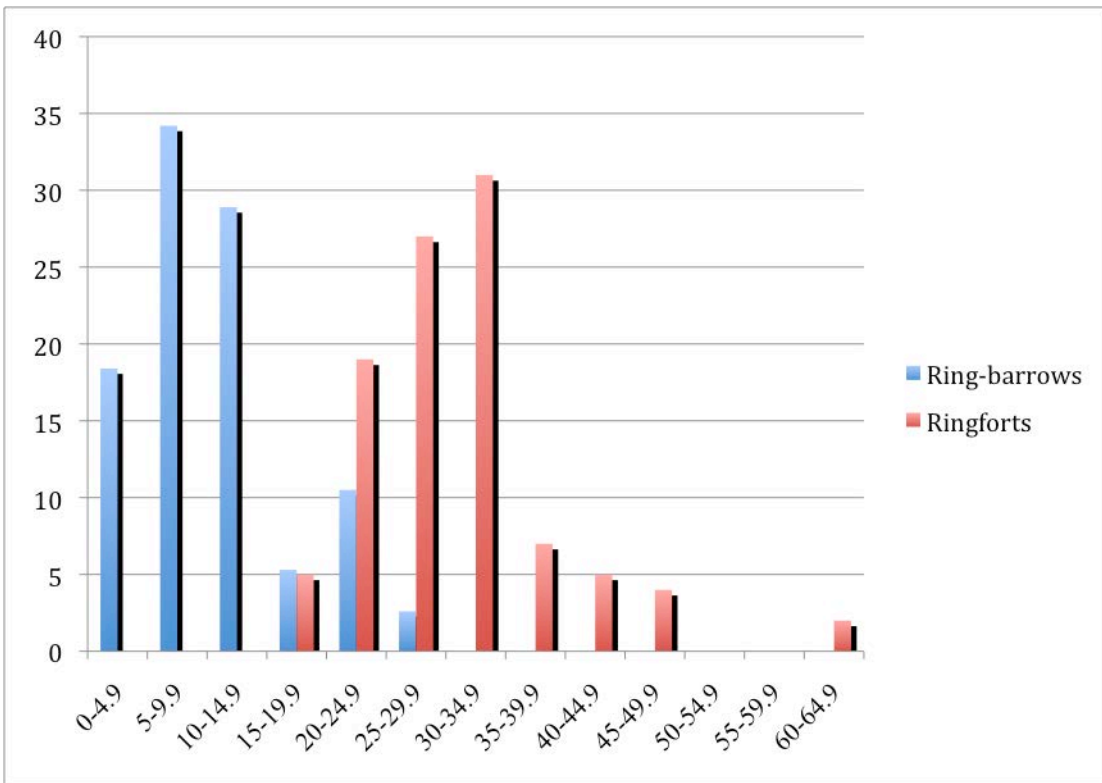
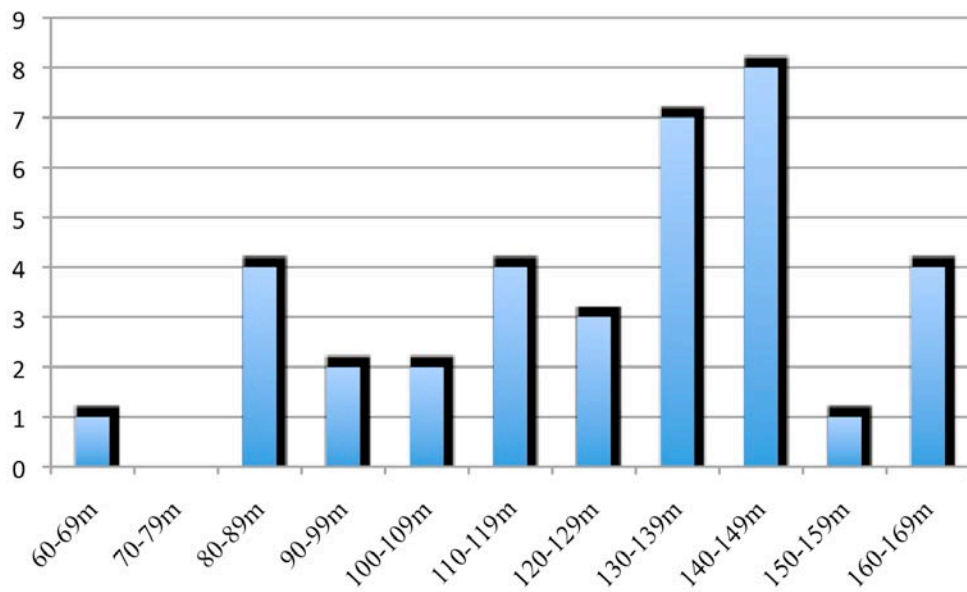


Fig. 2: Mounds and barrows in the County Westmeath RMP (1996), numerical distribution by barony.



