When is a ringwork a ringwork? Identifying the ringwork castles of County Wexford with a view to reconsidering Irish ringwork classification.

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Declaration

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university and to the best of my knowledge and belief, does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Grace Dennis-Toone

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Chapter 1. Introduction

The ringwork castle in Ireland holds significant historical importance but remains one of the lesser studied medieval site types. This is largely because it is an ambiguous site type that is difficult to correctly identify for various reasons, most notably the lack of an agreed upon classification of its morphology, and its similarity to other site types like the Irish *rath*. In most works, a ringwork castle is typically described as a circular, subcircular or D-shaped earthwork enclosed by a bank and ditch, often with a fosse; the average diameter of a ringwork's interior is 35m, although this varies greatly. A ringwork would also have had a wooden palisade built upon the bank and is usually found in defendable locations in the landscape (Menz 2017:94). The accurate identification of these sites is the first step in understanding their role in the Anglo-Norman conquest of Ireland and the greater colonial strategy adopted by the Anglo-Normans in England and Wales, as such a reliable classification methodology is key to unlocking patterns in the distribution and usage of the ringwork.

The first Anglo-Norman settlement in Ireland – Carrick, in County (hereafter Co.) Wexford on the River Slaney—has been classified as a ringwork by previous studies (Arbuthnot 2011; Colfer 2002; Shine et al. in press). The County of Wexford is rich with the archaeology of the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland (1169) and, as the front line of one of the most monumental events in Irish history, it is of great importance for understanding the events that took place in Ireland during the conquest and colonization of Ireland. This study has two key purposes: (1) to identify the possible ringwork castle sites of Co. Wexford and (2) to develop and apply a classification model to a range of previously identified ringwork sites to determine whether each site is a ringwork castle, possible ringwork castle or other site type. In doing so, this will enable more relevant discussion of the place of the ringwork castle in the frontier landscape of Co. Wexford and Ireland during the conquest period of c.1169 – c.1350.

1.1 Research questions and aims

As mentioned above, Co. Wexford was the frontier of the Anglo-Norman invasion and, as such, is the origin point for the ringwork castle in Ireland. For this reason, it has been chosen as the study area. There has been previous research into potential ringwork sites in Co. Wexford, however due to new evidence from recent projects at specific sites and further

discussion of the attributes of a ringwork in academic literature, it is felt that the ringwork sites of Co. Wexford require re-classifying. In 1980, Terry Barry published his paper on the earthworks of Ireland and concluded that over 100 ringwork castles could exist in Ireland (Barry 1983:195-309). More recently in 2011, a large study was conducted by Emma Arbuthnot on the ringwork castles in the medieval provinces of Leinster and Meath, including Co. Wexford (Figure 1), which sought to identify and re-classify ringwork sites (Arbuthnot 2011). She identified 16 sites in Co. Wexford and re-classified 11 as conclusive or possible ringworks. In 2013 Billy Colfer researched the castles of Co. Wexford and identified eight as possible ringwork castles (Colfer 2013:47). The Irish National Monuments Service also have eight ringwork castles listed in Co. Wexford in the Record of Monuments and Places. In light of new research, the conclusions and classifications presented in both Arbuthnot and Colfer's work on ringwork castles requires re-evaluation. These sources combined pinpoint 16 possible ringwork castles in Co. Wexford that will be researched and re-analyzed in this thesis. The research question and aims of this project are:

What are the ringwork castles of Co. Wexford, Ireland?

- Identify all possible ringwork castles in County Wexford
- Discuss and address the key issues with ringwork castle classification in Ireland
- Present any notable patterns from the results in the morphology, dispersion, location and occupation of ringwork castles and reclassify previously identified ringwork sites where necessary
- Address the role of ringwork castles in the Anglo-Norman conquest of Ireland and to a lesser extent the Norman conquest of England and Wales

