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Archaeological Impact Assessment at

Corlea, Keenagh,
Co. Longford
December 2016

Client: Longford Co. Co. County Hall, Co. Longford

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Non-Technical Summery

This project, aims to develop a walkway and tourist attraction around Corlea Bog and Trackway centre. The site is currently in use as cutaway bog and a visitor centre centred around the Corlea Trackway. Corlea Trackway is an archaeological monument of international importance and is in state ownership site number 677. 59 toghers or trackways have been identified in the Corlea bog and an even greater number in the surrounding peatland. The proposed development consists of several tracks across the site. The works will not include any excavation as part of the development. However due to the importance of the site a number of mitigation strategies have been recommended. This includes archaeological oversight of the construction phase and the use of specialist machinery to avoid compression of the peatland.

1 Introduction

This project, aims to develop a walkway and tourist attraction around Corlea Bog and Trackway centre. This project has been formulated by Longford County Council with the aim of developing a significant wilderness park around the bogs of South Longford, extending to Lough Ree and across the River Shannon into County Roscommon.

The site is currently in use as cutaway bog and a visitor centre centred around the Corlea Trackway. Corlea Trackway is an archaeological monument of international importance and is in state ownership site number 677.

Corlea Trackway was excavated in the mid 1980's. It was a substantial track of large oak timbers running across the bog. A series of other smaller trackways were also recorded and excavated over the subsequent period in its vicinity (Appendix II).

The report includes a desktop study and a site inspection. The desktop section of the report was compiled using: The Records of Monuments and Places; Excavations Bulletin; historic maps; aerial photographs; place names and historic books and journals.

A field inspection of the proposed site was also carried out as part of the assessment. This was undertaken on a dry day in December 2016.



Figure 1: Location of the development in Co. Longford

2 Assessment Methodology

2.1 Study Methodology

This assessment consists of a paper survey identifying all recorded sites within the vicinity of the proposed development and a site inspection. The methodology has been conducted based on the guidelines from the Department of the Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DAHG.).

2.2 Desktop Survey

The desktop survey undertaken consisted of a document and cartographic search utilising a number of sources including the following:

- **Record of Monuments and Places (RMP);** The RMP records known upstanding archaeological monuments, the original location of destroyed monuments and the location of possible sites identified through, documentary, cartographic, photographic research and field inspections. The RMP consists of a list, organised by county and subdivided by 6" map sheets showing the location of each site. The RMP data is compiled from the files of the Archaeological Survey

- **Cartographic Sources;**The following maps were examined: 1st edition Ordnance Survey Map of the Dublin County (1836-1846) and 2nd edition Ordnance Survey Map of the Dublin County (1908).
- **Literary Sources;** Various published sources, including local and national journals, were consulted to establish a historical background for the proposed development site. Literary sources are a valuable means of completing the written record of an area and gaining insight into the history of the environs of the proposed development. Principal archaeological sources include:

The Excavations Bulletin; Local Journals; Published archaeological and architectural inventories; Peter Harbison, (1975). *Guide to the National Monuments of Ireland*; and O'Donovan's *Ordnance Survey Letters*.

A comprehensive list of all literary sources consulted is given in the bibliography.

2.3 Site Inspection

An archaeological field inspection survey seeks to verify the location and extent of known archaeological features and to record the location and extent of any newly identified features. A field inspection should also identify any areas of archaeological potential with no above ground visibility.

3 The Receiving Environment

- 3.1 The proposed site is cut away bog which has been substantially worked in most parts down to bedrock by Bord Na Mona. Many areas of the site contain exposed gravel and developing scrub. The area is now out of peat production for a number of years and has started to be

colonised by pioneer plant species. No peat will be removed from the site during the constructing of the tracks.

4 General Archaeological and Historical Summary

- 4.1 Irish peat bogs have long been recognised as important source of information from the past. Their anaerobic environment has preserved a wide variety of archaeological sites and remains. Many thousands of archaeological sites including settlements, ritual sites and hoard sites, trackways, platforms and post-rows dating from the Neolithic to the Medieval period have been identified and some have been fully excavated. In conjunction with Bord Na Mona large surveys have been undertaken across the land in their ownership. The method of identifying archaeological sites in these areas has been to walk the along the drains cut into the milled bogs by Bord na Móna. These drains provide a section through the bog that allow sites at various depths to be identified. The depths of sites correlate to the deposition of peat in the past.
- 4.2 The Corlea Trackway was uncovered as a result of peat milling during the 1980's. It is an Iron Age ancient wooden road (toghers) built across the bog in 148 BC. This oak road is the largest of its kind to have been uncovered in Europe and was excavated by Professor Barry Raftery of University College Dublin. The Heritage centre has been built around a display of the original ancient road with newly built tracks exploring the area around the centre.
- 4.3 Excavations to 1991 in Corlea bog revealed 59 toghers in an area of around 125 hectares and further work has raised the total to 108 with a further 76 in the nearby Derryoghil bog. Most these toghers are constructed from woven hurdles laid on heaped brushwood on top of

the surface, built to be used by people on foot. Bord na Móna and the Office of Public Works have carried out conservation work on the surrounding bog to ensure that it remains wet and that the buried road remains preserved.

4.4 Archaeological Monuments

A number of archaeological monuments are located in the environs of the proposed development (all details from archaeology.ie).

