



Monitoring Report No. 173

**Land to the north of 34 The Village Lane
Burrenbane
Bryansford
Co. Down**

AE/09/55

Brian Sloan

Site Specific Information

Site Address: Land north of No. 34 The Village Lane, Bryansford

Townland: Burrenbane

SMR No.: near DOW:043:103

State Care *Scheduled* *Other* ✓

Grid Ref: J3441 3330

County: Down

Excavation Licence No: AE/09/55

Planning Ref / No.: R/2009/0096/F

Date of Monitoring: 22nd April 2009

Archaeologist Present: Brian Sloan

Brief Summary:

Three 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 40m east of a souterrain (DOW:043:103). Nothing of archaeological significance was uncovered in any of the trenches.

Type of monitoring:

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

Size of area opened:

Three trenches; each measuring approximately 12m in length by 2m in width.

Current Land Use: Pasture

Intended Land Use: Residential

Account of the monitoring

Introduction

A planning application for a private dwelling was made for a site north of No. 34 The Village Lane, Bryansford (Fig. 1). The proposed development site is located approximately 40m east of a souterrain (DOW:043:103) and both the souterrain and development site are situated in Burrenbane townland (Fig. 2). The souterrain was originally reported by Nick Brannon (previously of the NIEA) as being L-shaped in plan, typical of County Down souterrains, with a very tight entrance through a displaced roof lintel. He described one or two chambers with regular sections to the chambers approximately 1m wide and 1.6m high. He noted that there was damage to the western chamber, where it had been pierced by a water main, and there had also been some root damage (Sites and Monument Record, SMR No. DOW:043:103).

The proposed development site is located within a roughly rectangular field, bounded on the south, west and north by a post and wire fence, as well as hedgerows interspersed with mature trees. A farm shed and access gates are present along the eastern boundary of the development site. An archaeological evaluation took place in the adjacent field to the south of the proposed development site. This work was carried out by the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork in 2006, and despite the majority of the field being investigated, nothing of archaeological significance noted (Ward 2006, 2)

An archaeological evaluation was requested by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency: Historic Monuments Unit (NIEA:HMU) Casework Officer, Gina Baban, to assess the potential impact of the proposed development on any hidden archaeological remains. Monitoring of test trench excavation took place on 22nd April 2009. Three test trenches were excavated (Fig. 3) within the proposed development site boundary. The position of the trenches was adjusted slightly from those shown in the original research design. This was due to the presence of a 'fairy thorn' which the landowner did not wish to remove (Plate One). A similar stratigraphic sequence was represented in all of the trenches. The stratigraphy of the test trenches is described below:

Trench One

Trench One was aligned roughly west/east, measured approximately 12m by 2m, and was located at the northern end of the development site. The excavation ceased at the surface of the natural subsoil (C102) which was encountered at an average depth of 0.3m (Plates Two and Three).

The topsoil (C101) in Trench One was a grey brown silty clay with frequent granite inclusions, some of them quite large boulders. It had an average depth of 0.3m and directly overlay the subsoil (C102). The subsoil (C102) was a brownish orange boulder clay with frequent granite inclusions (Plates 1 and 2). No finds or features of an archaeological nature were observed in this trench.

Trench Two

Trench Two was aligned roughly west/east, measured approximately 11m by 2m and was located approximately 1.5m to the south of Trench One. The excavation ceased at the surface of the natural subsoil (C203) which was encountered at an average depth of 0.4m (Plates Four and Five).

In Trench Two the topsoil (C201) was a grey brown silty clay with frequent granite inclusions. It had a depth of up to 0.25m and directly overlay a slightly stonier cultivation soil (C202). This deposit, approximately 0.15m thick, was only encountered in the eastern end of the trench, where the surface of the subsoil (C203) sloped quite sharply. This is interpreted as representing the natural glacial topography of this inter-drumlin area.

The subsoil (C203), which was a brownish orange boulder clay with frequent granite inclusions (Plates 3 and 4). No finds or features of an archaeological nature were observed in this trench.

Trench Three

Trench Three was aligned roughly west/east, measured approximately 12m by 2m and was located approximately 2m to the south of Trench Two. The excavation ceased at the surface of the natural subsoil (C302) which was encountered at an average depth of 0.25m (Plates Six and Seven).

The topsoil (C301) in Trench C was a grey brown silty clay with frequent stone inclusions. It had a depth of up to 0.25m. Directly underlying this was the subsoil (C302), a

brownish orange boulder clay with frequent granite inclusions (Plates 5 and 6). No finds or features of an archaeological nature were observed in this trench.