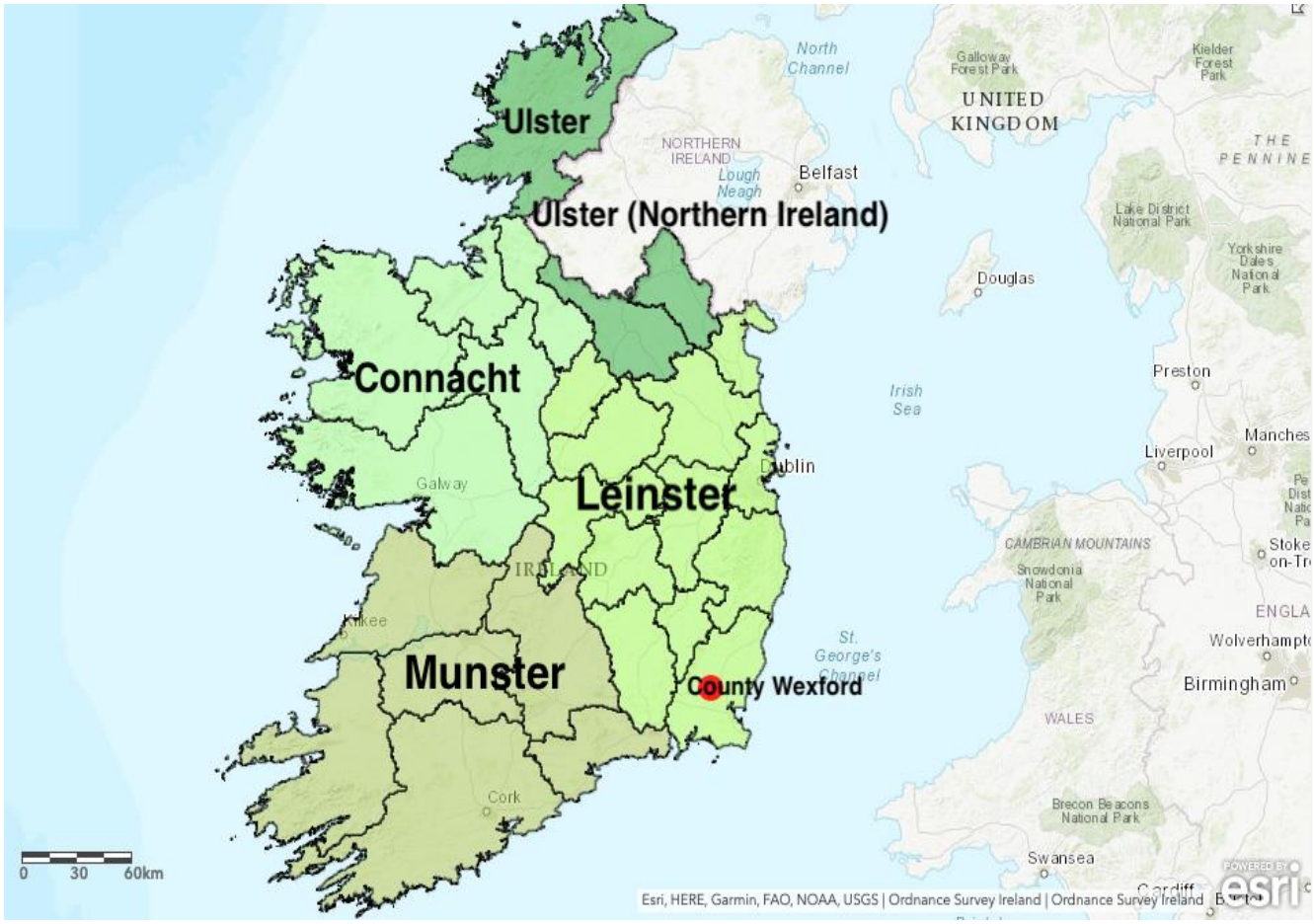


Figure 1. The medieval provinces of Ireland. Base map from the Ordnance Survey Ireland 2019

1.2 The reason behind the research

The key issue with ringwork castle identification in Ireland is the difficulty of classifying this site type correctly. This thesis will implement a revised model for classifying ringwork castles in Ireland, derived in part from previous projects on their identification, in order to classify possible ringwork castles of Co. Wexford more reliably. Whilst Arbuthnot (2011) forms the core of the method adopted here, this has been extended by more recent archaeological evidence and field surveys conducted by the researcher. This provides new information on the ringwork castles of Co. Wexford and their dispersal in relation to Anglo-Norman settlement patterns in the county.

The importance of ringwork castles in the Irish context lies in their role in the Anglo-Norman conquest, which began in 1169 (Colfer 2002:28). Although the initial knights who came across were invited, subsequent events arising from the marriage of the Anglo-Norman knight Strongbow to the daughter of the Lord of Leinster began centuries of war and oppression for the Irish under English rule (Colfer 2002:28). County Wexford became part of a frontier landscape in the years following the initial landing of the Anglo-Normans and the use of ringwork castles in this colonial conquest is seen from 1169 (Shine et al. in press). The precise role of this site type in the relative success of the conquest is still poorly understood and there is a consequent lack of understanding of why the ringwork castle fell out of popularity after the early 13th century to be replaced by the motte form (Arbuthnot 2010:221). In addition, there is a general acceptance that the ringwork was a purely military site catering to the housing of horses, men and arms (Liddiard 2005:12, Menz 2017:94).

There is a debate surrounding the nature of the ringwork castle – it being purely military or not – and how the castle relates to Anglo-Norman settlement patterns. Previous assessment of the ringwork castle tends to focus on the site being a temporary structure – how quick and easy they were to construct – and thus disregards the role of the ringwork castle as a fortified residence and military structure during its occupation. This serves to neglect the cultural insights that could be derived from such a key feature of conquest and colonization.

