



Monitoring Report No. 66

**Longstone Hill
Barnmeen
Co. Down**

AE/06/112

Kara Ward

Site Specific Information

Site Address: Adjacent to and south of 25 Longstone Hill

Townland: Barnmeen

SMR No.: near DOW:041:055 (proposed development site is not within scheduled area)

State Care *Scheduled* ✓ *Other*

Also near DOW:041:088

State Care *Scheduled* *Other* ✓

Grid Ref: J17313312

County: Down

Excavation Licence No: AE/06/112

Planning Ref / No.: P/2004/0980/O

Date of Monitoring: 14th June 2006

Archaeologist Present: Kara Ward

Brief Summary:

Six test trenches were excavated to evaluate the potential impact of the proposed development on any hidden archaeological remains. The proposed development site is located approximately 20m north of a scheduled standing stone (DOW:041:055) and there is a record in the Ordnance Survey memoirs of a souterrain and well (DOW:041:088) located 200 yards from the standing stone. Nothing of archaeological significance was uncovered in the evaluation trenches.

Type of monitoring:

Excavation of six test trenches by mechanical excavator equipped with a grading bucket under archaeological supervision.

Size of area opened:

Six trenches each measuring approximately 85.0m by 1.9m.

Current Land Use: Pasture.

Intended Land Use: Private dwelling and garage.

Account of the evaluation

A planning application was made for the construction of a single private dwelling and garage adjacent to and south of 25 Longstone Hill, Barnmeen, Co. Down (Fig. 1). The proposed development site is located approximately 20m north of a scheduled standing stone (DOW:041:055) (Fig. 2). The stone is a rounded granite pillar with a base measuring up to 1.4m in diameter and is unusually tall at 3m.

The Ordnance Survey memoirs record "...a cave c.200 yds from the stone (DOW:041:055) now closed up. It is c.7 perches long, 4ft in width. For c.4 perches, it is not more than 3ft high and increases to c.5'6". There is a well at the far end c.2ft in depth. The water was considered beneficial for healing sores" (Ordnance Survey Memoirs, Vol. 3, 1990). The Sites and Monuments Record states that the souterrain is probably located in the field east-south-east of the stone. It states that a small group of stones were noticed projecting from the otherwise smooth ground (Northern Ireland Sites and Monuments Record, DOW:041:088). This does not equate with the grid reference recorded in the Sites and Monuments Record which informs the maps in action location. The maps in action location places the souterrain directly west of the standing stone (Fig. 2).

An archaeological evaluation was requested by the Environment and Heritage Service: Protecting Historic Monuments Casework Officer, Stiofán Ó Cathmhaoil, to assess the potential impact of the proposed development on any hidden archaeological remains. Monitoring of test trench excavation took place on 14th June 2006. Six test trenches were excavated (Fig. 3) within the proposed development site boundary. All of the trenches measured approximately 85.0m by 1.9m and a similar stratigraphic sequence was represented in each. The site was heavily disturbed by agricultural features including drains and the remnants of field boundaries which all survived as features cut into the natural subsoil and filled with topsoil. The landowner confirmed that this now large single field was once four fields and perhaps up to seven prior to that (Dan Campbell pers. comm.). The stratigraphy of the test trenches is described below:

Trench A had sod (C101) with a depth of up to 0.13m. This overlay topsoil (C102) which was present between 0.13m and 0.42m below ground level. The topsoil was a gritty grey brown silty clay and lay directly over the subsoil (C103). The subsoil was an orangey brown boulder clay with decayed granite inclusions. A number of modern features were found to cut across the field at this location. At the eastern end of Trench A were the remnants of a field boundary (C104) in the form of a ditch cut now filled with topsoil (C102). The field boundary appeared to be aligned north-west to south-east. The full width of the field boundary was not uncovered but it was at least 2.0m wide. Approximately 8.0m from the western end of the trench were a series of plough furrows (C105, C106, C107 and C108) and possibly the faint remnants of others. The plough furrows were cut into the subsoil (C103) and filled with topsoil (C102) and appeared to be the result of an episode of deep ploughing. They each measured approximately 0.5m wide and were very shallow with a maximum depth of 0.05m. The extreme western edge of Trench A clipped the remains of another field boundary (C109) this time aligned roughly north-south. The maximum width exposed was 1.8m. Like the other features, this field boundary was cut into subsoil (C103) and filled with topsoil (Plates 1 and 2)

