



## **Monitoring Report No. 278**

**Roe Valley Country Park Hydroelectric Restoration Scheme  
Roe Valley Country Park  
Largy townland  
County Derry**

**AE/14/30**

Ruth Logue

## Site Specific Information

*Site location:* Roe Valley Country Park, 41 Dogleap Road,  
Largy, Limavady, BT49 9NN

*Townland:* Largy

*IHR number:* 0168000500 beetling mill

*County:* Derry

*Excavation licence number:* AE/14/30

*Dates of monitoring:* 19, 20, 24, 27 March and 2 April 2014

*Archaeologist present:* Ruth Logue

*Brief summary:* Archaeological surveillance of the excavation of a trench for the laying of a pipe as part of the work on the Hydroelectric Restoration Scheme at the country park.  
Nothing of archaeological significance found.

*Current land use:* Landscaped area adjacent to visitor centre, paths, green field (edge of bleach green).

*Intended land use:* Area to be reinstated to current land use on completion of pipe laying.

## **Account of the monitoring**

The Hydroelectric Restoration Scheme took place at Roe Valley Country Park, a NIEA Natural Heritage property to the south of Limavady. This project was the restoration of an historic hydroelectricity plant where electricity was generated from the 1860's up to 1967. The Ritter Power House was to be reused with the installation of a new turbine and generator; the existing equipment was to be removed and stored for future display.

As the work was taking place in an historic industrial landscape and close to a beetling mill archaeological surveillance was requested by the Gail Howell, Archaeologist, Historic Monuments Unit, NIEA. The element of the work which required an archaeologist was the installation of a new penstock pipe to the original power house. The pipe, 1m in diameter and c. 200m in length, was to run underground laid at a depth of 2.3m. The trench was dug in 14m lengths at a time with a section of pipe then laid, which meant that any monitoring of the work was intermittent. The pipe laying started near the power house, ran between the beetling mill and mill pond, and along the western edge of the bleach green. (Figure 1, Plate 1)

Trench excavation started on 19 March 2014 at the end of the pipe-line nearest the power house, and just to the east of the visitor centre. This area had been landscaped, presumably during the building of the centre, and the ground level had been raised. Initial monitoring took place in this area.

More monitoring was carried out as the pipe trench went past (to the west) of the beetling mill. The building is aligned north-west/south-east and is situated in modern landscaping near the mill pond. It is a two storey stone building with brick trims to the openings, it is now roofless and derelict with only the four external walls surviving. The mill race which was channelled from the River Roe would have run underneath the beetling mill, turning the water-wheel. There is no remaining trace of the water-wheel, which would have been located internally, and the head and tail race were in-filled in the early 1970s. Beetling was a process in the production of linen, after weaving, to finish the cloth by giving it a shine as the result of continual hammering. Nothing relating to the mill was uncovered during trench excavation. (Plates 2 to 4)

Past the beetling mill the trench cut across a path and then into a field which was a former bleach green. This last stretch of the pipe trench was monitored and again nothing of archaeological significance was noted. (Figure 1, Plates 5 to 7)

No features or finds of archaeological significance were found during the surveillance monitoring of the pipe trench excavation.

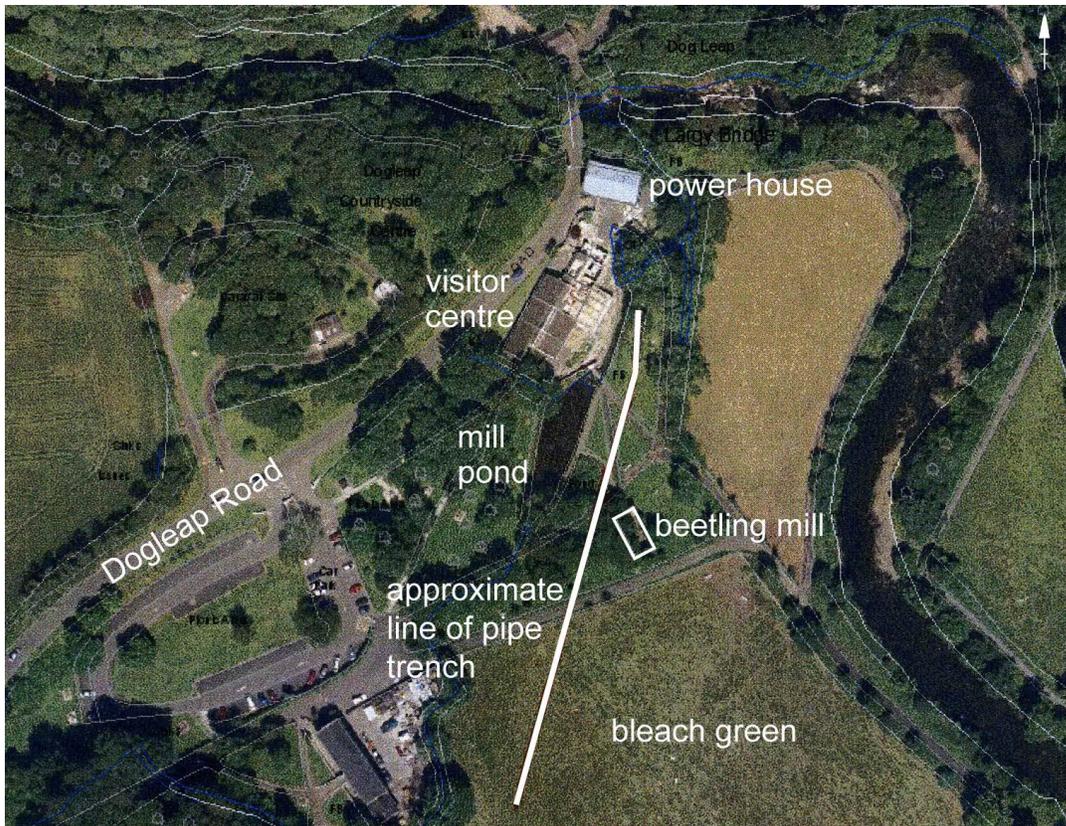


Figure 1: Aerial photograph of relevant part of the country park, showing location of line of pipe trench, beetling mill and bleach green.



Plate 1: Line of pipe trench, marked by yellow posts, pre-excitation with bleach green at right of photo (looking north-north-east).



Plate 2: Beetling mill (looking west).



Plate 3: Pipe trench passing beetling mill, with former bleach green in background (looking south-east).



Plate 4: Pipe trench passing south-west facing side of beetling mill (looking north-east).



Plate 5: Pipe trench crossing path, with former mill building (now Green Lane Museum) in background to right (looking south-west).



Plate 6: Pipe trench crossing path, with former bleach green to left (looking south).



Plate 7: Last section of pipe trench, with section of pipe being put in place (looking south-south-west).