1.3 Chapter outline

Chapter Two introduces the historical background, including the political landscape and events that caused the Anglo-Norman conquest, as these are key to understanding the origin and purpose of the ringwork castle in Ireland. It also notes the key historical figures involved in shaping the frontier landscape and erecting the ringwork castles of Co. Wexford.

Chapter Three reviews the literature on ringwork castles in Ireland, England, Wales and Europe. It highlights the key excavations that have taken place at ringwork castles and their results. Chapter Four provides the methods used in this research project and the model developed to classify ringwork castles.

Chapter Five presents the results of the study and Chapter Six analyses the significance of the findings in relation to the use and distribution of ringwork castles and their role in the Anglo-

Norman conquest of Ireland, addressing the effectiveness of the methodology to combat the key issues in ringwork identification.

Chapter Seven concludes the thesis with a review of the findings and a look to the future with recommendations for possible additional research.

Chapter 2 Colonies and Conquest: A brief history of County Wexford

2.1 Celtic and Pre-Viking Period

Co. Wexford is situated within the medieval province of Leinster and has a long and complicated history with invaders to the region (see figure 2). The area within Co. Wexford that is today known as Wexford town had settlements with indications of Mesolithic activity from c.5000 – 3000 BCE (Colfer 2008:20). The presence of these early people would most likely have been concentrated along the mouth of the river Slaney (Colfer 2008:20). The arrival of the Celtic Iron Age (600 BCE), demarcates a period in which the Irish and British Celts remained untouched by a thriving and expanding Roman empire (Stout and Stout 1997:42). It was during this time that Ireland developed small kingdoms with economic and political power, and though Ireland was known to the Ancient World, and especially to Britain and Wales, it continued to develop governance for itself (Colfer 2008:23).

The spread of Christianity from Rome had significant effects in Ireland, bringing the country on to the global stage, creating more and better pathways of contact, trade and technological advances (Colfer 2008:23). Agricultural practices, and by association population, grew exponentially from the 5th century CE. The area of Co. Wexford was ruled by a sept called Uí Bairrche and later Uí Chennselaig; the minor kingdoms split up the modern Co. Wexford and later gave names to baronies (Colfer 2008:23). Christianity unified much of the European region, facilitating relationships between countries which later lead to the Irish Kings seeking aid from across the waters in Britain and vis versa.