LF022-058001-

Class: Road - class 1 togher

Townland: CLOONBREANY, CORLEA

Description: National Monument in State Ownership No. 677. This togher (L 1km min.; Wth 4m; D 0.5m), discovered in 1984, was constructed of large oak planks. It ran in an ESE-WNW direction from dry land in the E to an island of dry land in the bog to the W. The planks (L 10m max.) were laid transversely on parallel large runners that were placed longitudinally. It bears comparison to another togher (LF022-055008-) and is of a similar date. A number of wooden artifacts were found in association with it. Dendrochronological dating revealed a date of 148 BC (Q5631). A section of this togher (L 18m) from Cloonbreany townland has been conserved and is now on display at the Corlea Visitor Centre, which was built on the exact axis of the trackway in the bog. (Raftery 1986; 1990, 37-46; 51-61; 1996, Corlea 1, 7-55; Moore 2007, No. 9)

LF022-058013-

Class: Road - class 3 togher

Townland: CLOONBREANY

Scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the RMP: Yes

Description: Possibly two toghers, orientated E-W, overlying one another in an area 2.75m x 0.4m. Composed of longitudinal roundwood mostly of hazel and some birch.

Compiled by: Mary Tunney based on data supplied by the former Irish Archaeological Wetland Unit, University College, Dublin.

LF022-058005-

Class: Road - class 2 togher

Townland: CLOONBREANY

Scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the RMP: Yes

Description: A togher (L 240m min.; Wth 0.3m; D 0.16m), noted in 1987, consisting of longitudinal thin oak planks laid end to end (orientated NW-SE) and supported by short transverse timbers. In some places the planks were stabilised by very small stakes placed through drilled holes.

Dendrochronological date AD 587±9 (Q6696). (Raftery 1990, 47; 1996, Corlea 5, 65-71)

LF022-058002-

Class: Road - class 2 togher

Townland: CLOONBREANY

Scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the RMP: Yes

Description: This togher (L 220m; Wth 1.25m; D 0.25m), noted in 1986, consisted of two layers of tightly packed longitudinal brushwood and roundwood between which were transverse

roundwoods. The orientation was ENE-WSW. Pegs lined the edge of the togher. Radiocarbon dated to 1366-1052 BC (2970±30 BP, GrN-13666). (Raftery 1990, 18-19; 1996, Corlea 2, 55-60)

LF022-058012-

Class: Road - class 3 togher

Townland: CLOONBREANY

Scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the RMP: Yes

Description: A crudely constructed togher (Wth 1.2m; D 0.15m), orientated E-W, consisting of longitudinal roundwood and brushwood, predominantly of birch.

LF022-058011-

Class: Road - class 3 togher

Townland: CLOONBREANY

Scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the RMP: Yes

Description: A crudely constructed togher (Wth 1.75m; D 0.15m) of roundwood and brushwood. Birch and alder were the main species present.

LF022-058010-

Class: Road - class 2 togher

Townland: CLOONBREANY

Scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the RMP: Yes

Description: A togher (L 85m; Wth 2m; D 0.25-0.4m), orientated E-W, consisting of a superstructure of transverse roundwood on a substructure of longitudinal roundwood and brushwood. The predominant species were alder and ash.

LF022-058014-

Class: Road - class 3 togher

Townland: CLOONBREANY

Scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the RMP: Yes

Description: A togher (Wth 1.2m; D 0.1m), orientated E-W, consisting of a single layer of transverse roundwood overlying occasional longitudinal brushwood. The main species present were hazel and birch.

LF022-058015-

Class: Road - class 3 togher

Townland: CLOONBREANY

Scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the RMP: Yes

Description: A togher (Wth 0.6m; D 0.12m), orientated E-W, composed of longitudinal brushwood with occasional roundwood of birch and hazel.

LF022-058008-

Class: Road - class 3 togher

Townland: CLOONBREANY

Scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the RMP: Yes

Description: A togher (Wth 2.4m; D 0.15m), orientated E-W, composed of longitudinal roundwood and brushwood of hazel and birch.

LF022-057040-

Class: Road - class 3 togher

Townland: CLOONBREANY

Scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the RMP: Yes

Description: A togher (Wth 0.5m; D 0.05m min.), orientated E-W, composed of longitudinal oak planks with transverse supports and pegs.

LF022-058009-

Class: Road - class 3 togher

Townland: CLOONBREANY

Scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the RMP: Yes

Description: A togher (Wth 1.65m; D 0.2m), orientated E-W, showing clear evidence of both a superstructure and substructure containing a substantial amount of roundwood and brushwood. Species present included birch and alder.

LF022-091----

Class: Platform - peatland

Townland: CLOONBREANY

Scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the RMP: Yes

Description: A compact band (exposed L 1.4m, Wth 1m) of longitudinal brushwood, with one roundwood element forming one edge, was orientated SW-NE. There was no evidence of woodworking. The evidence suggested that it was likely to be the remains of a platform.