In Trench B, the sod (C201) had a maximum depth of 0.12m. The underlying topsoil (C202) was present between 0.12m and 0.46m below ground level and directly overlay the subsoil (C203). The subsoil (C203) was a compact orangey brown gritty sand. The remains of plough furrows were found at the eastern end of Trench B and more faintly across the rest of the

trench. At least four distinct plough furrows were uncovered (C204, C205, C206 and C207), all aligned north-west to south-east. The plough furrows were found to be approximately 0.5m wide each and were cut into the subsoil (C203) and filled by topsoil (C202). A further deep cut plough furrow (C208) was uncovered approximately 11.0m from the western edge of Trench B. Like the other plough furrows, this feature had a width of approximately 0.5m, was cut into the subsoil (C203) and was filled with topsoil (C202). Approximately 9.0m from the western end of Trench B was the remains of a field boundary (C209), aligned roughly south-west to north-east and with a width of approximately 3.8m and is likely to be a continuation of the field boundary (C109) found in Trench A. This field boundary (C209) was also found to cut into the subsoil (C203) and was filled by topsoil (C202) (Plates 3 and 4).

In Trench C, the sod (C301) had a maximum depth of 0.09m. Underlying this, the topsoil (C302) was present up to a depth of 0.41m. The topsoil (C302) was a grey brown sandy clay with occasional granite boulder inclusions. Directly underlying the topsoil was the subsoil (C303), an orange sandy boulder clay with infrequent decayed granite inclusions. The faint trace of a number of plough furrows was uncovered at the eastern end of Trench C. There appeared to be at least five (C304, C305, C306, C307 and C308) all running south-east to north-west and roughly 0.5m wide each, similar to those in the other trenches. They were most visible in the first 25.0m from the eastern end of the trench but faint traces of other plough furrows could be seen throughout the trench. The remains of a field boundary (C309) were also uncovered in this trench, approximately 39.0m from the eastern end. It appeared to line up with the south-east to north-west aligned field boundary located in trenches A and B (C109 and C209) and had a similar width of approximately 4.0m. The field boundary (C309) was cut into subsoil (C303) and filled by topsoil (C302). A modern field drain (C309), containing corrugated plastic piping, was found cutting south-west to north-east through some of the plough furrows (C306 and C307) at approximately 8.0m from the eastern end of the trench. The drain (C309) had a width of approximately 0.35m (Plates 5 and 6).

Trench D had sod (C401) with a depth of up to 0.14m. The underlying topsoil (C402) was present between 0.14m and 0.50m below ground level. The topsoil (C402) was a grey brown gritty silty clay. It directly overlay the subsoil (C403) which was an orangey brown gritty sand. The remains of a field boundary (C404) aligned roughly east-west was uncovered along most of Trench D. It was cut into the subsoil (C403), had a width of approximately 4.0m and was filled with topsoil (C402). The trace of a number of plough furrows were found running south-east to north-west along the trench. One plough furrow (C405) was located at approximately 0.14m from the eastern end of Trench D. Another plough furrow (C406) was located approximately 1.0m from the eastern end of Trench D and another (C407) was located approximately 5.0m from the western end of Trench D. A fourth plough furrow (C408) was located approximately 14.0m from the eastern end of the trench. All the plough furrows had an average width of 0.5m, were cut into the subsoil (C403) and were filled with topsoil (C402). The faint trace of a number of other plough furrows were uncovered at other locations across the trench. A modern stone-filled field drain (C409) aligned south-east to north-west was located approximately 8.0m from the eastern end of Trench D. It had a width of approximately 0.35m (Plates 7 and 8).