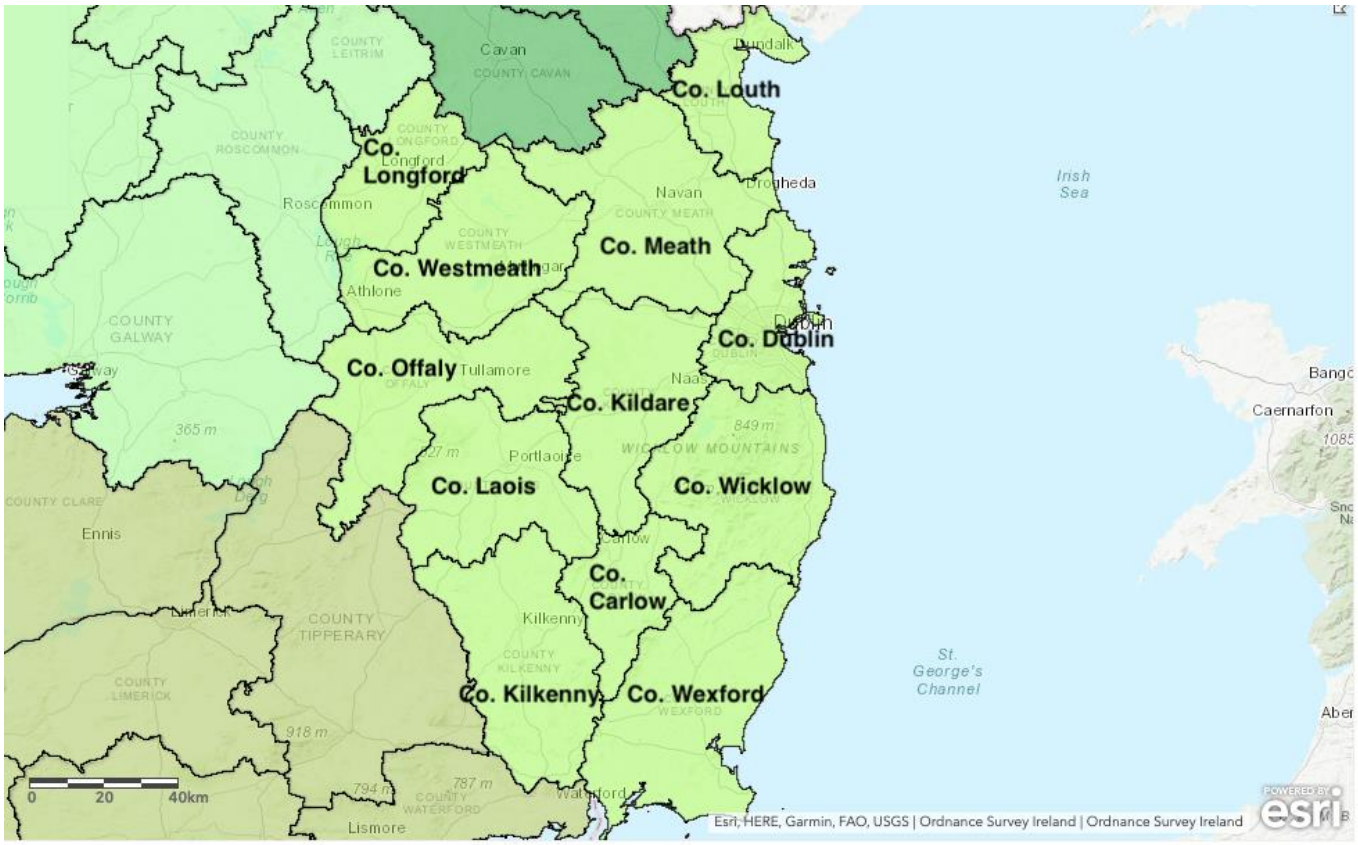


Figure 2. The modern counties situated within the province of Leinster. Base map from the Ordnance Survey Ireland 2019

2.2 The Scandinavian Vikings in Wexford

The origin of Wexford town and many of the pre-urban settlements in Co. Wexford comes from the Scandinavian colonies who settled in the area. A place well known outside of Ireland is Loch Garman, also known as Wexford Harbor and Inbhear Sláine, in Co. Wexford, an important trading stop along the Irish sea with connections to Britain and the continent (Colfer 2008:23). Evidence of ringforts and ecclesiastical centres in the region of Loch Garman suggest a large population towards the end of the 10th century CE. This is considered a result of attractions such as the estuaries and river, drawing the Celts to the area which later attracted Scandinavian Vikings (Colfer 2008:28).

The Vikings named their permanent settlement in Wexford, calling it Waesfiord in reference to the shallow bay at the mouth of the Slaney and the settlement that would become Wexford town (Colfer 2008:31). The modern town of Wexford still shares street names and land plots with the Viking town (Colfer 2008:33). This period between 914CE and the arrival of the Anglo-Normans in 1169CE saw integration between the Irish and the Norse, creating a hybrid culture that some (Clarke 1998; Colfer 2008; Bradley 1988) argue saw the Vikings become more Irish than Scandinavian. This contrasts the history that followed the Anglo-Norman Invasion.

The flourishing towns of Wexford and Dublin, which thrived under Norse infrastructure and trade, were eventually taken control of by Diarmait Mac Mael-na-mBó in c.1051. His family continued to control Leinster for decades, with constant conflict and divided lands.
His descendant Dermot McMurrough inherited his kingdom and, in a bid to defend the territory which his family had ruled for generations he sought aid from Welsh knights when confronted with losing his title as Lord of Leinster.

2.3 The Anglo-Norman Invasion

The historical literature surrounding the Anglo-Norman invasion is understandably biased on both sides. Most relevant here, however, is that the Anglo-Norman knights who came to Co. Wexford in 1169 were invited over by McMurrough. The practice of seeking foreign aid at this time was not unusual, but the damning decision on McMurrough's part was to barter the support he needed to reclaim his lands and position in return for acknowledging the

overlordship of Henry II of England (Martin 2008:1i-1iii). In addition to this, McMurrough had no coin to pay the predominantly Welsh knights and so he offered land, in particular to the Knight Richard de Clare (later and better known as Strongbow), who was also promised marriage to McMurrough's daughter, Aoife, and the succession to the kingdom of Leinster (see figure 4) (Colfer 2002:28).

In August of 1169 the Anglo-Norman knights and their men landed at Bannow Bay, amounting to five to six hundred men (see figure 3) (Colfer 1987:71; Colfer 2002:30). This force took the Norse town of Wexford and granted it to Robert fitzStephen and Maurice fitzGerald, who built their first fortification at Carrick. This was the first ringwork erected in Ireland (Colfer 2002:30). Hervey de Montmorency was granted the lands at Great Island, where it is thought he may have erected the possible ringwork there (Colfer 2002:30). Montmorency and Raymond le Gros constructed a fort similar to that at Carrick on the headland at Baginbun; this, too, is classified as a ringwork by some (Colfer 2002:31; O'Conor 2003).