(A)



(B)

Fig. 3: A. Numerical distribution of maximum internal diameters of all ring-barrows and the first 100 earthen ringforts for which measurements were available in the Archaeological Inventory of County Sligo, Vol. I (Egan *et al.* 2005), banded at 5m intervals; (B) Numerical distribution of altitudes for mounds and barrows in the study area, banded at 10m intervals.

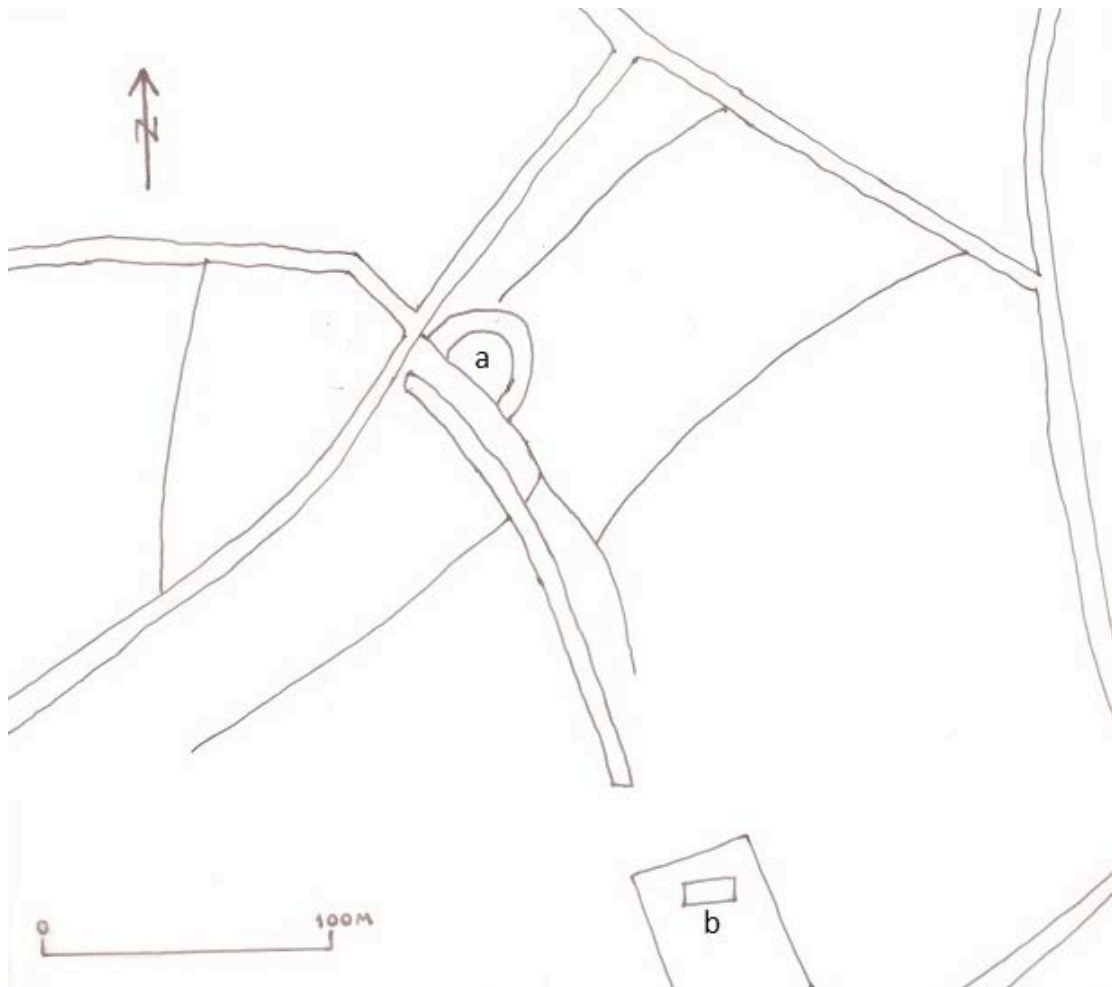


Fig. 4: Plan of modern (double lines) and pre-1837 (single lines) field fences in the vicinity of ring-barrow at Leny (a, Site 10), with Leny church marking site of Early Christian foundation at bottom of picture (b). Traced from aerial photograph on the National Monuments website.