In Trench E, the sod (C501) had a depth of up to 0.13m. The underlying topsoil (C502) was present between 0.13m and 0.36m and was a grey brown silty clay. It directly overlay the subsoil (C503), an orangey brown gritty sand. At least four evenly spaced plough furrows (C504, C505, C506 and C507) were found to cut across the site at the eastern end of Trench E. They were located between 0.0m and 6.0m from the eastern end of Trench E and each had a width of approximately 0.5m. All the plough furrows were cut into the subsoil (C503) and were filled with topsoil (C502). The remains of a field boundary ditch (C508) were located approximately 6.5m from the eastern end of the trench. It measured approximately 4m wide,

was cut into the subsoil (C503) and was filled by topsoil (C502). A modern stone filled field drain (C509) aligned south-east to north-west cut across the trench at approximately 7.0m from the eastern end of Trench E. It had a width of approximately 0.35m and cut through the field boundary ditch (C508). The remnants of a field boundary ditch (C510) were uncovered approximately 26.0m from the western end of Trench E. The field boundary had a width of approximately 4.0m and was probably a continuation of the field boundary encountered in Trench C (i.e. C308). Like the other features, the field boundary (C510) was cut into the subsoil (C503) and was filled by topsoil (C502) (Plates 9 and 10).

The sod (C601) in Trench F had a maximum depth of 0.16m. Underlying this was topsoil (C602) at a depth of between 0.16m and 0.49m. The topsoil (C602) was a grey brown gritty silty clay. It directly overlay the subsoil (C603), an orangey brown gritty sand. The traces of a number of plough furrows were encountered at the eastern end of the trench. There were up to six plough furrows (C604 – C609, numbered from east to west) which were all aligned south-east to north-west and had an average width of 0.5m. All of the plough furrows were cut into the subsoil (C603) and were filled with topsoil (C502). A modern stone filled field drain (C610), also aligned south-east to north-west, was uncovered at approximately 21.0m from the eastern end of Trench F. It had a width of around 0.35m, was cut into the subsoil (C603) and filled with topsoil (C602). The remains of a field boundary (C611) were uncovered approximately 29.0m from the western end of Trench F. The field boundary consisted of a ditch which was cut into the subsoil (C603) and filled by topsoil (C602). It had a width of around 4.0m and was probably a continuation of the field boundary encountered in Trench E (C510) (the digital images of Trench F could not be recovered).

The excavation of evaluation trenches has shown that the site has been quite heavily disturbed by plough furrows, c vvvvfield drains and field boundaries. The presence of some plough furrow cuts in the subsoil indicates an episode of deep ploughing, these seemed to be concentrated in the eastern side of the field and perhaps indicate ploughing which took place prior to the removal of a field boundary. There were faint traces of plough furrows uncovered in other areas of the trenches and this may indicate a programme of agricultural improvement consisting of the creation of a large field and involving the removal of field boundaries. This was presumably followed by planting of new grass to form improved pasture. Subsequent to this was a programme of land drainage involving stone filled drains with corrugated plastic piping. It was evident that in the undisturbed areas of the trenches there were no finds, features or deposits of archaeological significance.

Archive:

Finds: n/a

Photographs: 10 digital images, held by the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, Queen's University Belfast.

Plans / Drawings: n/a

Signed: _____ Date: _____



Fig. 1: 1:50,000 Map showing location of site (red circle).