Nothing of archaeological significance was encountered during the investigation. As such, it is not recommended that any further archaeological work is necessary in connection with this development. Publication of the results of this evaluation is not merited save a short summary to be submitted in the annual *Excavations Bulletin*.

Archive:

Finds: n/a

Photographs: 15 digital images, held by the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, Queen's University Belfast.

Plans / Drawings: n/a

Signed: _____

Date: _____

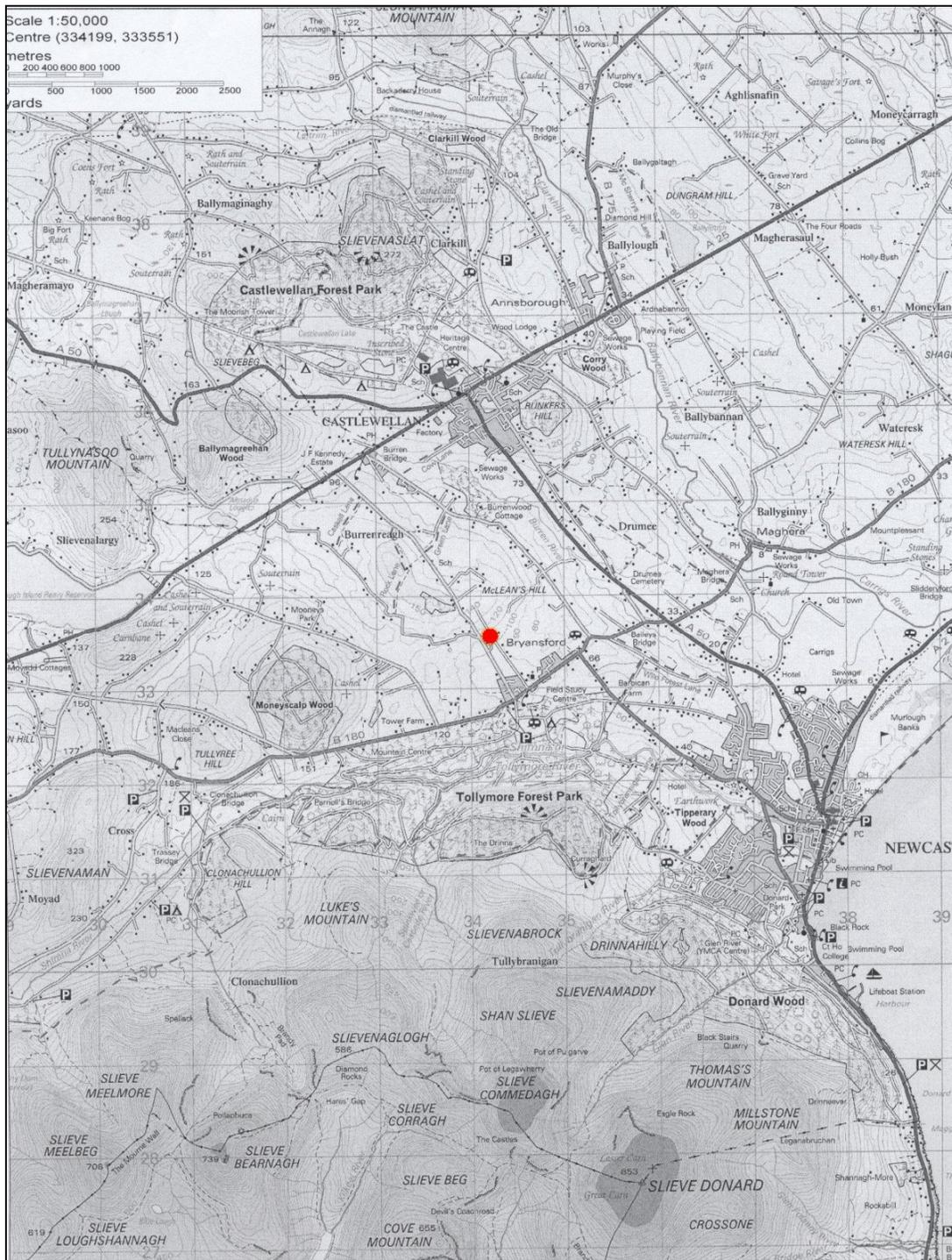


Fig. 1: Map showing location of site (red).