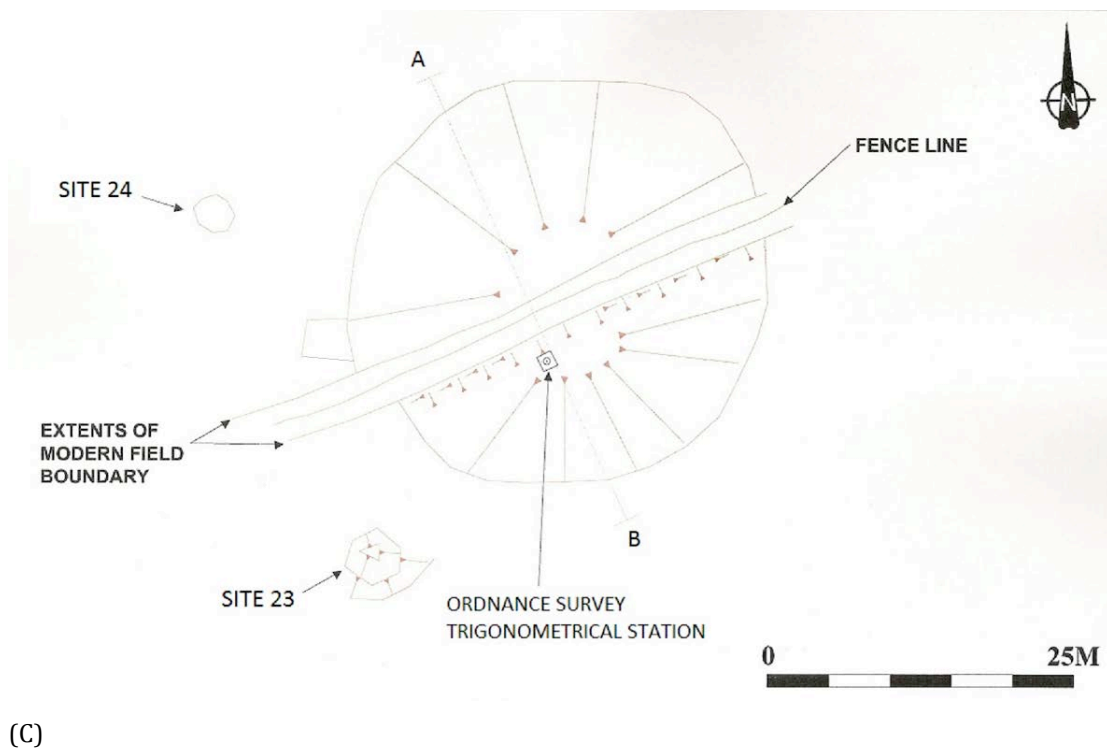
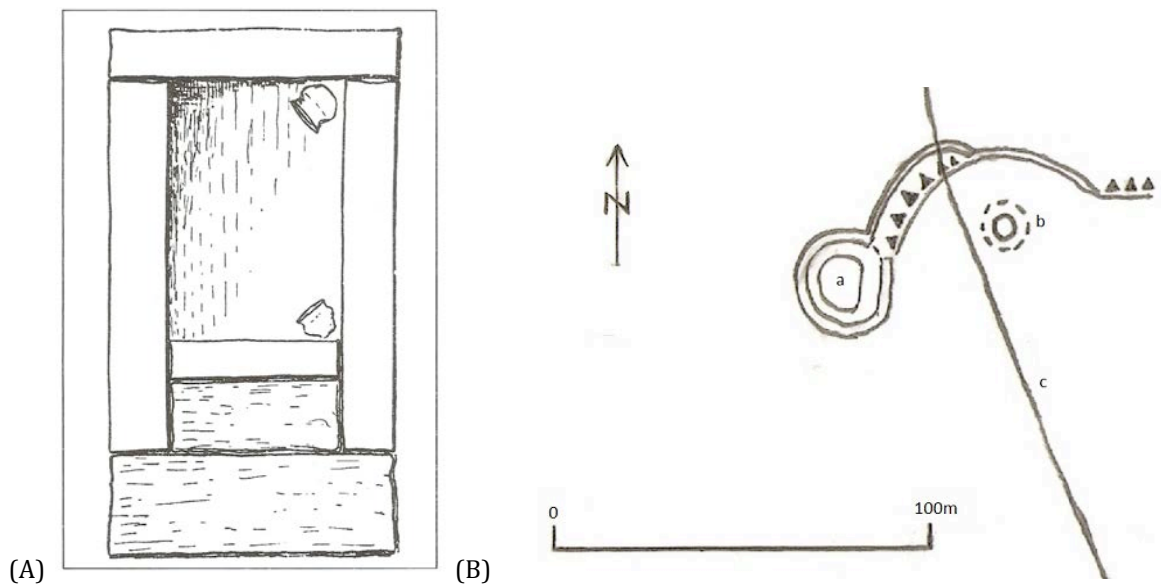