The Anglo-Norman knights with Dermot McMurrough successfully took the cities of Waterford and Dublin, and true to his word McMurrough married his daughter to Strongbow in 1170 (see figures 3-4). Later in 1171, McMurrough died while at Ferns, and Strongbow took control of Leinster and lands beyond (Colfer 2002:33). After a power struggle between Strongbow and King Henry II of England, Strongbow agreed to surrender Dublin, coastal cities and castles surrounding it. This was to be in return for remaining in control of Leinster (Colfer 2002:33). Henry was determined to establish his control in Ireland and after events in Wexford caused the local people to remove Robert fitzStephen, Henry replaced him with William fitzAldelin. From this point on, the English had control over Ireland, many English and Welsh knights as well as the subsequent influx of those who later emigrated there (Colfer 2002:35).

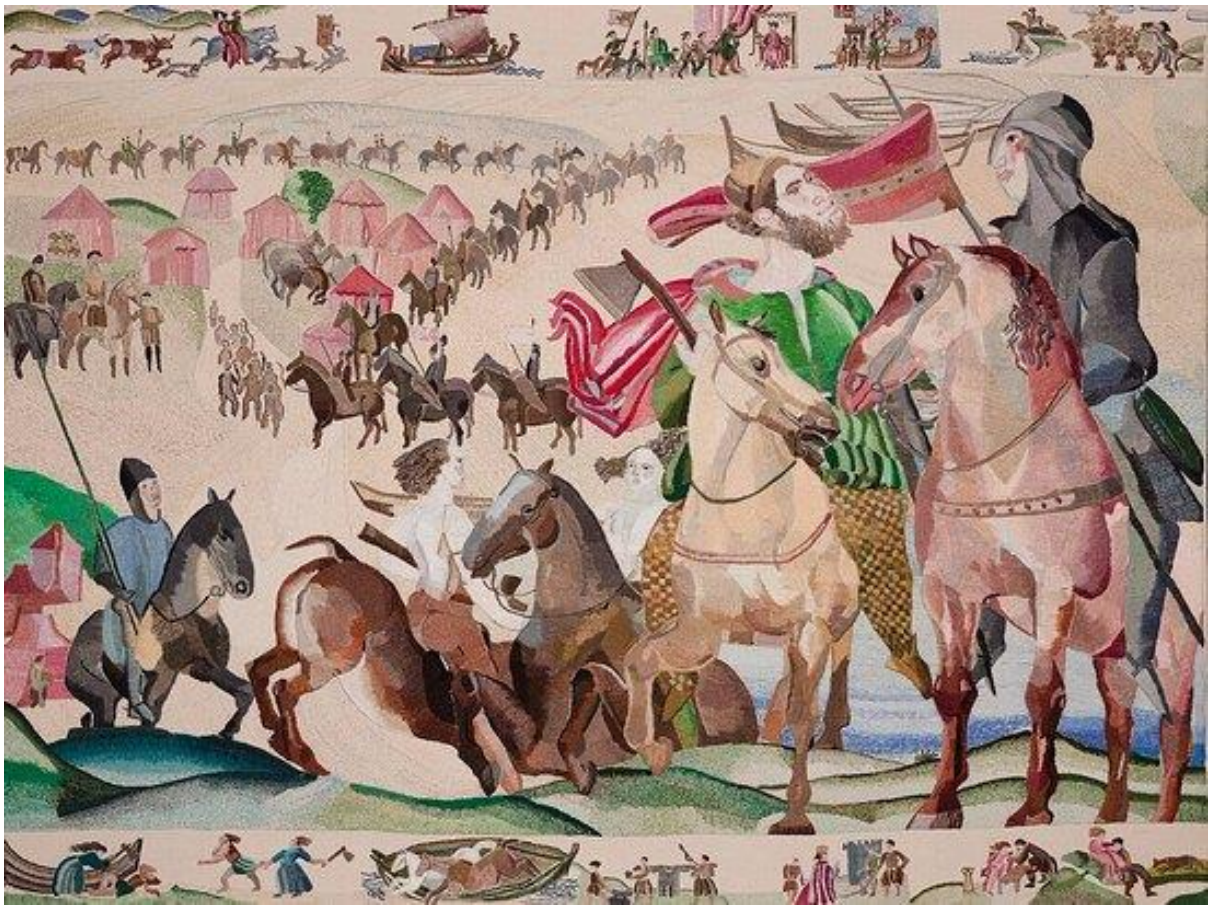


Figure 3. The Ros Tapestry, depicting the Anglo-Norman knights arriving to Wexford.

Figure 4. The Ros Tapestry, depicting the wedding of Strongbow and Aoife in 1170.

