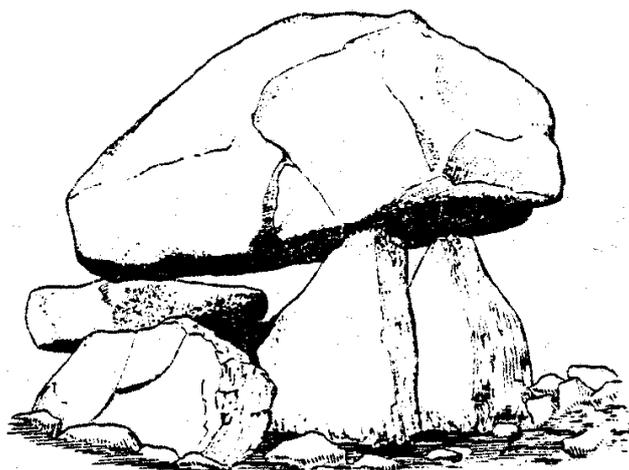


ULSTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY



Survey Report: No. 21

**Survey of Earthwork, Florence Court Demesne,
County Fermanagh
UAS/09/06**

In association with



HENRY WELSH

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First published 2010

Ulster Archaeological Society
c/o School of Geography, Archaeology and Palaeoecology
The Queen's University of Belfast
42 Fitzwilliam Street
Belfast
BT9 6AX

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1. Summary

1.1 Location

A site survey was undertaken at an earthwork at the Florence Court estate, County Fermanagh, Parish of Killesher, Barony of Clanawley, Townland of Florence Court Demesne, Irish Grid reference H 1772 3411. The site (SMR number: FER 244:035) has also been given the reference NTSMR 131513 by the National Trust