Fig. 5: A. Cist in tumulus at Rathbennett (Site 18), after Macalister and Murray (1931-2, Fig. 1); B. Plan of earthwork in Wattstown townland running from ringbarrow (a, Site 20) in a northern arc around bowl-barrow (b, Site 21), with 4m wide modern field fence (c) running through it, traced from OSI aerial photograph; C. Plan of monuments on summit of Frewin Hill (Wattstown), including main mound (Site 22) to right and satellites (Sites 23-4) to left, prepared by Oscar Ryan.

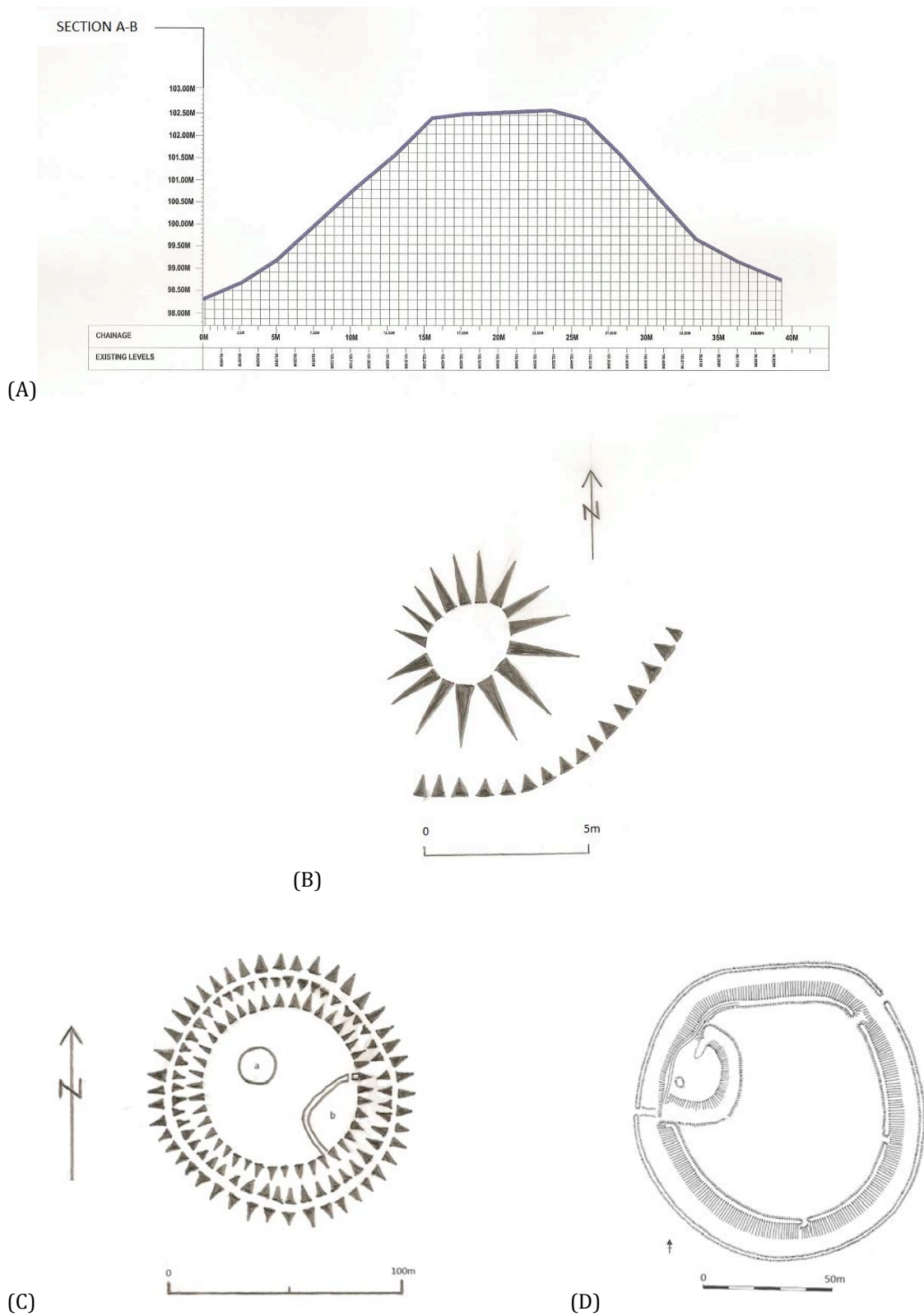


Fig. 6: A. Section across main mound on summit of Frewin Hill, Wattstown (Site 22), prepared by Oscar Ryan; B. Plan of bowl-barrow at Wattstown (Site 23); C. Sketch-plan of earthwork at Ballynaclin (Site 26), based on tracing from OS 6" sheet with internal features added: (a) mound and (b) embanked enclosure; D. Plan of earthwork at Sessiaghmagarroll, Co. Tyrone, after Herity (1993, Fig. 28b).