2.4 Land-grants and Settlements

Initially Dermot McMurrough honoured his agreement with the knights who supported him by dealing out land parcels. After McMurrough died in 1171 and Strongbow and Henry II took control, they both granted land to loyal followers, shaping Leinster and Co. Wexford into the land parcels and townships that exist today (Colfer 2002:35). A few decades later, William Marshal, a knight from Henry's court, was given Strongbow and Aoife's daughter as a wife. After Strongbow's death, William Marshal became the next Lord of Leinster. He built many significant structures including Ferns castle, Tintern Abbey and Hook Head lighthouse.

The link between ringworks and land grants lies in the observation of which grants were given to whom. Arbuthnot and others have all observed that the decision to build a ringwork was largely a result of personal preference rather than absolute suitability (Arbuthnot 2011:222, King and Alcock 1969:106). Key figures with notable land grants during the conquest and colonisation period include the Knights Templars, the de Prendergast family, the Roche family and Hervey de Monte Marisco. An additional question that may be answered by overlaying the ringwork castles with the land grants; did ringworks continue to be purely Anglo-Norman structures, built by those who had land given to them by Strongbow, or did the Irish adopt the castle building earthwork structure themselves?

Chapter 3 The literature of Ireland's ringwork castles

3.1 Introduction to the chapter

This chapter will review previous research and the background of ringworks castles in Ireland, England, Wales and greater Europe. It aims to provide an overview of the current opinions and debates surrounding the ringwork castle in Ireland. This includes specific research into ringwork castles, earthwork castles, the Anglo-Norman conquest, excavation reports and research on the feudal landscape of Ireland post Anglo-Norman arrival. In addition to this, the literature regarding ringworks and Norman invasions of England and Wales will also be reviewed in order to draw comparisons between the use of the ringwork castle in the three contexts. There is also some debate over whether the castle is primarily part of the feudal system that was introduced in Britain and Ireland by the Normans, and as such whether a castle by definition can only be Norman.

3.2 The Ringwork Castle in Europe

The ringwork is first seen in the Rhine-Lire region in Europe in the 10th and 11th centuries as a hybrid of earthwork models. Following this, the form was modified by the Scandinavians who inhabited Francia (who later became known as the Normans) during the tenth and eleventh centuries (O'Riagain 2010:34). It is generally understood that the Normans subsequently brought across their ringwork castles to England in 1066 and used them to dominate and colonize the local population between 1066 and 1068 (Arbuthnot 2010:32).

Leslie Alcock observes that there are some ringworks in northern Europe that antedate the earliest known motte sites (Alcock 1963:87). This suggests that the ringwork castle may have had origins outside of the Normans in Francia. Alcock investigated the Norman ringworks at Penmaen and Dinas Powys in Glanmorgan, Wales, during the 1960s (Alcock 1963; Alcock 1966).

Oliver Creighton's book on early European castles provides insight into the ringwork in Europe before and alongside those erected in Ireland after 1169. Creighton uses the example of Gniezno in Poland, which he describes a

large enclosure with '…ringwork defences built around a structure of enormous logs with layers of clay, sand and stone' (Creighton 2012). The language used by Creighton may suggest a different attitude to ringworks, where the term 'ringwork' refers to the shape of a defensive feature rather than a definitive site type.

3.3 The Ringwork in England

Research into ringworks in England and Wales has adopted a clearer definition of the site type and agreed upon a morphology, making their identifications of this site type more reliable. In similar circumstances to those in Ireland, Britain was invaded and colonised by the Norman's in 1066, the similarities between the two events are easily noticeable, significantly the use of ringwork castles (Brown 1969; Liddiard 2017).

English historian, Davison, theorized in 1967 that ringwork castles, rather than mottes, were the key castles used by the Normans in the conquest of England, and Arbuthnot states that this theory has been confirmed by archaeological and historical evidence and is now widely accepted (Arbuthnot 2010:35; Davison 1969;19-24). Forde-Johnston's 1979 'Great medieval castles of Britain' contains an index of British castles and their details including site classifications, he refers to various ringwork castle sites (Forde-Johnston 1979). Barbara English published 'Towns, mottes and ringworks of the conquest' in 1995 and believed then that the first Norman castle built in England was a ringwork at the site of Pevensey, close to the place of landing. This is a similar colonisation pattern to that recognised in Ireland (English 1995:48; Shine et al. 2018). Creighton has published various works on settlement patterns and castle landscapes within the last decade. The key points taken from his work are the level of importance the Anglo-Normans placed on the location of the castles for control of the population and the interaction castle sites have with communities and the wider landscape (Creighton 2004; Creighton 2005). If a ringwork castle was going to be modified later into a manorial site, its sitting in the landscape in relation to pre-existing population centres would be fundamental. Simpson reiterates that the castle is result of the feudal system and as a result are often built in defensible and strategic locations. The church is also built in association with the castle -side by side-, is considered the hallmark of the Norman conquest (Simpson 1969:4,82). Hull reminds the academic world that castles can be viewed for their role as a residence as well as a military fortification and that lines do not need to be drawn so heavily between the two

(Hull 2008:75). Relating to the ringwork castle this adds to the idea that a ringwork castle could have had both a military and residential role in England and Wales, where location and longterm settlement appear to be a prominent factor (Hull 2008:75).