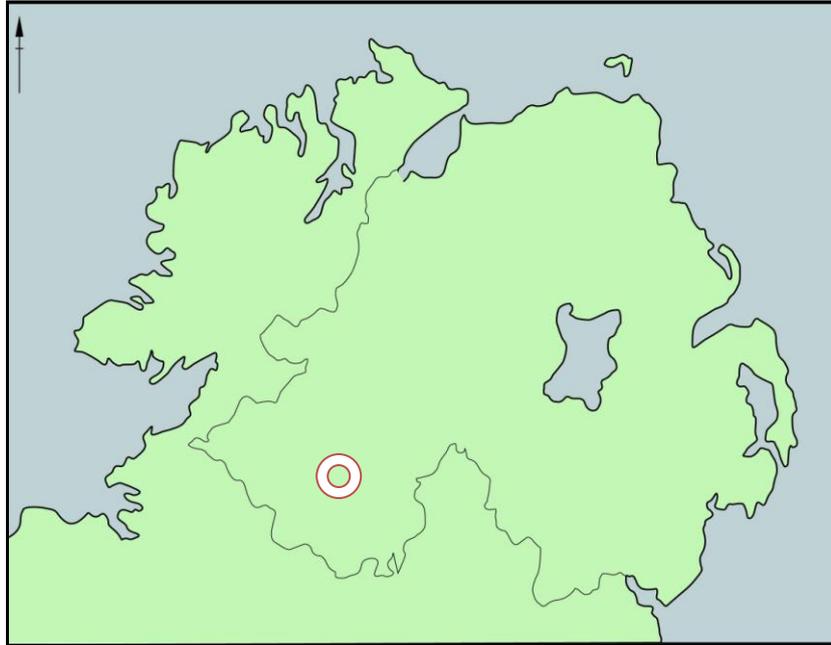


Figure 1: Location map for Florence Court, County Fermanagh

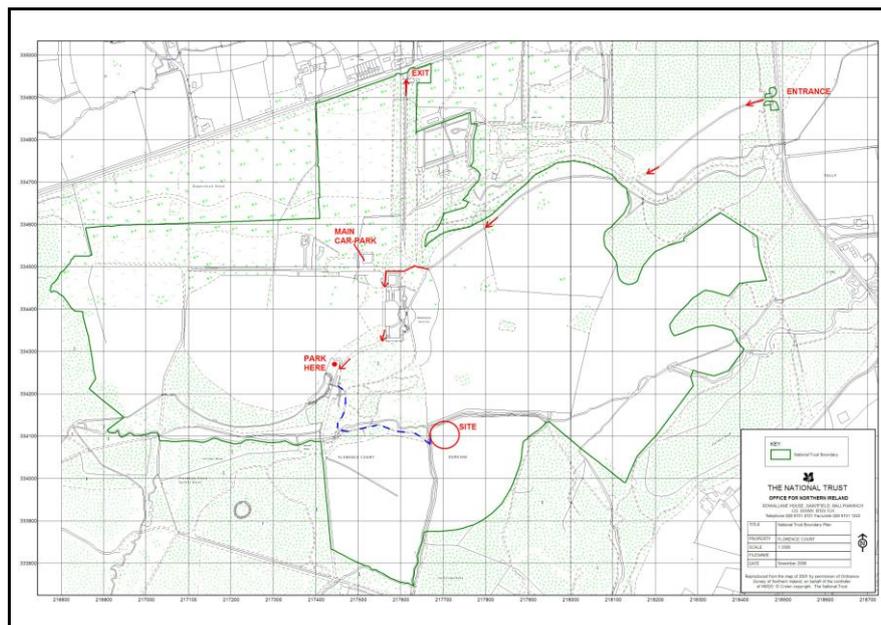


Figure 2: Location map of site in Florence Court Demesne

The earthwork is situated within the grounds of the Florence Court estate and forms part of a wider landscape owned by the National Trust. The survey was the sixth in a series of planned surveys undertaken by members of the Ulster Archaeological Society during 2009.

1.2 Aims

In order to enhance the archaeological record of this site, the aims of this survey were to produce accurate plan and profile drawings of the monument and carry out a photographic survey. This information was compiled into a report and copies submitted to the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, to the National Trust and to the archives of the Ulster Archaeological Society. The report was also published on the website of the Ulster Archaeological Society.



Figure 3: The earthwork, viewed from the south-east

2. Introduction

2.1 Background

The survey of the earthwork was undertaken on Saturday 29 August 2009. It was carried out by members of the Ulster Archaeological Society in response to a decision taken by the committee of the society to extend an opportunity to members to participate in practical surveys of archaeological monuments that had not previously been recorded. This followed a bequest to the society from the late Dr Ann Hamlin, from which the items of survey equipment were purchased. During discussions with Mr Malachy Conway, Survey Archaeologist of the National Trust in Northern Ireland, it was noted that many archaeological sites on National Trust property had not been subject to a detailed archaeological survey. It was therefore agreed that members of the society would commence a programme to survey these sites. This earthwork was

subsequently chosen to be the twenty-first of these surveys and coincided with the compilation of an archaeological survey of County Fermanagh commissioned by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency.



Figure 4: UAS Survey Group members at work at the earthwork

2.2 Previous archaeological surveys

Terence Reeves-Smyth carried out a survey of the Florence Court Demesne for the National Trust, which was published in 1990 (see Reeves-Smyth, T.J.C. 1990. *Florence Court Demesne* [3 Volumes], Saintfield: National Trust. The survey included a part of the demesne known as the Sheep Field, which contains the earthwork described thus:

In the north part of the field near the river at NGR 177341 there are traces of an earthwork feature. It comprises a roughly rectangular banked enclosure circa 40m long that probably originally contained a dwelling. The date of this feature could be anything from the medieval period to the 17th century (Reeves-Smyth 1990, Vol. 3, 109.

2.3 Cartographic evidence

This site does not appear on any Ordnance Survey map, but the field in which the earthwork stands was marked on Mulvihill's 1768 map of the demesne, where it was called *Knockneachull Meadow*. A Rath (FER 244:001) is situated 550m to the west-south-west and a Standing Stone (FER 244:036) and associated circular enclosure is situated in what is known as the *Giant's Field*, 675m to the south-west.