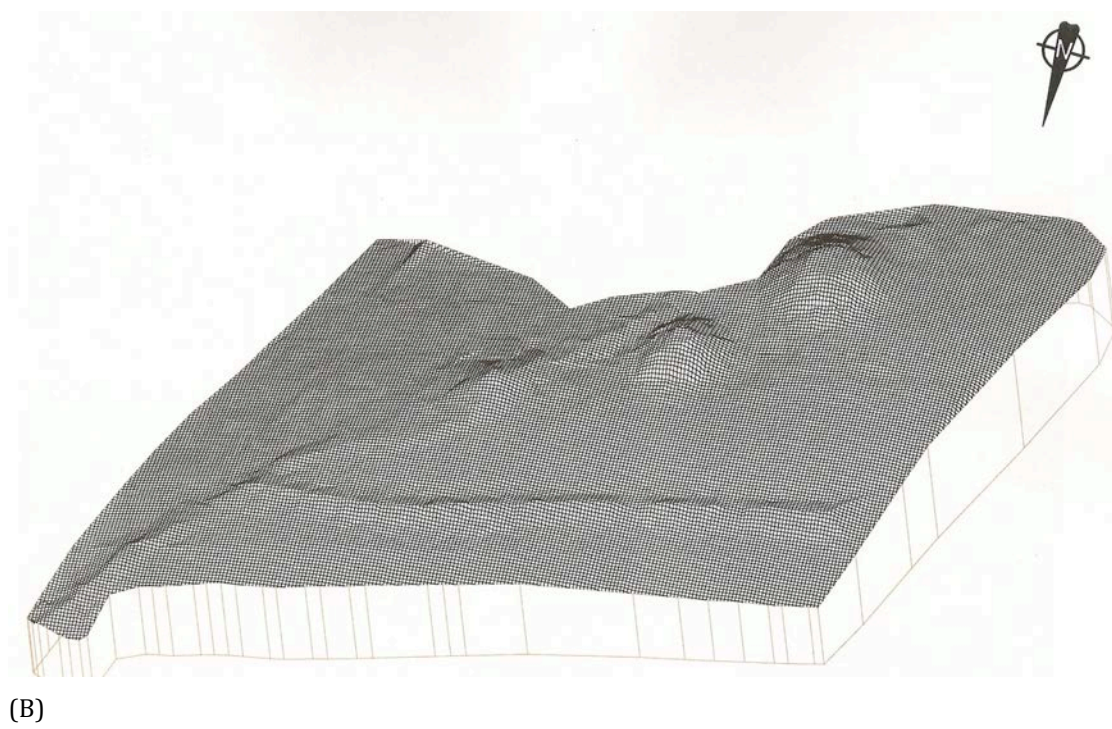
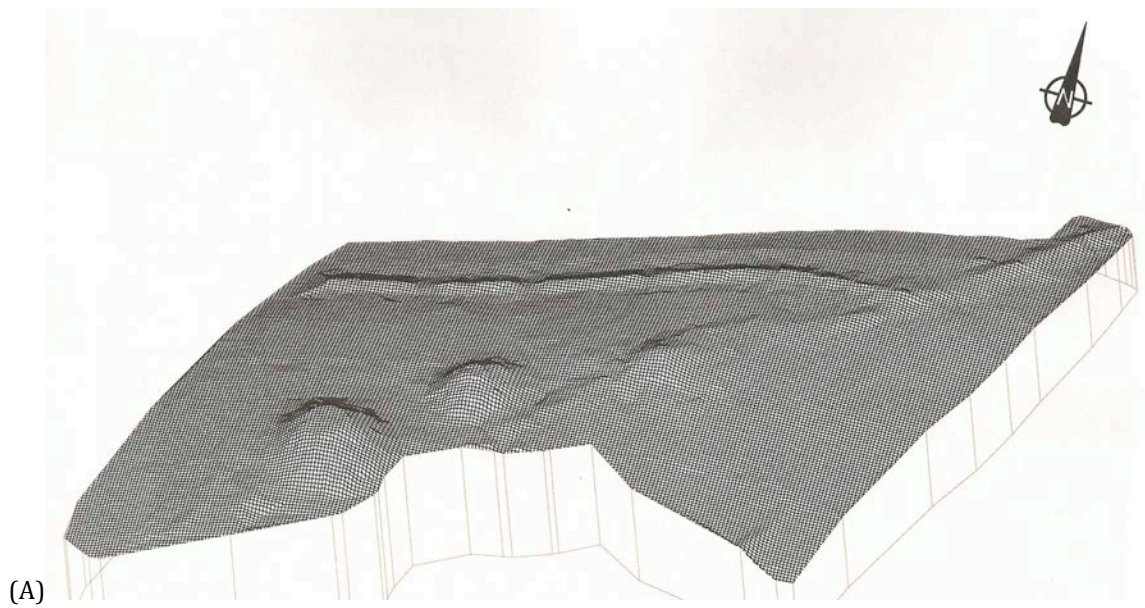