Another notable comparison is the siting of ringwork castles in England and Wales, where nearly all examples built between 1066-1080 were constructed inside previously developed Anglo-Saxon *burhs.* This suggests that control of local settlements as a goal of the Norman colonial model (Creighton 2003:13-19; English 1995:135-137). In many cases in the Irish context, the ringwork is also built on the site of an earlier ringfort or *rath.* Additionally, ringworks constructed in England and Wales were usually part of manorial estates. These were often superseded by additions and modifications over the years until they had evolved into a manorial centre (Lightfoot et al.2016).

For example, Rumney Castle in South Glamorgan, Wales, is small and situated above a natural scarp overlooking the River Rhymey; it was mentioned in 1184-85 and guarded the western boundary of the lordship of Gwynllwg (Lightfoot et al. 1992). Lightfoot and fellow authors describe the site as having gone through various modifications, including widening of the rampart, the construction of multiple timber structures, as well as moving the entrance and erecting a stone gate tower over it (Lightfoot et al. 1992). By the latter half of the 13th century the site was completely renovated into a manorial centre; this saw the rampart levelled, the interior infilled, and buildings constructed around the mound edges (Lightfoot et al. 1992). This modification of a ringwork into a completely different site type demonstrates the difficulties of identifying ringworks in both England and Ireland. Certainly, this practice of redevelopment and reuse is undeniable in both contexts, adding to the difficulty of fully understanding the morphology of the ringwork castle.

In 1969 King and Alcock published 'Ringworks of England and Wales', a paper that identified and catalogued ringworks, as well as put in place a method of identifying them in the field. Their method was primarily based on morphology, and they identified six different 'types' of ringwork castle – categories A, B, Bb, C, D and Dd, see figure 5 (King and Alcock 1969:93). Arbuthnot regards King and Alcock's classification scheme as unsuitable for classifying the ringworks of Ireland, as their morphology differs greatly (Arbuthnot 2011:91). Arbuthnot also argues that her

study only identified three types of ringwork in Ireland and notes that 38% of her sites did not fit into any of King or Alcock's six categories (Arbuthnot 2011:91).

There appear to be other physical differences between the ringwork as identified by King and Alcock in the UK and those recognised in the Irish context. King and Alcock state that a ringwork's interior platform is often equal to external ground level unless it is situated on a hill or the interior has been raised by natural processes, such as sediment deposition (King and Alcock 1969:94). They also note that complete ringworks are more often found on flat ground, while partial ringworks are often found on hill slopes, or on sites with a sheer drop or cliff at the rear of the site (King and Alcock 1969:94). In their study, King and Alcock also found that some ringworks in the UK had exterior enclosures or baileys, which seems to differ with the Irish context where no baileys have been recorded (King and Alcock 1969:95).

In Wales ringworks are rare in the regions held by the Welsh rulers during the conquest period, with most being found in the south on the coast or along the English border (King and Alcock 1969:105). Colfer noted in 2002 that the majority of the first wave of Anglo-Norman knights came from South Wales where the ringwork was common, suggesting that they were following an established cultural precedent (Colfer 2002).