LF022-058004-

Class: Road - class 2 togher

Townland: CLOONBREANY

Scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the RMP: Yes

Description: A togher (L 60m; Wth 2m min.; D 0.12m), noted in 1986, constructed of longitudinal brushwood and roundwood. The orientation was ENE-WSW. Radiocarbon dated to 1433-1319 BC (3125±20 BP, GrN-13688). (Raftery 1996, Corlea 4, 65)

LF022-058003-

Class: Road - class 2 togher

Townland: CLOONBREANY

Scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the RMP: Yes

Description: A togher (L 14.9m min.; Wth 3m; D 0.06m), noted in 1986, composed of longitudinal hurdle panels and loosely arranged hazel stems with occasional pegs. The orientation was NNE-SSW. Radiocarbon dated to 1249-1016 BC (2920±20 BP, GrN-13687). (Raftery 1990, 20; 1996, Corlea 3, 61-4)

LF022-058016-

Class: Road - class 3 togher

Townland: CLOONBREANY

Scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the RMP: Yes

Description: A crudely constructed togher (Wth 0.8m; D 0.15m) of roundwood of birch and hazel. It was badly damaged and was orientated E-W.

LF022-097----

Class: Platform - peatland

Townland: CLOONBREANY

Scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the RMP: Yes

Description: Longitudinal brushwood (exposed L 1m; Wth 0.95m) with one supporting roundwood underneath, aligned NW-SE, was in poor condition when recorded. The evidence suggested that it was likely to be the remains of a platform.

LF022-058017-

Class: Road - class 3 togher

Townland: CLOONBREANY

Scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the RMP: No

Description: The remains of a destroyed togher, orientated E-W, identified by wood debris on the field surface.

The variety of sites show a consistent pattern of settlement from the earliest times. Evidence of additional archaeological remains may be preserved below the ground level. Houses constructed in prehistoric times and up to the 11th century AD were generally made of wood once this decayed the remains can only be detected through archaeological excavation. Similarly, burial sites may not have any surface markers and remain undetected below the surface. Ground disturbance may uncover buried archaeological sites, features or artefacts.



Figure 2: Extract from the RMP for the development with the proposed development marked