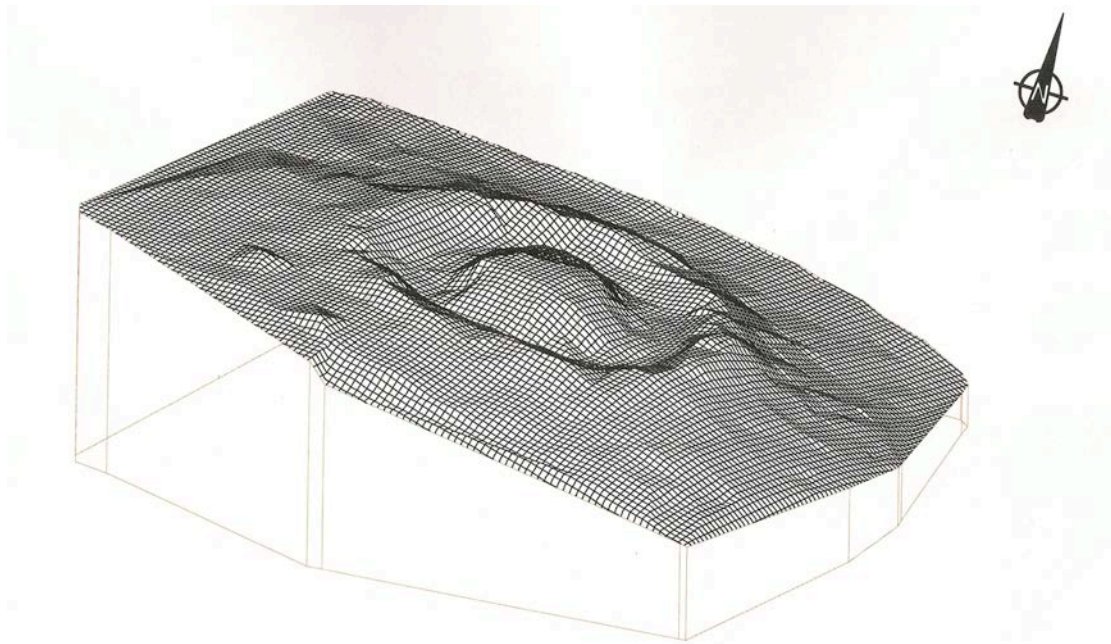
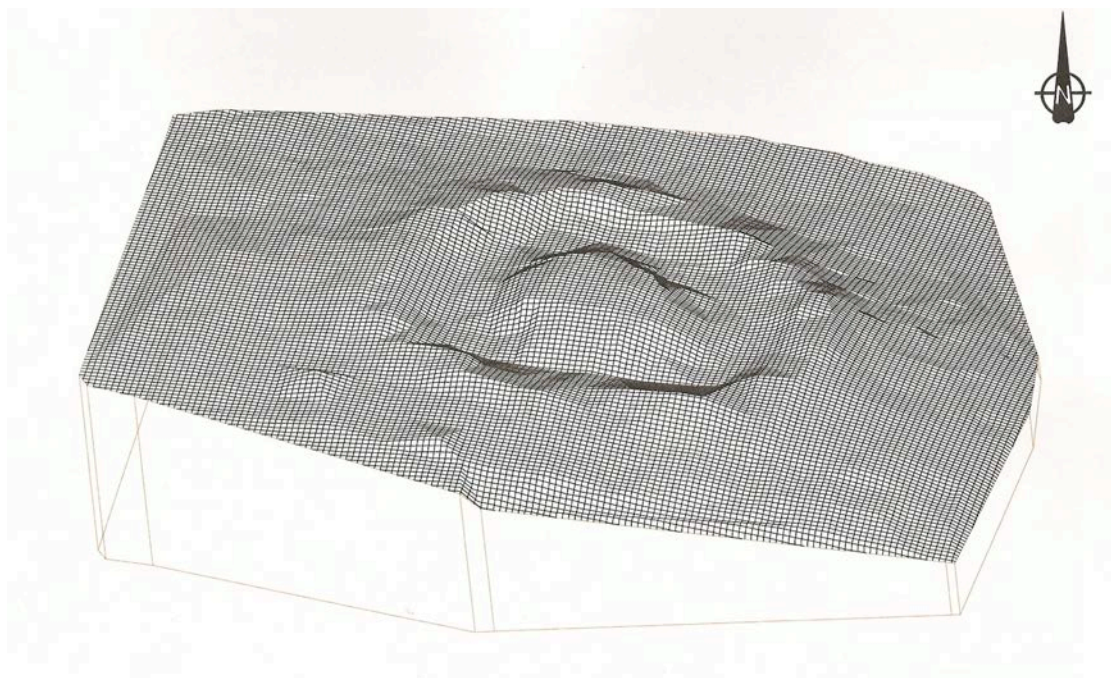