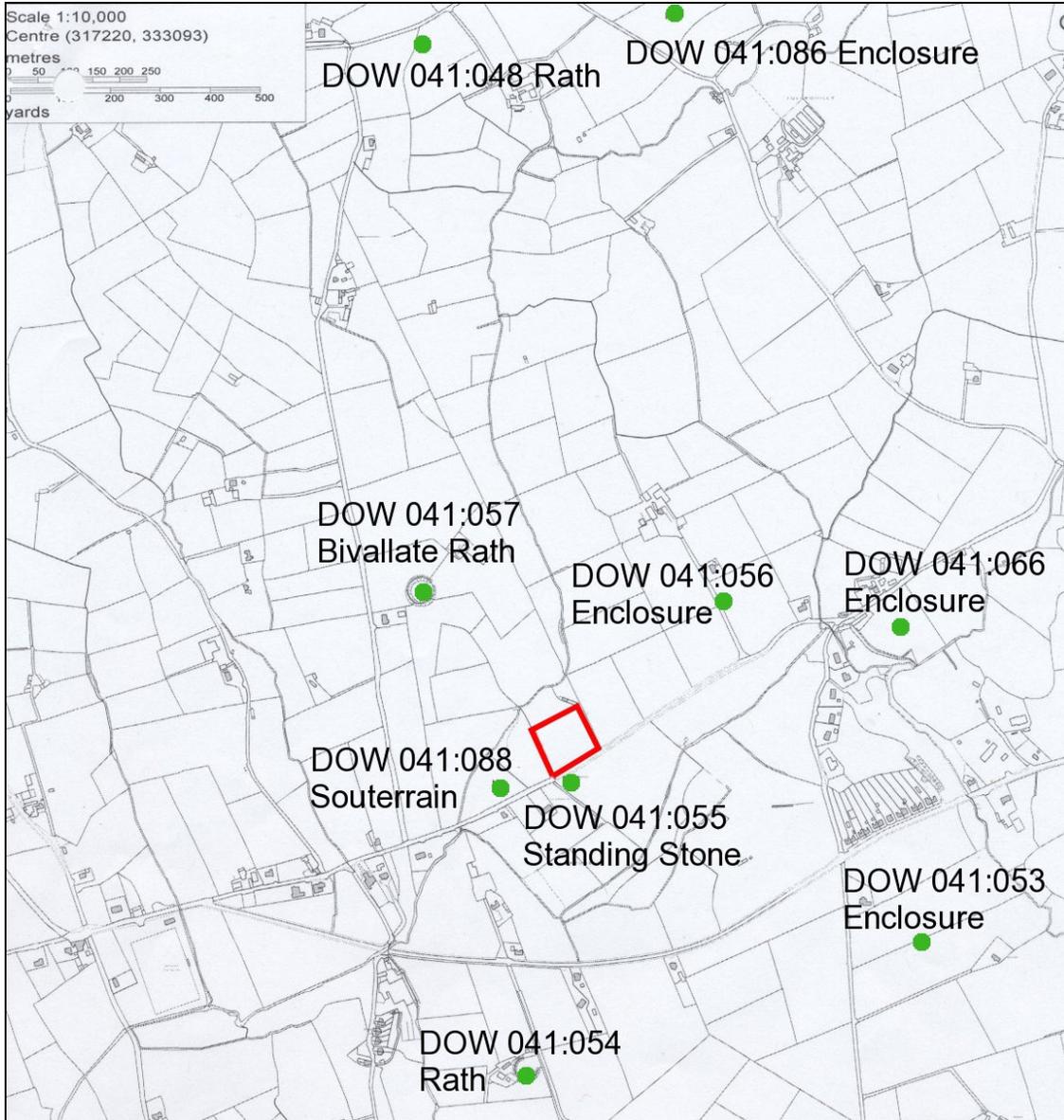


Fig. 2: Location of site (outlined in red) and archaeological monuments in the immediate vicinity (green).



Fig. 3: Location of test trenches (marked in red).