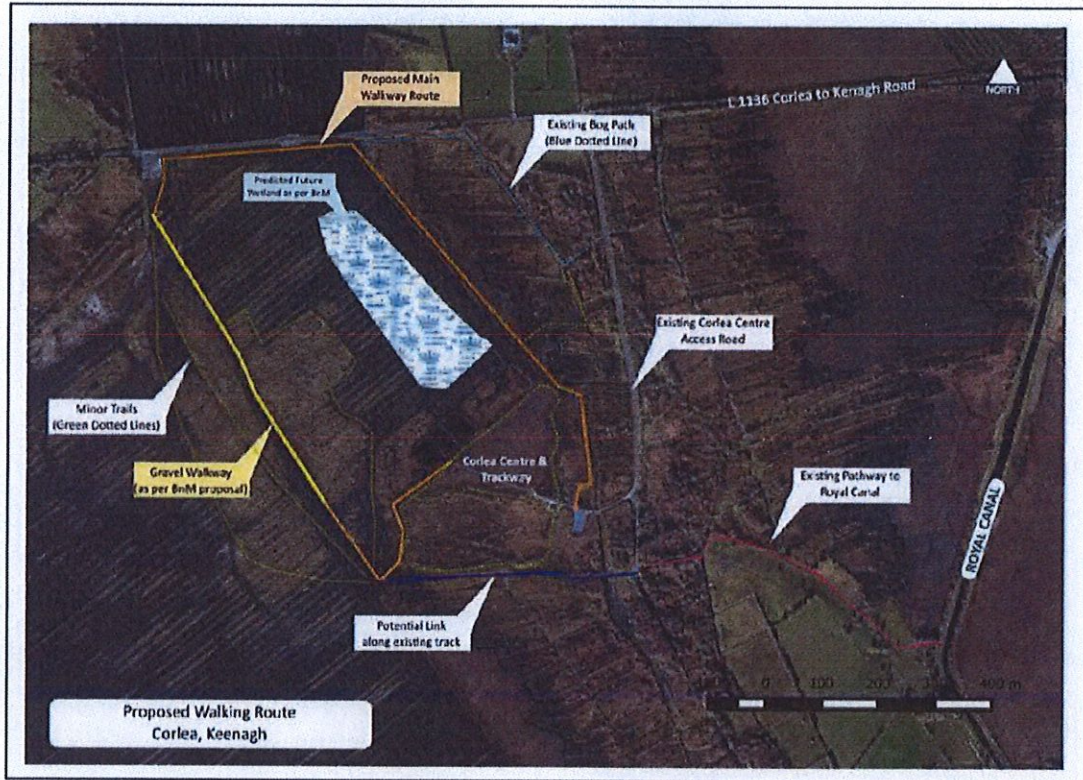


Figure 3: Proposed layout of the walkway

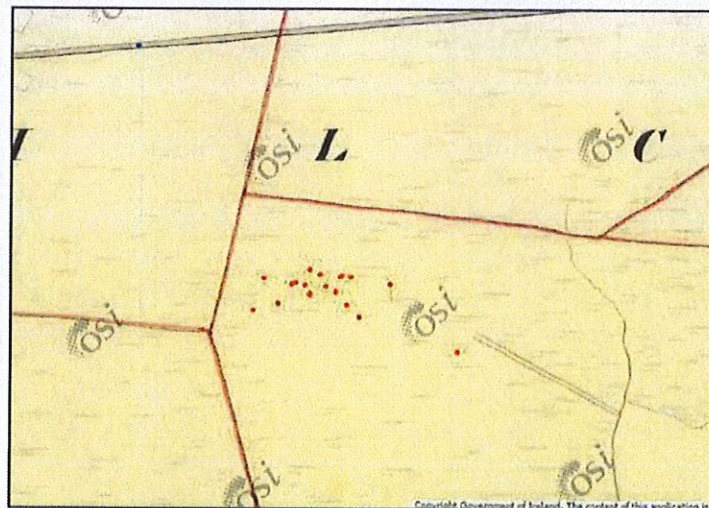


Figure 4: First edition OS map with the archaeological monuments marked

6 Impact on the Cultural Heritage Landscape

6.1 Recorded Monuments

Field walking undertaken in December 2016, has shown that the proposed development is in an area of high archaeological density. The main trackway at Corlea is a national monument in state ownership and of international importance (Monument number 677). In the peatland around the centre a further 59 toghers have been recorded during archaeological surveys. This is a very high density of monuments. The area now consists of cutaway peatland that has been reflooded to preserve the remaining archaeological monuments and re-wild the area. This is visible in areas of scrub and birch surrounding the proposed walkway.

The proposed development will not undertake any excavation of peatland and will utilise existing tracks where possible. The main track will surround the site and will primarily utilise existing walkways at the south, west and north and a wooden walkway will be laid on the peat at the east. This is not in the vicinity of the archaeological monuments recorded in the peatland and is at a remove from them, however it is likely that further remains may exist within the area.

The minor track visible in the plans (Figure 3) at the centre of the site is near a number of monuments but will not impact on them.

6.2 Previous Archaeological Works

A series of archaeological reports and excavations have been undertaken in Corlea (appendix II). This has included surveys and excavations of toghers within

the bog. The excavation works have concentrated on monuments that were in danger of destruction from the milling of peat.

6.3 Cartographic and Ariel Photographic Evidence

The first edition OS map and the 25" maps show undisturbed peatland with no features or anomalies indicative of archaeological remains. Ariel photographic evidence for the site has shown that it has been landscaped in the recent past. The maps and photographs do not include anything suggestive of archaeological remains within the proposed development site.

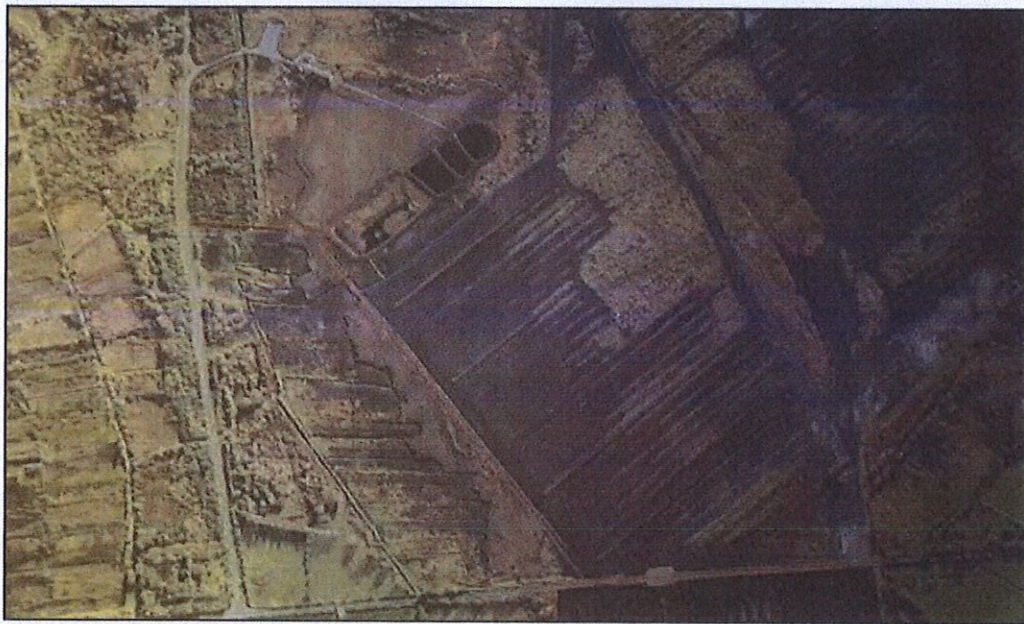


Figure 5: Ariel photograph of the proposed development

6.5 Field Walking

Field walking was undertaken in December 2016. This has shown that the area included for the development have been radically altered because of milling by Bord Na Mona. 59 archaeological monuments have been recorded within the area of peatland of Corlea Bog. The proposed trackway will utilise existing pathways visible on the ground and in the aerial photographs at the south, west and north of the development. At the east, the site consists of cutaway bog and a timber walkway will be laid down in this area. A number of minor tracks will also be created across the cutaway bog.

6.5 Visual Impact

The proposed development includes a number of trackways through the bog. This will utilise, where possible, existing tracks and will include the laying down of gravel and timbers to create a year round walkway through the bog. These sites will have no visual impact on the cultural heritage landscape. They are only visible at ground level. Re-wilding already occurring at the site will further reduce any potential visual impact on the monuments.

6.6 Archaeological Potential

Corlea Bog includes a large number of archaeological monuments. 59 toghers including the main trackway at Corlea have been identified. Although the site has been intensively surveyed there is potential for further features to be uncovered in the future. There is little potential for remains to be uncovered during these

works as there are no plans to excavate peat during the laying of the tracks.