Fig. 7: GPS survey of hilltop at Slane More (Sites 32-4 and associated earthworks), from the south (A) and from the north (B), prepared by Oscar Ryan.

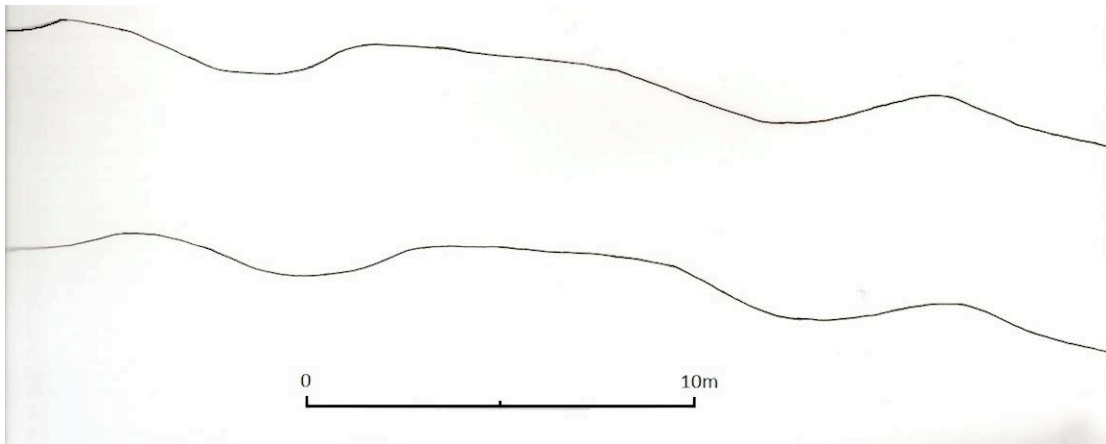


(A)