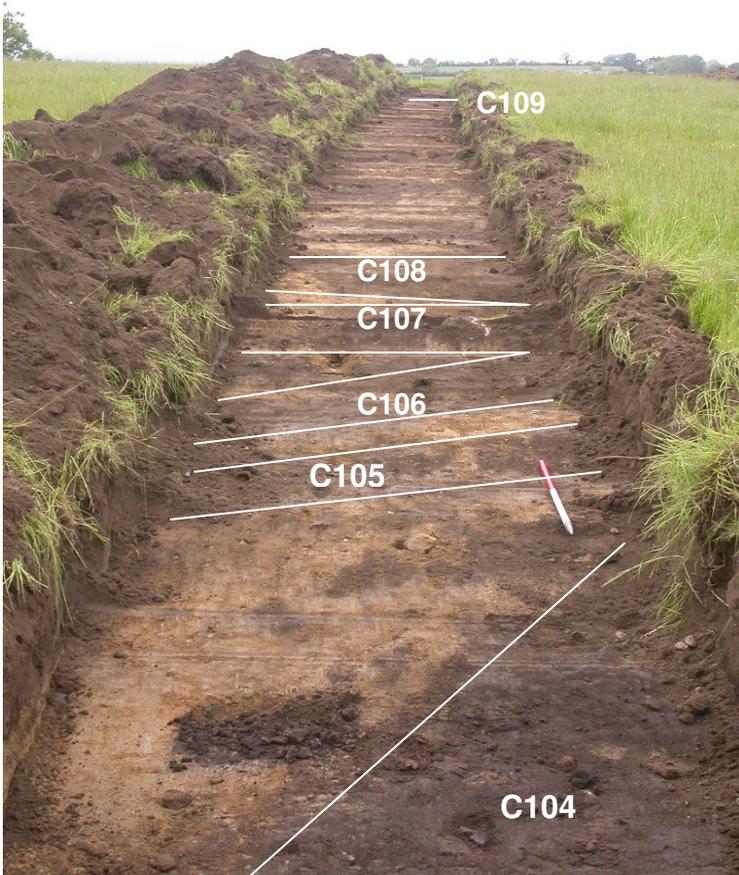


Plate 1: View of Trench A from east after excavation to surface of subsoil (C103).



Plate 2: View of south-facing section in Trench A, after excavation to surface of subsoil (C103).

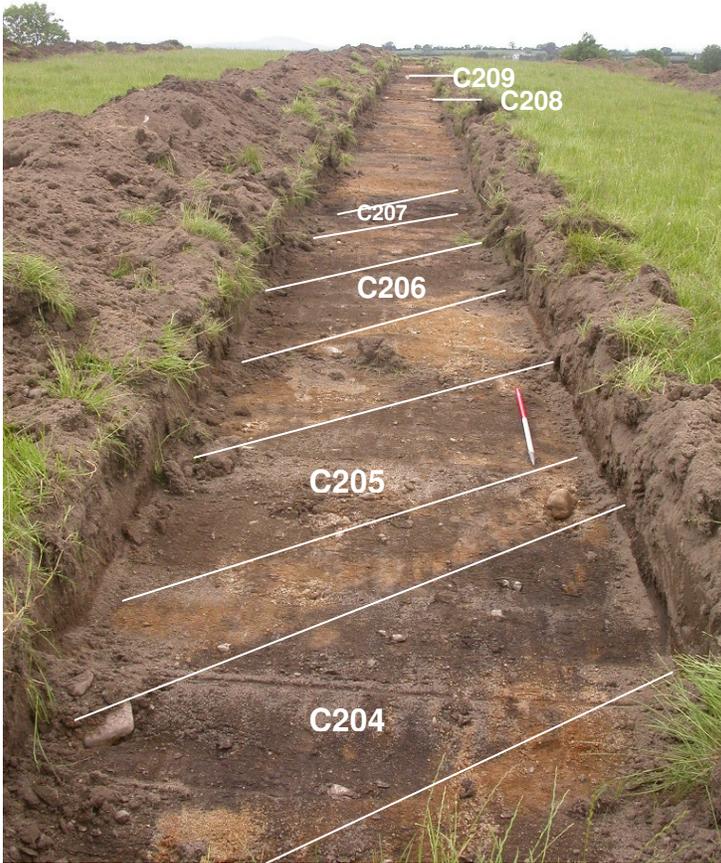


Plate 3: View of Trench B from east, after excavation to surface of subsoil (C203).