Construction works may cause damage to archaeological remains both recorded and unrecorded. As a result of this a number of mitigation strategies have been recommended.

7 Mitigation Strategies

The site contains a large number of archaeological remains these will not be directly impacted on by the development. However, sub surface features may extend into the area of the proposed walkways as a result of this a series of mitigation strategies have been recommended

- It is recommended that archaeological monitoring be undertaken as part of the development. Although no excavation is planned accidental damage could occur and archaeological oversight would help prevent this.
- The trackways should be designed to minimise compression of sub surface remains.
- During the laying of the trackways only machinery designed to prevent compression of the peatland should be used. This will prevent accidental damage to the sub surface remains.
- Storage of material during construction should be designed to reduce the risk of compression to the peatland the any possible sub surface remains.
- Should archaeological features be uncovered the Department of Arts Heritage, Regional, Rural and the Gaeltacht Affairs should be contacted.

8 Conclusion

This project, aims to develop a walkway and tourist attraction around Corlea Bog and Trackway centre. The site is currently in use as cutaway bog and a visitor centre, centred around the Corlea Trackway. Corlea Trackway is an archaeological monument of international importance and is in state ownership site number 677.

The proposed development consists of a number of tracks across the site. The works will not include any excavation as part of the development. However due to the importance of the site a number of mitigation strategies have been recommended. This includes archaeological oversight of the construction phase and the use of machinery to avoid compression of the peatland.

All recommendations are subject to agreement with the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

Appendix I: Photographic Record

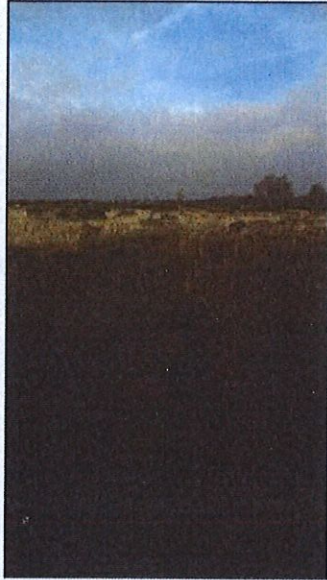


Plate 1: Looking east over the proposed development



Plate 2: Looking east over the proposed development and location of a minor trackway



Plate 3: Looking north at an existing track to be upgraded at the south of the area

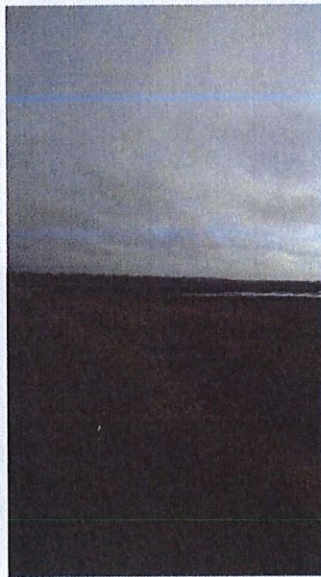


Plate 4: Looking east over the proposed development at the north of Corlea Bog

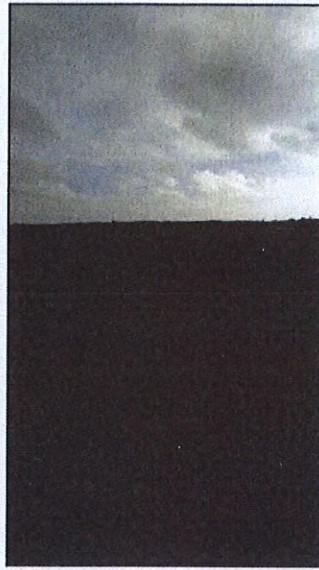


Figure 5: Looking west over proposed location of the trackway

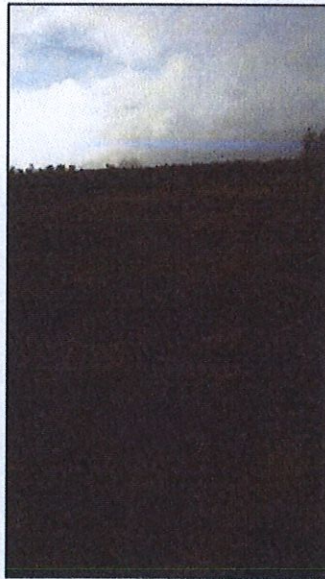


Figure 6: Looking west over the proposed trackway at the east of Corlea Bog

Appendix II: Review of previous archaeological work

Information taken from excavations.ie

1986:62. 'Corlea Bog', Corlea, Cloonbreany, Longford

Corlea 1

The Iron Age corduroy road was further excavated, confirming the broad details of constructional technique. Numerous examples of worked timbers were taken away for further analysis.

Otherwise, the only find was a wooden pot-stave.

Corlea 2

A brushwood trackway first examined in 1985, was more extensively investigated in 1986. A continuous 10m-long cutting showed that it had been made by laying down longitudinal bundles of birch rods in three layers giving a thick, dry walking surface. These rods are almost certainly a product of coppiced woodland. A single row of pegs along one edge of the trackway was probably intended to secure it in position.

