

Palaeoecology Research Services

**Technical report: biological remains from excavations
at Barnagore 4, N22 Ballincollig bypass scheme, County
Cork, Republic of Ireland (site code: 02E0400)**

by

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Summary

Small quantities of biological remains recovered from the processing of two bulk sediment samples from deposits within a possible Bronze Age cremation pit encountered during monitoring works for the N22 Ballincollig bypass scheme at Barnagore 4, County Cork, were submitted for analysis.

The remains were restricted to small quantities of charred seeds and grain, of flax and barley respectively. The record for flax from the secondary pit fill (Context 2) is unusual and, therefore, important for a deposit of this early (Bronze Age) date.

KEYWORDS: BARNAGORE 4; N22 BALLINCOLLIG BYPASS SCHEME; COUNTY CORK; REPUBLIC OF IRELAND; TECHNICAL REPORT; BRONZE AGE; CHARRED PLANT REMAINS; CHARRED GRAIN

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Introduction

An archaeological excavation of deposits encountered during the initial stages of the monitoring programme for the N22 Ballincollig bypass scheme, County Cork, Republic of Ireland, was undertaken by Archaeological Consultancy Services Ltd (ACS).

The site at Barnagore 4 comprised two features—the basal remains of a possible Bronze Age cremation pit cut into the boulder clay, and a nearby small shallow deposit of sandy clay. Analysis of the pottery recovered from the pit is ongoing but initial observations were that all of the sherds represented items from the Bowl tradition of the early Bronze Age. A radiocarbon date of charcoal from the pit supported a Bronze Age date giving a range of 2300-2040 BC.

Small quantities of biological remains recovered from the processing of bulk sediment samples were submitted to PRS for analysis.

Methods

The soil samples were placed onto 1 mm nylon mesh in a sieving tank. The light organic fraction was washed over through a 2 mm sieve into a 500 micron sieve to collect the flots. Each of the soil samples was put through this system twice to ensure that as much material as possible was recovered.

The sediment samples were processed by ACS prior to delivery to PRS and only the small quantities of recovered plant remains were

submitted for analysis. These remains were examined and identified as closely as possible.

Results

The results are presented in context number order by feature. Archaeological information, provided by the excavator, is given in square brackets. The sediment description was also supplied by the excavator.

Feature: cremation pit C4

Context 2 [secondary fill of cremation pit C4, early Bronze Age]
Sample 2

Loose at the top becoming more compacted towards the base, mottled mid-brown, sandy clay, with flecks of re-deposited orange subsoil, and moderate inclusions of charcoal and sherds of early Bronze Age (Bowl tradition) pottery.

The submitted material consisted of seven charred flax (*Linum usitatissimum* L.) seeds and some fragments, perhaps also of these seeds.

Context 3 [primary fill of cremation pit C4]
Sample 3

Moderately compact, mid to dark brown, sandy clay, with frequent angular stones and occasional fragments of charcoal present.

The submitted material comprised a single charred barley (*Hordeum*) grain.

Discussion

The record for flax from the secondary pit fill (Context 2) is unusual and, therefore, important for a deposit of this early (Bronze Age) date.

Retention and disposal

All of the material should be retained as part of the physical archive for the site.

Archive

All material is currently stored by Palaeoecology Research Services (Unit 8, Dabble Duck Industrial Estate, Shildon, County Durham), along with paper and electronic records pertaining to the work described here.

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