2.4 Archiving

Copies of this report have been deposited with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, the National Trust and the Ulster Archaeological Society. All site records have been archived by the National Trust at Rowallane, Saintfield, County Down.

2.5 Credits and Acknowledgements

The survey was led by Harry Welsh and other members of the survey team were Michael Catney, William Dunlop, June Welsh, Ian Gillespie, Anne MacDermott, Ken Pullin, George Rutherford, Colin Boyd, Hilary Boyd and Pat O'Neill. The Ulster Archaeological Society is particularly grateful to Mr Malachy Conway, Survey Archaeologist of the National Trust, who worked closely with the survey team in choosing the site and facilitating access.

3. 2009 UAS Survey

3.1 Methodology

It was decided that the survey would take the form of the production of plan and profile drawings, accompanied by a photographic survey. This report was compiled using the information obtained from these sources, in addition to background documentary material.

3.2 Production of plan and profile drawings

Plan and profile drawings were completed, using data obtained from a field survey. Measurements were obtained by using the society's *Leica Sprinter 100* electronic measuring device. Sketch plans at 1:200 scale were completed on site by recording these measurements on drafting film secured to a plane table and backing up the data on a field notebook for subsequent reference. Field plans were later transferred to a computer-based format for printing.

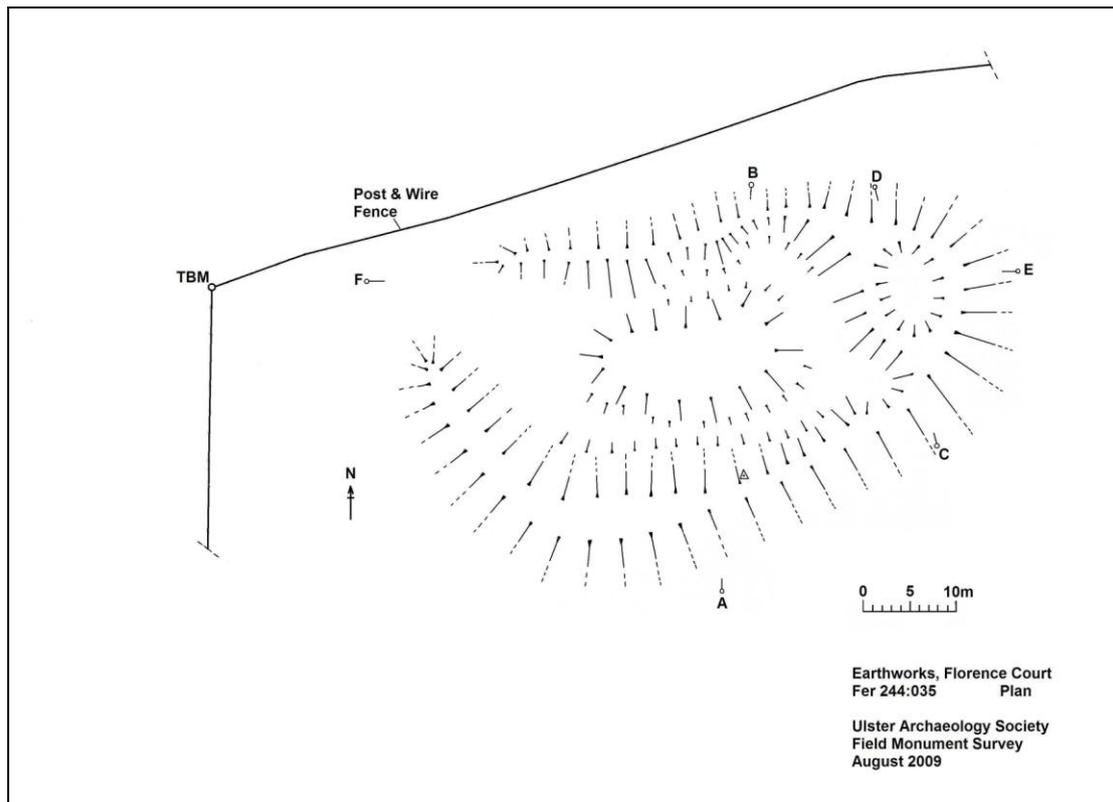


Figure 5: Plan of the earthwork

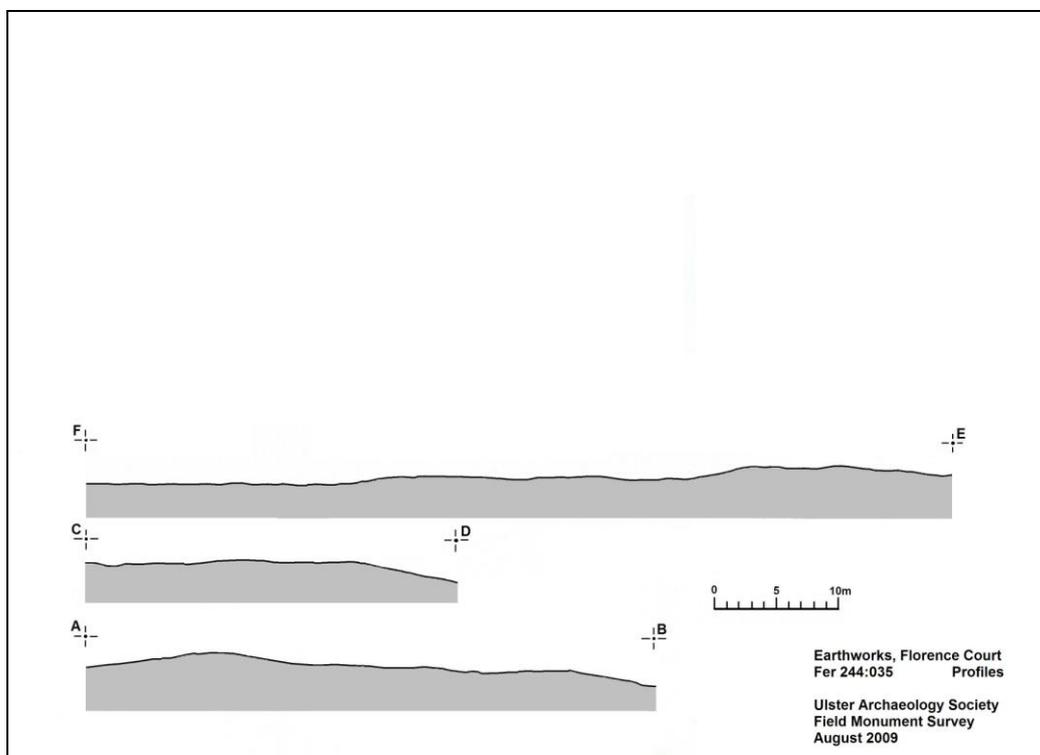


Figure 6: Profiles of the earthwork

3.3 Photographic archive

A photographic record of the site was taken by using a *Ricoh Caplio 600G Wide* 8 megapixel digital camera and a *Nikon D700* 12 megapixel digital camera. A photograph record sheet was employed, corresponding to photographs taken during the site survey. The archive has been compiled in jpeg format and saved to compact disc.



Figure 7: View of site, looking north-east



Figure 8: View of central mound, looking north-west



Figure 9: Aerial photograph of earthwork FER 244:035 and site of Standing Stone FER 244:036, 1981, *Crown Copyright*

A series of aerial photographs were taken of this area in 1981 and one (F4188) captured this earthwork (FER 244:035) and a Standing Stone (FER 244:036), with associated circular enclosure (see Figure 9 above).

4. Discussion

4.1 Introduction

The Florence Court Demesne is situated 11 kilometres to the south-west of Enniskillen and extends to some 575 hectares of parkland and woodland. It has been the home of the Cole family, the Barons Mount Florence and Earls of Enniskillen, since the eighteenth century. The mansion and 5.7 hectares of land were donated to the National Trust in 1954 and a further 56 hectares of parkland was acquired by the National Trust in 1985. The Cole family left the property in 1974.