Corlea 3

This was first noticed in the face of a Bord na Móna drainage channel. Upon investigation it proved to have incorporated in its construction both longitudinal birches and a carefully-made birch hurdle. Only 6.50m of this track have been as yet uncovered but it will be interesting to see if the track made use of further hurdles.

Corlea 4

This ran across Corlea 3 and is little removed from it in time. It is the crudest and roughest of the tracks uncovered and was made by throwing down branches of birch and oak longitudinally on the bog surface. There were many spaces between the timbers, giving the structure an appearance of impermanence.

Corlea 5

This was almost totally obliterated before its existence was brought to notice. It consisted of a series of narrow oak planks laid end to end on short transverse sleepers. Perfectly drilled circular holes in the ends of some of the planks suggest that they came from a dismantled structure of some sort. Fragments of a wooden shovel or spade lay close to the fragmentary track.

Chronology

Corlea 1 has been dated to 148 BC on the basis of dendrochronological analysis carried out by Dr M.G.L. Baillie, Queen's University, Belfast. A radiocarbon date of 1020 ± 30 bc has been established, courtesy of Dr Ian Laming, Groningen University, for wood from Corlea 2. Wood from Corlea 3 and 4 is currently being subjected to radiocarbon dating in Groningen. These tracks are either broadly contemporary with Corlea 2 or somewhat earlier. Samples for dendrochronological

analysis have been taken from Corlea 5 and are now in Queen's University, Belfast. It is not, however, certain if these are suitable for accurate dating. This track is higher than any of the others in the bog (hence its almost total destruction) and may date to the Early Historic or early medieval period.

1987:36. 'Corlea Bog', Corlea, Cloonbreany, Derryoghil, Longford

Author: Barry Raftery, Dept. of Archaeology, University College, Dublin

Site type: Bog trackways

License number:

Most of the investigations were concentrated on a section of the great Iron Age timber road (Corlea 1), which was well preserved under almost 1.5m of bog in a privately-owned section of the bog in the townland of Cloonbreany. A continuous length of about 35m was uncovered. Details of construction were similar to those encountered in previous seasons. The upper timbers, however, were among the most massive found. These were transverse oak planks, many up to 4m in length. All were mortised at their ends and pegged to the bog. Several of the largest had double pegs piercing them at one end.

Finds, casually discarded by the road-builders, included pot-staves, a knife handle and two carefully-shaped pegs, all of wood. Of the latter, one had a triangular notch cut into one end and was barbed at the other in the manner of a modern tent peg.

Three other tracks already investigated in previous seasons were further examined. Two (Corlea 2 and 3) were brushwood constructions of a later Bronze Age date. The third (Corlea 5) was a simple plank walkway dating to the 6th century A.D.

In addition to the work in Corlea, brief investigations also took place in a nearby Bord na M6na bog in the townland of Derryoghil. Here no fewer than 14 trackways were discovered, exposed on the surface of the bog by peat-milling activities. One was made of transverse oak planks on a brushwood foundation. The rest were of brushwood construction. Only six could be very superficially examined in the time available. They included examples made of longitudinally placed birch or hazel rods and examples of hurdle construction. None has as yet been dated.

1988:44. Derryoghil, Corlea, Cloonbony, Longford

Author: Barry Raftery, Dept. of Archaeology, University College, Dublin

Site type: Toghers

License number:

Following on the experience of previous years, work was centred in Derryoghil townland where it had already become apparent in 1987 that at least 16 wooden trackways existed. Detailed investigations in 1988 revealed the presence of over 40 trackways in the bog, 39 of which were subjected to archaeological examination.

Considerable variety in construction was revealed. The simplest of which there were two examples consisted of straight wooden poles of medium size laid lengthwise on the bog surface with the occasional support of short transverse timbers. One of these has been given a preliminary radiocarbon date of around 2000BC. More common are tracks made of bundles of hazel rods laid lengthwise on the surface of the bog. Two tracks with carefully laid transverse rods were also uncovered and there were at least six tracks made of skillfully woven hurdles. The most massive of the tracks consisted of substantial split oak planks, up to 2.5m in length, laid transversely on a bed of irregular brushwood. A dendrochronological date in the mid 10th century B.C. has been established for the construction of the track. A number of the brushwood tracks have been tentatively dated to the 10th and 9th centuries BC by radiocarbon methods.

One track in the neighbouring townland of Corlea was investigated. It consisted of transversely laid planks and logs with a substructure of irregularly laid brushwood and larger logs. This has been dated by radiocarbon to around 1900 BC.

A trackway in Cloonbony townland, not far from Lanesboro, was also excavated. This was composed of two layers of tightly packed transverse logs of alder which rested on a parallel pair of longitudinal runners.

2000:0628. Lough Bannon 2, Corlea, Longford

Author: Noel Dunne, ADS Ltd, Windsor House, 11 Fairview Strand, Fairview, Dublin 3.

