

Fig 1

Fig 2

Fig 3



circular ring ditch

ensemble of first

Fig 4

Fig 5

Fig 6



Kilmartin/ Rathmore

Prehistoric ritual/ burial site: The Bronze Age 2000 - 500 BC

A second area of prehistoric ritual/burial activity was located within the Townland of **Kilmartin/ Rathmore**, situated on a ridge of high ground to the east of the existing N11 road (Fig. 4). Here a large prehistoric enclosure some 38m in diameter with an entrance to the northeast was identified and excavated (Fig. 5). Several pits were situated in the interior, one of which contained and urn cremation (a vessel in which the cremated ashes of one or more individuals are placed). Cremation of the dead was a common custom in the Bronze Age, c. 2000 - 500 BC. Deposits of burnt human bone were often placed in a large pottery urn which was then placed in a pit or cist (a grave lined with stones and covered with slabs or endosed on four sides). The high ridges of the area appear to have been the focus of intense prehistoric activity dating to the Neolithic, c. 4000 - 2000 BC and the Bronze Age, c. 2000 - 500 BC. The presence of such a large enclosure, with little evidence of internal features, that is situated at an elevated position, certainly suggests a ritual function dating to the Neolithic /BronzeAge. This interpretation is strengthened by the presence of the urn cremation. The visual link of the Rathmore enclosure to features across the ravine in the adjacent Townland of **Kilmartin** suggests related activity. The features excavated at **Kilmartin** produced copious quantities of both lithics (stone tools) and pottery (Fig. 6), which appears also to date to the Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age. Further post-excavation analyses including radiocarbon dating, environmental and artefact analyses will contribute to producing a picture of the prehistoric landscape of this part of Co. Wicklow.

Burnt Mounds (Cooking/ Industrial sites): The Bronze Age 2000 - 500 BC

At Rathmore between **Kilmartin** and **Inchannappa**, 24 burnt mounds (or fuleadha fadh as they are more commonly known) were excavated. These mounds are commonly found near water or in wetland areas. They are remnants of a process that involved heating stones in a fire and putting them in a water filled pit of trough to boil the water, possibly for cooking, bathing or for working with textiles. The fire-cracked stones were discarded after use and eventually formed a mound around the trough or pit area. These features are visible in the landscape today as mounds and excavation reveals the fire-cracked stones and sometimes an associated trough, lined with either wood planks, clay or stone slabs to keep them watertight. They are one of the most common site types in Irish prehistory: by 1900 a minimum of 4000 had been recorded in the country. The majority of the mounds found at **Rathmore** were each associated with a single sub-rectangular trough. Flint scrapers - small stone tools, flint flakes, a flint knife and a possible fragment of gold Bronze Age ring money uncovered during excavation may be the due to the date of these features. The vast majority of these sites are known from the Bronze Age, c. 2000 - 500 BC.

Medieval habitation/ Industrial site: Medieval - post medieval period AD 1000 - 1700

In **Rathmore** Townland about 2km north of Ashford, the remains of a possible enclosure were uncovered. This feature also extended beyond the limit of excavation of the new N11 road route. It appears to represent a section of a boundary ditch, which may have enclosed an area to the west. Here a light mound along a high ridge may indicate an area of habitation within the enclosure. The title of the ditch suggest that following its excavation it was allowed to fill up naturally before being deliberately filled perhaps as a result of abandonment of the site. The discovery of medieval pottery here suggests a medieval date.

Fig 7

Fig 8

Fig 9



remains of a wood lined trough

Fig 14



Fig 10

Fig 11

Fig 12

Fig 13



Inchannappa

Prehistoric habitation site: The Bronze Age 2000 - 500 BC

An area of prehistoric activity was located within the Townland of **Inchannappa Lower**. Here another 33m wide enclosure was uncovered at the base of a drumlin (Fig. 10). Numerous pits and post-holes (holes originally containing structural timbers) were excavated. The post-holes indicate a large round structure, possibly a domestic house located within the enclosure. Coarse pottery sherds and fragments of a quartz stone suggest a Bronze Age date for the activities at this site. Quern stones date from Neolithic times and were used in the process of grinding wheat into flour.

Industrial site: Iron Age and Early Christian period 500 BC - AD 7000 and medieval - post medieval period AD 7000 - 1700

Evidence for industrial activity was found at **Inchannappa Upper**, where a series of six large areas of burning were recorded. The largest of these, a stone lined kiln (a chamber built the firing (baking) of pottery or drying of corn, used from prehistoric times) was located in the east of the site (Fig. 15). It was reused at least three times before its destruction. This feature has initially been interpreted as a corn-drying kiln. No production waste or debris was recorded for any of the features, although one spindle whorl, a tool used in weaving was recovered (Fig. 12). The site was bounded by two shallow enclosing ditches, in which no archaeological material was recorded. The site may be associated with a known but unnamed Early Christian church, graveyard and foot nearby.