Plate 4: View of south-facing section in Trench B, after excavation to surface of subsoil (C203).

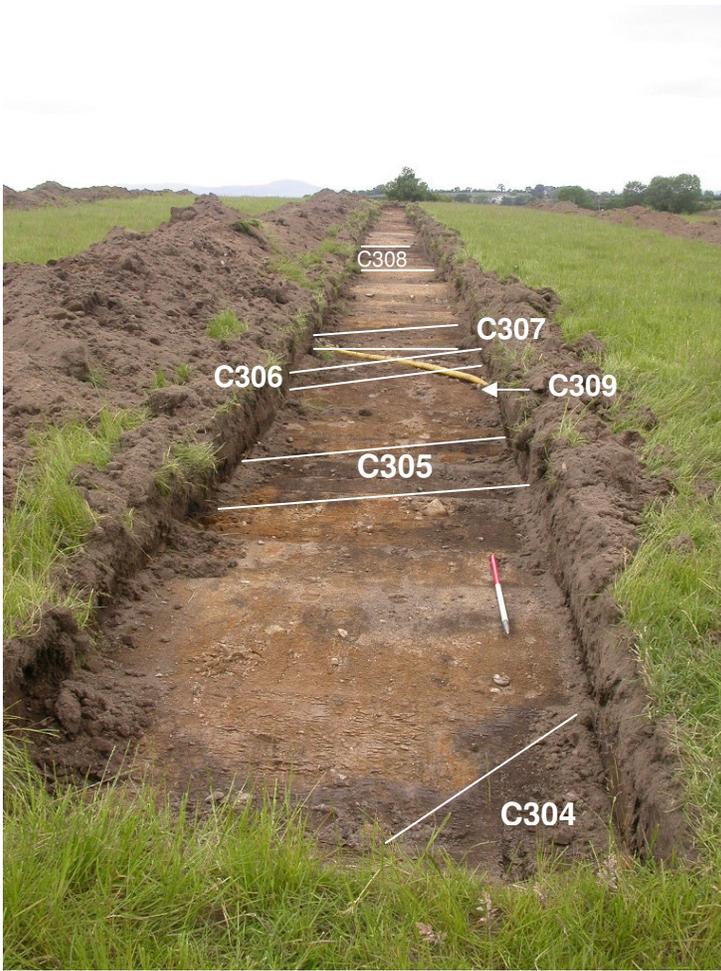


Plate 5: View of Trench C from east, after excavation to surface of subsoil (C303).



Plate 6: View of south-facing section in Trench C, after excavation to surface of subsoil (C303).