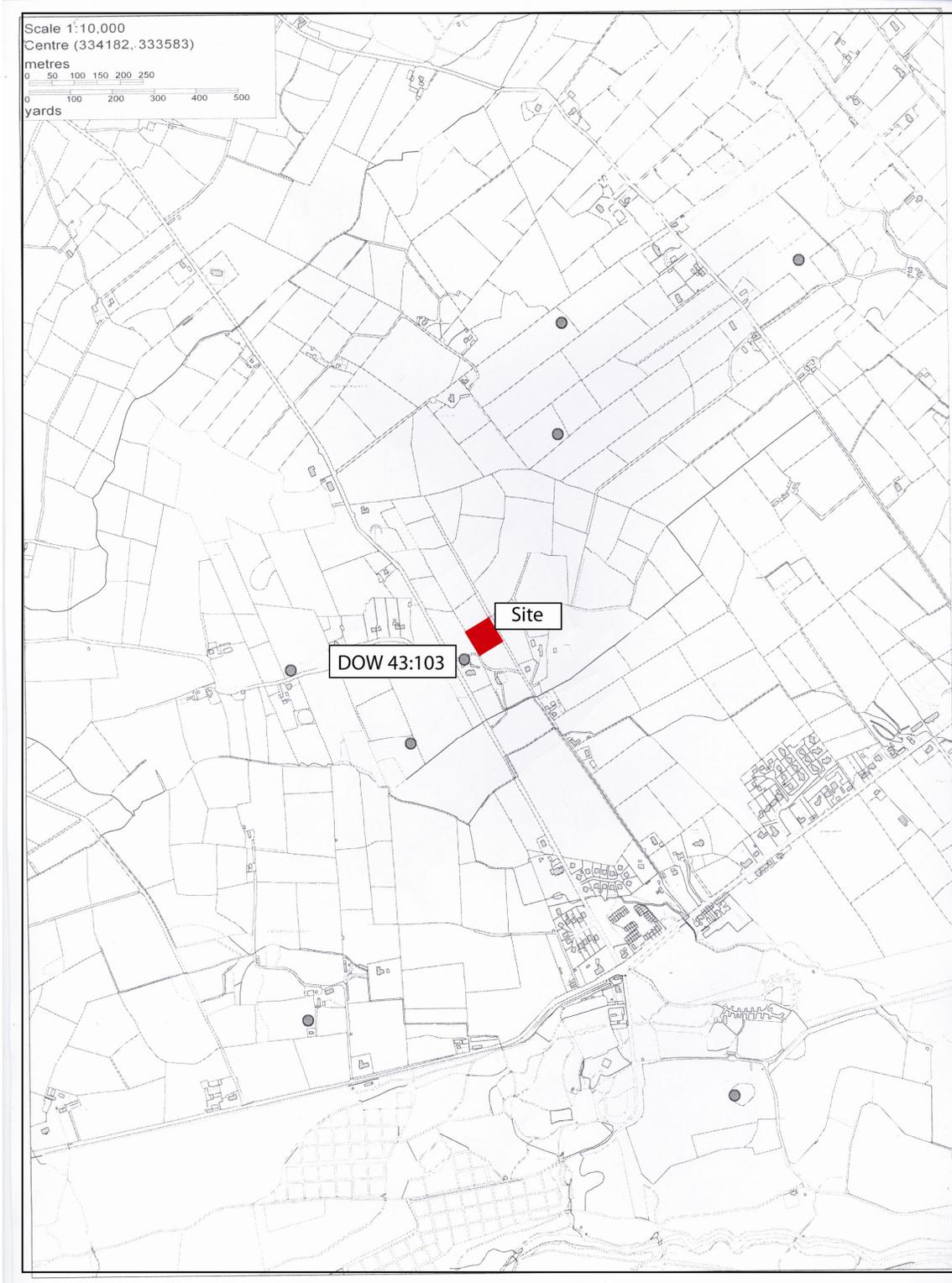


Fig. 2: Location of site (outlined in red).



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



Plate One: Development prior to the excavation of the evaluative test trenches, looking north-west.



Plate Two: Trench One following excavation to the surface of the subsoil (C102), looking west.



Plate Three: South-facing section of Trench One.



Plate Four: Trench Two following excavation to the surface of the subsoil (C203), looking west.



Plate Five: North-facing section of Trench Two.



Plate six: Trench Three following excavation to the surface of the natural subsoil (C302), looking east.



Plate Seven: South-facing section of Trench Three.