Site type: Brushwood togher

License number: 00E0456

This togher is evident on the Bord na Móna milled surface for a distance of at least 27.5m. Excavation revealed that it was constructed with longitudinal light brushwood and had an original width of 1.1–1.2m. Three heavier light brushwood elements, orientated north-east/south-west, formed both sides and an internal spine for the site. The body of the togher was formed with a single layer of lighter brushwood, orientated north-north-east/south-south-west. The heavier elements were aligned slightly differently to the lighter brushwood for some reason that is unclear, but it is unlikely that the differing alignments are the result of the former having become dislodged or displaced relative to the main body of the site, or vice versa. Construction details exposed in

the course of the excavation differed greatly from those noted in the course of the 1999 reassessment at the same site, only 7.5m to the south-west. This site and No. 631 (below) are on the same alignment and located c. 50m apart, but they were assigned separate numbers during the 1999 reassessment on the grounds that they also differed markedly in construction details. However, given the immense variation that is now apparent within the one site, it is possible that this site and No. 631 (below) are in fact parts of the one together.

2000:0629. Lough Bannow 2, Corlea, Longford

Author: Noel Dunne, ADS Ltd, Windsor House, 11 Fairview Strand, Fairview, Dublin 3.

Site type: Hurdle

License number: 00E0457

This site consisted of a hurdle that was partly evident on the Bord na Móna milled surface in 1999 and again in 2000. Excavation showed that it survived in a degraded and cracked state owing to milling, pressure from machinery passing over it and exposure to the elements. The screen measured 2.9m west-south-west/east-north-east by 2m and was constructed with five sails, orientated north-north-west/north-west to south-south-east/south-east, and woven rods. Much of the weave pattern did not survive owing to the cracked nature of the site. The hurdle rested on an oak roundwood, orientated east-north-east/west-south-west and 2m long. Some fragments of light brushwood were also evident at this lower, foundation level. Further exposure through milling and some trowelling in 2000 confirmed that the hurdle is distinct from Site 31A of the 1999 reassessment, which is located only 3.6m to the north. The latter is a together constructed with longitudinal roundwoods, brushwood and pegs. Both features are at the same level in the bog and are likely to be contemporary. Some brushwood elements partly bridge the gap between the two sites

2000:0630. Lough Bannow 2, Corlea, Longford

Author: Noel Dunne, ADS Ltd, Windsor House, 11 Fairview Strand, Fairview, Dublin 3.

Site type: Roundwood, brushwood and twig together(s)

License number: 00E0458

This together extends in an east-north-east/west-south-west direction across two milled fields for a minimum visible distance of 35.5m. Two cuttings were excavated along its length, with Cutting A being the easternmost one. The investigations revealed that the site was constructed with longitudinal roundwoods, brushwood and twigs. It ranged in width from 0.95m to 2.5m and was up to 0.3m thick. The upper walking surface was located at a depth of 0.05–0.45m.

In Cutting A, the principal surface elements consisted of eight roundwoods or heavy brushwood, arranged in four pairs. Similar paired rods were evident at the base of the structure in Cutting B. In that cutting, densely packed longitudinals formed the upper levels and were bordered by heavier roundwood elements. A small number of transverses may have been deliberately inserted through the upper levels in order to counteract a possible tendency of the longitudinal rods to spring upwards, because of the weight exerted by traffic on the trackway. The lowest level in Cutting B was orientated north-east/south-west, in contrast to the general east-north-east/west-south-west direction of the site. This level was aligned on Site 13A of the 1999 reassessment, which is a togher that is located in the drain face only a short distance to the north-east. It is possible that the present site was constructed on top of Site 13A in Cutting B. Additional timbers were encountered at a depth of 0.2m in the peat directly underlying the excavated structure in that cutting and almost definitely belong to a new site. Following on from the 1999 numbering sequence, this possible new structure was labelled 37A but was not investigated further as the feature was located under the water level in the adjacent drain and was consequently waterlogged.

A large number of pegs and posts were used to hold the togher in position. These displayed a variety of worked ends, including wedge-, chisel- and pencil-point examples. Many of the tips were blunted and buckled from being hammered into the bog and impinging on lower elements of the structure.

2000:0631. Lough Bannow 2, Corlea, Longford

Author: Noel Dunne, ADS Ltd, Windsor House, 11 Fairview Strand, Fairview, Dublin 3.

Site type: Brushwood and twig togher; roundwood, brushwood and twig togher

License number: 00E0459

The primary togher excavated under this licence was constructed with longitudinal twigs and light brushwood, arranged in a shallow band 0.5–0.8m wide and orientated north-east/south-west. The sighting on the opposite side of the drain to the excavation and recorded in the course of the 1999 reassessment was also constructed with longitudinal twigs and light brushwood, but here single longitudinal, heavy brushwood formed both sides of the feature, with a similar longitudinal element placed in between. The removal of fill from a disturbed band accidentally uncovered a new, separate togher underneath. Following on from the numbering sequence used during 1999, this new site was numbered 36A.

A layer of peat, 0.2–0.25m deep, was sandwiched between both toghers, and numerous pine cones were preserved in the lower levels of that peat and scattered on the surface of the underlying site. The latter was 3.55m wide and orientated north-east/south-west to north-north-east/south-south-west. It contained a central band of longitudinal light brushwood and twigs,

1.15m wide. On the north-west side were four main, spaced roundwood and brushwood longitudinals, together with other transverse and longitudinal roundwoods, brushwood and twigs.

Underlying the central band and extending for 1.25m to the south-east were up to fourteen roundwood and brushwood transverses. This area also included some irregularly placed light/heavy brushwood and roundwoods. Up to seven posts or pegs used to contain the site were also uncovered. One displayed a compacted tip and marked buckling along its length from having been driven into the bog. Both together extended towards the southern slope of an east-west ridge, located immediately to the north-east of the excavated area.