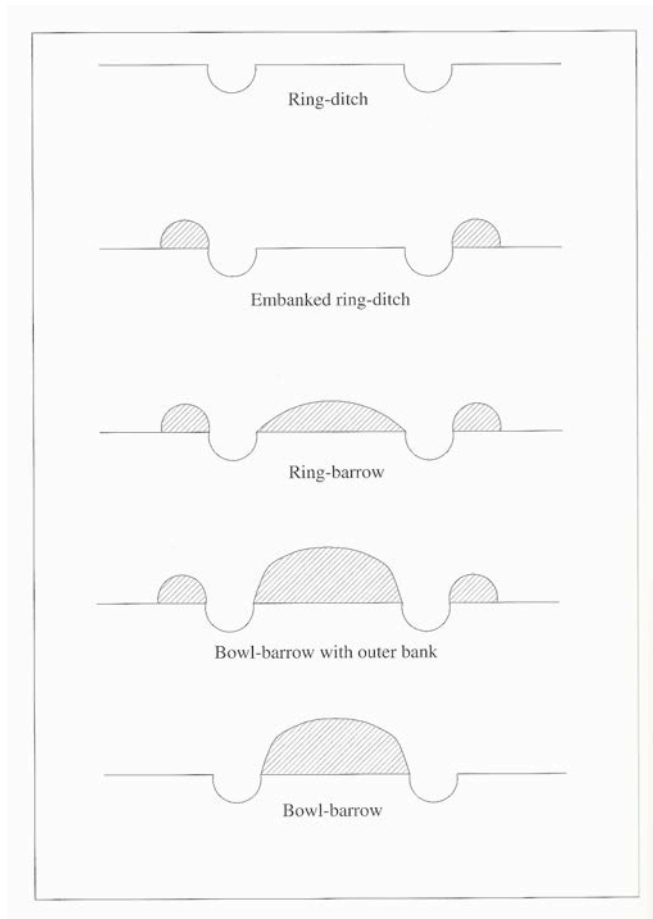


(B)

Fig. 8: GPS survey of ring-barrow at Walshestown South (Site 35), from the south-east (A) and from the south (B), prepared by Oscar Ryan.



(A)



(B)

Fig. 9: A. Sections across ring-barrow at Walshestown South (Site 35), W-E (top) and S-N (bottom); B. Five main types of barrow found at the royal site of Tara, after Newman (1997, Fig. 65).



Pl. 2. Bowl-barrow at Wattstown (Frewin Hill), Site 21 (Scale is 2m high).



Pl. 3. Bowl-barrow at Wattstown (Site 21) from cairn on top of Frewin Hill (Site 22).



Pl. 4. Cairn or tumulus at Wattstown (Frewin Hill), Site 22 (Scale is 2m high).



Pl. 5. Barrows at Slane More (Sites 32-4) from cairn on top of Frewin Hill (Site 22).



Pl. 6. Loughcrew hills, site of Passage-tomb cemetery, from cairn on top of Frewin Hill (Site 22).



Pl. 7. Knockdrin (Site 7) from cairn on top of Frewin Hill (Site 22).



Pl. 8. Barrow at Rathlevanagh, Site 19 (Scale is graduated at 20cm intervals).



Pl. 9. Embanked enclosure on central platform at Ballynaclin, Site 26 (Scale is 2m high).



Pl. 10. Tumulus surrounded by broad, shallow ditch at Leny, Site 8 (Scale is 2m high).



Pl. 11. Close up of tumulus at Leny, Site 8 (Scale is graduated at 20cm intervals).



Pl. 12. Eroded, dome-shaped tumulus at Fulmort, Site 4 (Scale is graduated at 20cm intervals).



Pl. 13. Eroded, dome-shaped tumulus at Fulmort, Site 4 (Scale is graduated at 20cm intervals).



Pl. 14. Conical tumulus at Irishtown, Site 28, from the N (Scale 2m high).



Pl. 15. Conical tumulus at Irishtown, Site 28, from the E, showing how ground drops down to S of mound (Scale is graduated at 20cm intervals).



Pl. 16. Ring-barrow at Balrath, Site 2 (Scale is 2m high).



Pl. 17. Ditch on W side of ring-barrow at Balrath, Site 2 (Scale is graduated at 20cm intervals).



Pl. 18. Cairn (to left) and bowl-barrow (to right) on Frewin Hill and its western spur (Sites 21-2), from ring-barrow at Balrath (Site 2).