The earthwork is located within the demesne in a field now known as the Sheep Field, some 250m south-south-east of the present mansion house. It is not recorded on any Ordnance Survey maps, but the field in which the earthwork stands is marked on Mulvihill's 1768 map of the demesne, where it was called *Knockneachull Meadow*. A Rath (FER 244:001) is situated 550m to the west-south-west and a Standing Stone (FER 244:036) and associated circular enclosure is situated in what is known as the *Giant's Field*, 675m to the south-west.

4.2 Site description

The earthwork consists of a kidney-shaped bank, measuring 70m south-west/north east, by 40m north-west/south east, with a maximum height of 2.7m above the external ground level. There is a 6m wide entrance at the north-west. At the south-east, a 6m wide portion of the bank is absent for 3m into the inner face. In the centre of the site is an oval-shaped mound, 18m east/west, by 8m north/south. There are traces of a shallow ditch between the external bank and inner mound to the north and south of this mound. To the north-east, an oval-shaped mound, 30m north/south, by 20 m east/west is incorporated in the bank. This mound has a corresponding oval-shaped depression on the top, 11m north/south by 7m east/west and 1m in maximum depth. There are several exposed rounded stones at the top of this mound, approximately 0.2m in diameter. Probing indicated the presence of many more stones at approximately 0.2m below the present ground level across the entire mound. To the south-east, an overgrown path meanders from the earthwork to the present field gate, approximately 200m to the east. This is probably the old demesne trackway described by Reeves-Smyth, which probably dates to the early 1800s and which went out of use in the 1970s ‘when the Forest Service laid a new one alongside the river’ (Reeves-Smyth 1990, 109).

4.3 Interpretation

Reeves-Smyth suggested that the site was a rectangular structure and probably the remains of a medieval house site. There are a number of raths in the area of this site, including three to the south-west (FER 244:001, FER 243:019 and FER 243:020) and a further three to the north-east (FER 244:027, FER 244:002 and FER 244:003). Raths are thought to date from the 6th to 9th centuries AD, in a period known as Early Christian, or Early Medieval and are usually ‘more or less strictly circular in plan, enclosing an area between twenty and forty metres across’ (Mallory and McNeill 1991, 185). This site does not seem to meet these criteria in any respect.

The 2009 UAS survey plan indicates that the bank is not rectangular, but an irregular oval, or kidney-shape, with a clearly identifiable opening in the bank to the north-west. There was no evidence of an external ditch. Further, the bank gradually reduces in height in the area of the opening, where there is no evidence of a bank or ditch at all. The bank itself is not of uniform height or width and appears to be made up of a series of mounds that have eroded together to varying degrees. This is particularly evident from the northern to south-eastern portion of the bank. The highest part of the bank is to the north-east, where it appears to be an oval-shaped mound that has been incorporated into the bank at this point. The mound is oval in plan and at the top there is a corresponding oval-shaped depression, about 1m in maximum depth. This may be the site of a collapsed cist burial or the result of treasure-hunting activities in the past. There are numerous rounded stones, approximately 0.2m in diameter, visible at the top of this mound and probing indicated the presence of many more across this part of the site. This would seem to support the suggestion that the mound is more likely to be the remains of a cairn, rather than bank material. There are traces of an inner ditch between the bank and the oval-shaped mound in the centre of the site and this is particularly evident at the north and south. The presence of an outer bank and inner ditch is usually indicative of a ritual use, as it would not be practical for defensive purposes.

There are a number of prehistoric monuments to the south and south-west of this site, on the slopes of Tren and Benaughlin. These include a standing stone and associated circular enclosure (FER 244:036), situated in what is known as the *Giant's Field*, 675m to the south-west. At approximately 2km to the south-east, another standing stone (FER 244:006), a stone circle (FER 244:028) and a megalithic tomb (FER 244:034) have been identified. Four cairns have also been identified at about 3km to the south-west.

The plan of this site bears a remarkable similarity to that of a Bronze Age multiple cist cairn, known as *Dun Ruadh*, in the townland of Crouck, County Tyrone (TYR 019:004), which was partially excavated by Oliver Davies between 1935-36 and again by Derek Simpson in 1987 (Figure 10).