Medieval habitation site: Medieval - post medieval period AD 1000 - 1700

A series of five enclosures were excavated at **Rosanna** along the eastern side of the existing N11. Upon excavation, one of the five enclosures (Fig. 14) was confirmed as archaeological and from the recovered material it appeared to be medieval (Fig. 15), dating somewhere between the 12th and 13th centuries. The other enclosures were shown to be post-medieval and were probably decorative ornamental garden features (Fig. 13). These features further substantiate historical documents, which record the Townland of **Rosanna** as being one of the finest landscape gardens in Co. Wicklow.

Rosanna

Fig 16

Fig 17

Fig 18



reconstruction of enclosure of Mount Usher

Mount Usher and Milltown North

Prehistoric ritual/ Burial sites: The Bronze Age 2000 - 500 BC

Two important burial sites are excavated in the Townlands of **Mount Usher** and **Milltown North** on the flood plain of the Vartry River. These were both ring ditch burial sites dating from the middle Bronze Age. **Mount Usher** is a single large ring ditch enclosing an internal structure marked by post-holes (Fig. 18). Within the structure there was evidence of a possible cremation pyre (wooden structure burned during the process of cremating the dead). Evidence for at least three cremation burials were found; a badly destroyed stone line cist burial within the ditch contained at least 2 urns and cremated remains, the third burial was located just outside the southwest edge of the ditch. This cremation was placed in a large encrusted urn. The site in **Milltown North** contained two ring ditches 20m apart, one of these measured 15m wide and contained two simple cremation burials within and a second smaller ring ditch 5m wide located to its north (Fig. 21). The entrance to this second ditch was facing west with two large pits at the end of each terminal. Although badly truncated over time a ring of shallow post-holes encircled the outer edge of the ring ditch.

Prehistoric habitation site: The Bronze Age 2000 - 500 BC

In the Townland of **Ballynabarney**, the remains of a circular house measuring 10.5m in diameter and with an entrance to the southeast were discovered. The excavation uncovered a slot trench for the house walls and an internal ring of post-holes (Fig. 20), which would have held the timber posts to support a roof. A reconstruction would show a roof, conical in shape. There was a number of possible storage pits excavated within the house and storage/rubbish pits to the south. To the north were two small ring ditch features extending outside the limit of the road scheme, which probably had a ritual function. This house is probably from the Bronze Age 2000 - 500 BC.

Medieval Industrial site: Medieval - post medieval period AD 1000 - 1700

At **Ballynabarney** a possible kiln was discovered, this time in the centre of a medieval ditched enclosure roughly rectangular in shape with rounded corners, measuring 12m by 19m (Fig. 17). This ditch formed a complete circuit with a notable depression (which might have allowed an entrance). The ditch appears to have been intended for drainage (Fig. 19). The most conspicuous feature within the enclosures was an area of very heavily burnt red clay and sand, possibly representing a hearth or kiln with a flue (used to conduct the furnace-heated air). Discovered within the enclosure were 2,700 sherds of pottery (provisionally dated to the late 13th and early 14th centuries) several metal objects and several hundred small stones apparently chosen and brought to the site for their shape and size, possibly for some industrial purpose. Two groups of small stake holes, 60 in total, associated with the hearth may be the remains/traces of a screen used to shield fire against the wind. The quantities of pottery suggest that this enclosure may have been for a small rural pottery kiln (Fig. 16).

Ballynabarney

Fig 19

Fig 20

Fig 21



Killadreenan

Prehistoric ritual/ burial site: The Bronze Age 2000 - 500 BC

Three main areas of archaeological ritual/burial activity were identified along the proposed road route: first at **Rathmore**, second along the flood plain of the Vartry and Rathnew Rivers and third within the Townland of **Killadreenan** at the very northern end of the road route. In the Townland of **Killadreenan** a ring ditch (Fig. 1-2) was excavated. This circular ditch (ditches are associated with defensive structures, as a means of drainage or as a construction trench) measured about 10m wide and was situated on a flat plateau at the top of the steep north slope of the Chapel River valley. The ditch encircled a central pit. Pottery and flint (Fig. 1) from the fills of the ditch have been provisionally dated to the Bronze Age, c. 2000 - 500 BC.

Habitation/ Industrial site: Medieval - post medieval period AD 1000 - 1700

A possible medieval occupation was excavated in **Timore Lane**. Here the remains consisted of two roughly linear features emerging from an unexcavated area on the west facing slope of a large hill. It is suspected that a large portion of this site continues underneath the field surface outside the limits of the new N11. The features were in an area which documentary sources refer to as being the location of a small village dating from the 17th and 18th Centuries. The largest and most northerly of the features appeared to have resulted from an episode of burning and may represent a hearth (any place where a pit was dug and a fire built, sometimes identified by charcoal, baked earth, ash, discoloration, or an outline of stones). A second feature appeared to constitute an indistinct shallow trench, possibly a wall foundation around the hearth. Radiocarbon dating may provide and indication as to the date, however the exact form and function of these pits/trenches remains unknown. They may constitute partial remains of the 17th and 18th Century village previously mentioned. Equally, the site may be the remains of the industrial activity similar to that found at **Inchannappa Upper**. Finally the site may have been the location of ritual activity. This appears very unlikely, however without further investigation the form and function of the site will remain unknown.

Timore Lane