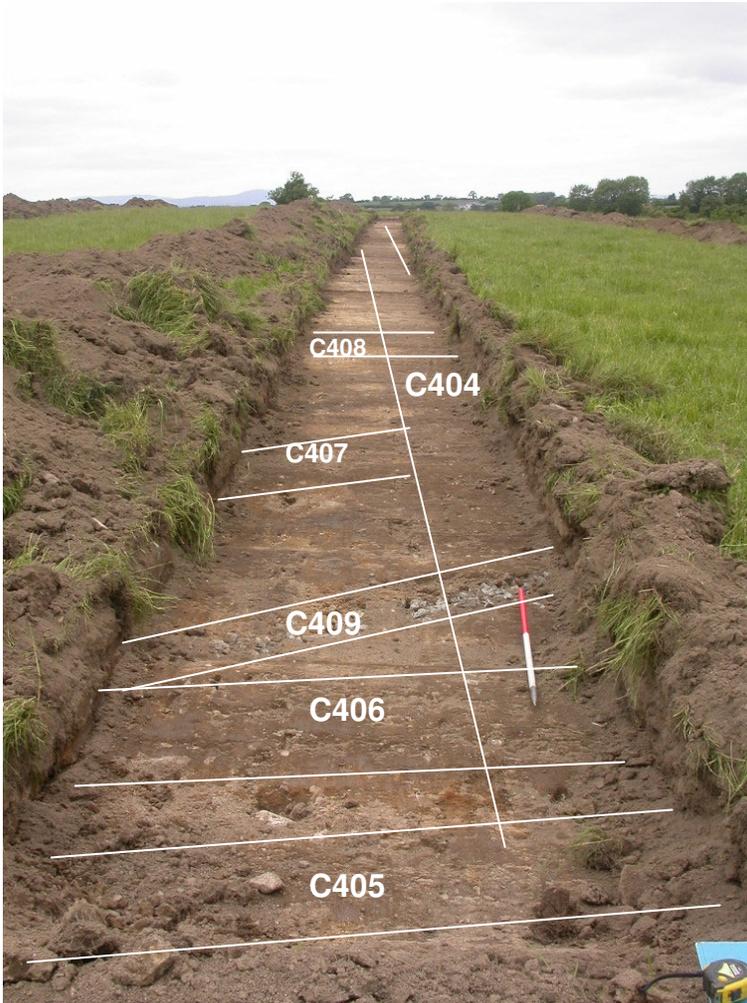


Plate 7: View of Trench D, after excavation to surface of subsoil (C403).



Plate 8: View of north-facing section in Trench D, after excavation to surface of subsoil (C403).

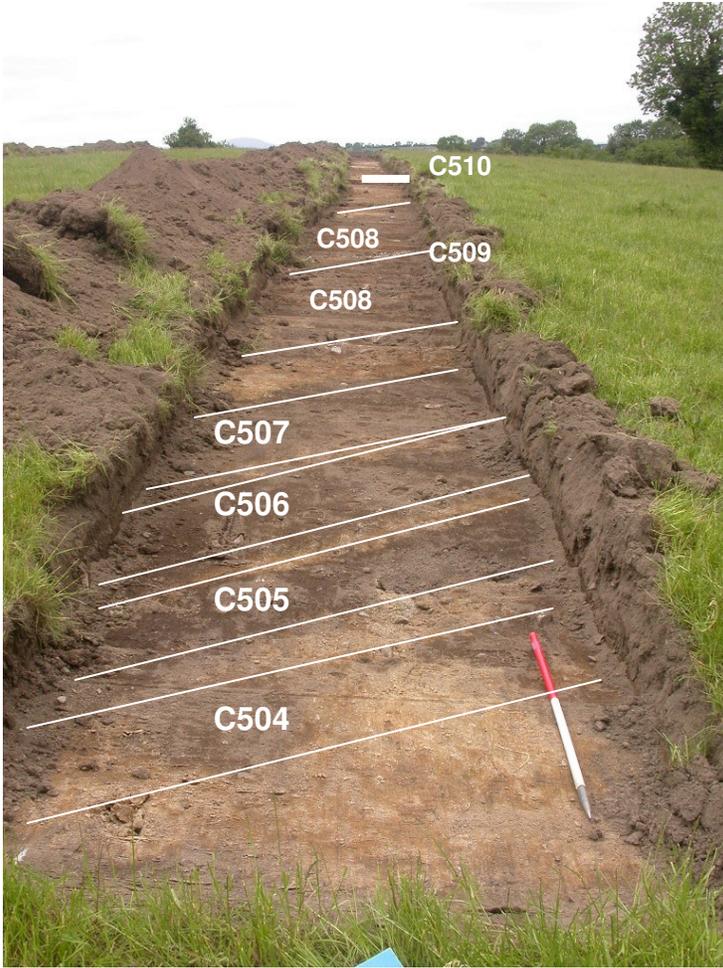


Plate 9: View of Trench E from east, after excavation to surface of subsoil (C503).



Plate 10: View of south-facing section in Trench E, after excavation to surface of subsoil (C503).