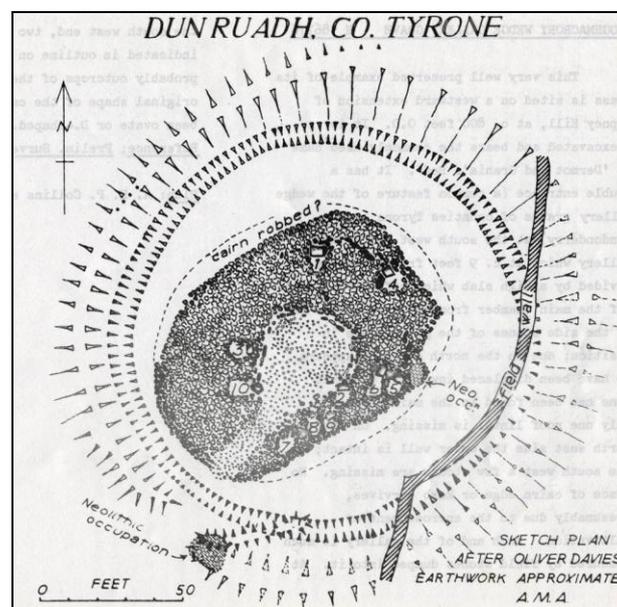


Figure 10: Plan of Crouck Multiple Cist Cairn (after Addyman 1967, 55)

There are a total of fifteen known multiple cist cairns in Northern Ireland. Available details suggest that these are mostly oval in plan. Areas vary widely, from 126sq.m to 1250sq.m, but average around 500sq.m. The average surviving height of these monuments is 2.1m (see figure 10). The monument in Florence Court is considerably larger in area, at 2,200sq.m, but at 2.7m is of average height.

Townland	SMR	Shape	Length	Width	Height
Dorsey	ARM 028:003	Circular	16	16	1.7
Slieve Gullion	ARM 028:007	Circular	30	30	4.8
Ballaghbeg	DOW 049:011	Oval	43	37	1.0
Beihy	FER 244:010	Oval	18	16	1.8
Ballydullaghan	LDY 026:056	Circular	19	19	1.9
Crouck	TYR 019:004	Oval	32	25	Not known
Carryglass	TYR 057:007	Oval	16	10	1.5

Figure 11: Dimensions of some other multiple cist cairns (NIEA)

In the absence of positive dating evidence, it is difficult to be certain about the classification of this monument. However, the features observed during the 2009 survey, such as the shape in plan, the use of stones of regular size in its construction and its proximity to other prehistoric monuments in the area, seem to point to a prehistoric ritual or burial origin.

5. Recommendations for further work

In order to obtain more definitive dating material for the monument, the National Trust may in the future wish to consider limited excavation. It is also a cause for concern that the monument is located in a field that is used for grazing animals, exposing the remains to damage. It is suggested that the present field boundary is moved south, to bring the monument within the area accessible to members of the public and at the same time protected from the activities of cattle and sheep. Signs might also be erected, informing visitors of the presence and nature of the monument, adding to the attractions at Florence Court.

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T/2094/3A Map of the Demesne of Florence Court, County Fermanagh, by F. Mulvihill, June 1768.

APPENDIX A

PHOTOGRAPH RECORD FORM

Site: Earthwork FER 244:035, Florence Court Demesne, County Fermanagh

Date: 29 August 2009

Film no.	B/W Print	Colour print	Colour slide	Digital image (m.pixels)
				8 and 12 resp.

Make and model of camera...*Ricoh Caplio G600 Wide and Nikon D700*

Frame no	Direction viewed from	Details
1504	SW	Raised mound in NE corner
1505	NE	Marker on NE mound
1506	SE	Mansion house and raised bank, NE corner
1507	E	Site looking west
1508	E	Looking towards centre of site from NE mound
1509	N	From path fence, through centre of site
1510	W	Survey team in action
1511	W	Looking east (66 degrees) from bank
1512	W	From SW corner
1513	SW	From SW corner of bank
1514	SW	Towards bridge and ford