2000:0616. Cloonfore and Corlea Excavations, Longford

Author: Noel Dunne, ADS Ltd, Windsor House, 11 Fairview Strand, Fairview, Dublin 3.

Site type: Bogland sites

License number:

Excavations were carried out in County Longford boglands in the summer of 2000 as part of a mitigation strategy designed to resolve known archaeological sites threatened by Bord na Móna milled peat production. The work was undertaken by Bord na Móna through its consultants, ADS Ltd.

The excavations followed on from an archaeological reassessment of approximately two-thirds of the Longford bogs that was undertaken during the summer of 1999, where a total of 361 archaeological sites were recorded.

Seven high-priority areas with regard to Bord na Móna production requirements were noted, and a mitigation strategy document was compiled for those areas. This document was produced by Dr Ann Lynch, Dúchas The Heritage Service, Mr Ragnall Ó Floinn, NMI, and Prof. Barry Raftery, UCD.

Excavation took place at all eight sites listed for investigation in Lough Bannow 2 bog and at all seven sites listed for Derryad bog.

The Lough Bannow 2 sites form part of a concentration of 35 features that is located immediately north of the Keenagh to Lanesborough road, in the townland of Corlea. This archaeological zone is approximately 2.5km to the west-south-west of Keenagh village and 1km north-north-west of the Corlea visitor centre. Excavation took place here between 3 July and 4 August 2000.

The Derryad sites form part of a concentration of twenty features in the north-west corner of that bog, in Cloonfore townland. This concentration is located at the rear of the Bord na Móna

Mountdillon headquarters and approximately 4.5km to the east-south-east of Lanesborough village. Excavations took place here between 1 August and 1 September 2000.

2000:0624. Lough Bannow 2, Corlea, Longford

Author: Noel Dunne, ADS Ltd, Windsor House, 11 Fairview Strand, Fairview, Dublin 3.

Site type: Roundwood and brushwood togher

License number: 00E0452

This site was located close to the present milled surface on the western side of a Bord na Móna field drain. Excavation showed that it was greatly disturbed by the milling process, and no clear picture of the original site emerged in the course of the work. Much of the wood uncovered was in a very degraded state and not in situ. Sufficient elements survived, however, to indicate the vague trace of a togher, 0.4–1.2m wide and orientated north-north-west/ south-south-east. This was constructed with longitudinal roundwoods and brushwood, up to 0.12m in diameter, which were probably originally underlain by transverse elements. A number of posts or pegs were uncovered, most of which were located to the east-south-east of the site and showed no apparent structural relationship with the togher. A complex archaeological site that includes woven elements was recorded at a lower level than the present site in the bottom of the adjacent field drain. A similar complex was noted in the course of the 1999 reassessment only 14m to the west-north-west in the next drain. This give evidence of intense archaeological activity in the area and may represent the remains of prehistoric habitation on the actual bog surface.

2000:0625. Lough Bannow 2, Corlea, Longford

Author: Noel Dunne, ADS Ltd, Windsor House, 11 Fairview Strand, Fairview, Dublin 3.

Site type: Roundwood and brushwood togher

License number: 00E0453

This east-west togher is evident on the Bord na Móna milled surface and in a drain section face for a minimum distance of 10m. Excavation showed that its upper walking surface consisted of loosely laid, longitudinal light brushwood, with roundwoods placed along the edges. Its original width was 1.6–1.75m. The longitudinal elements had dipped and sagged over the lifetime of the togher into the softer patches in the underlying bog, and their shapes had moulded to the contours of the substructure elements. The latter consisted of transverse, diagonal and longitudinal roundwoods and brushwood, which in turn rested on diagonal and longitudinal light brushwood. Pegs were used to contain the edges of the togher and the substructure transverses. Their tips were not worked or pointed, and all the pegs showed signs of buckling from having been hammered into the drier tufts of the bog surface. The transverse runners were further held in position by being placed beside a natural tree root.

2000:0626. Lough Bannow 2, Corlea, Longford

Author: Noel Dunne, ADS Ltd, Windsor House, 11 Fairview Strand, Fairview, Dublin 3.

Site type: Roundwood and brushwood togher

License number: 00E0454

2000:0627. Lough Bannow 2, Corlea, Longford

Author: Noel Dunne, ADS Ltd, Windsor House, 11 Fairview Strand, Fairview, Dublin 3.

Site type: Roundwood and brushwood togher

License number: 00E0455

Further investigations in 2000 revealed that this feature could be traced from one peat stockpile to another, across eleven Bord na Móna milled fields for an overall visible distance of 159m. This togher is orientated east-north-east/west-south-west. The excavation showed that the site possessed an upper walking surface, which consisted of a core of closely spaced roundwood and brushwood longitudinals, with longitudinal outliers placed parallel to these central elements. The width of the upper walking surface was 0.4–0.7m. This superstructure rested on transverse, diagonal and longitudinal roundwoods and brushwood. The largest transverse was a curving oak roundwood up to 3.5m in length. A natural tree root was preserved in the peat close to one of the ends of that transverse and at the same level. The wood from the site was very soft and decayed; consequently, no well-preserved worked ends were recovered. The largest of the upper longitudinals was a half-split, roundwood trunk that was hollowed through decay and that may have been in that rotted condition when it was originally put in place.