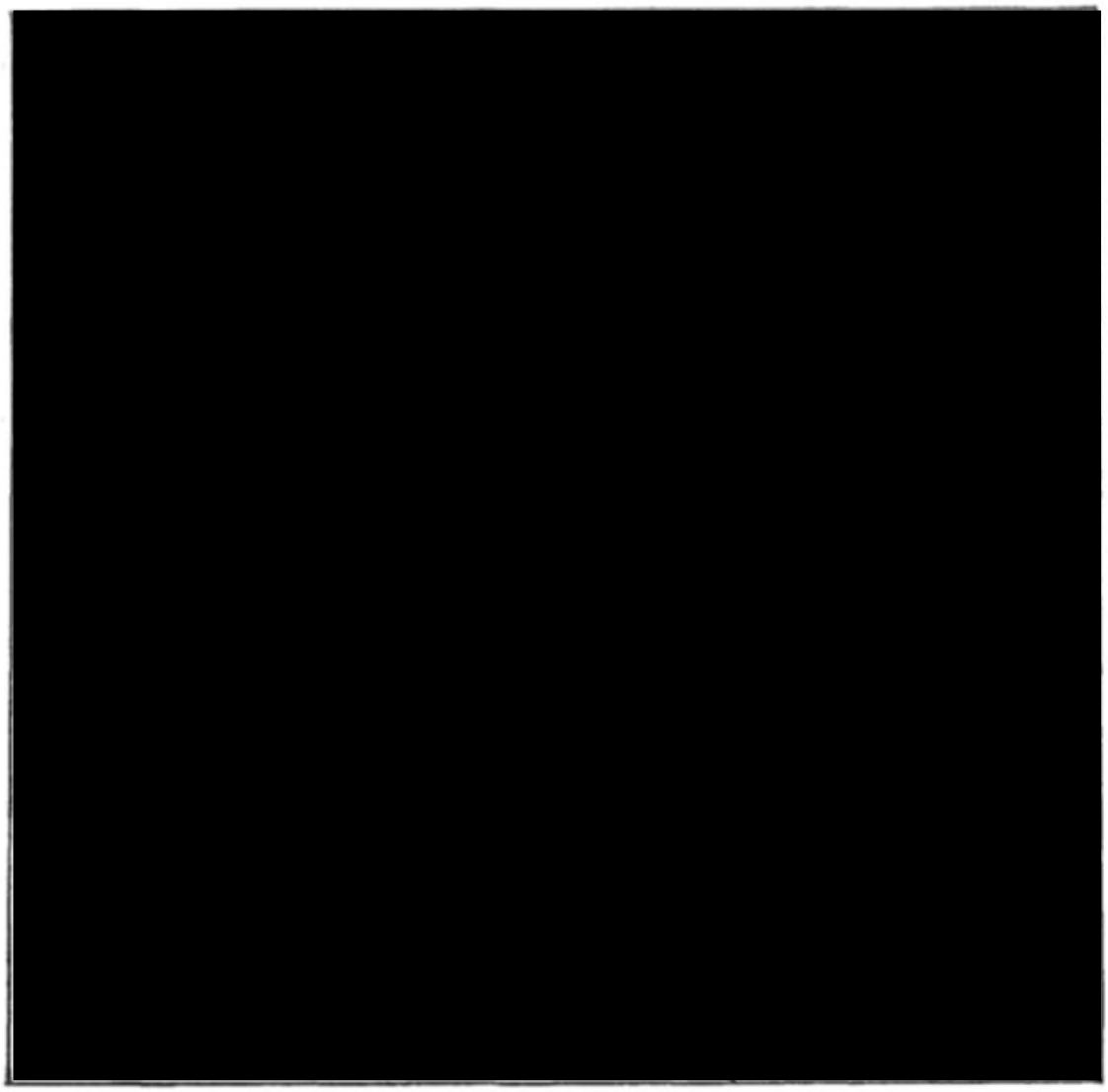


Figure 5. Earthwork Sections Model King and Alcock 1969:94. Removed due to copyright restriction. Available via citation.

3.4 The Ringwork Castle in Ireland

Ringwork castles have been studied in the Irish context since the 1970s, initiated by Fanning's excavation report of the ringwork at Pollardstown, Co. Kildare, in 1973 (Fanning 1973). Although Fanning has been credited with the 'discovery' of ringwork castles in Ireland, his piece on Pollardstown is only two pages long and contains little evidence for his argument. His reasoning for identifying the site as an Anglo-Norman ringwork was the high medieval date of the finds, and the military nature of those artefacts (Fanning 1973: 253).

Interest in Anglo-Norman ringwork castles in Ireland increased exponentially over the following decades. At present, the main issue is the difficulty of identifying an Anglo-Norman ringwork in the field based on morphology alone, since major attributes are shared with other monument types, such as the common ringfort (Barrett and Graham 1988; Barry 1987:45; O'Conor 1999). This problem, coupled with the popularity of the ringwork in the 1980s, meant that many sites were misidentified. Tadhg O'Keeffe argues that 80% of ringwork castle sites in Ireland identified by the Archaeological survey of Ireland (ASI) may be incorrectly classified (O'Keeffe pers. comm. 23rd May 2019). In addition to issues of identification, the use or purpose of the ringwork castle is still unclear, although the most popular theory holds them to be a military fortification. Overall, the question remains whether the ringwork castle held a particular and significant position within the Anglo-Norman colonisation model (Menz 2017:93). Similarities between the Norman conquest of England and the Anglo-Norman conquest of Ireland are not hard to find, the ringwork castle being one of them. As with England, the beach headlands were fortified with ringwork castles, the first fortification to be constructed in both colonisations and castles built in a pre-established capitol (Renn 1968:58).

3.5 Previous Research

In 1978 a paper containing a list of sites identified as ringworks was published by D. C. Twohig, who, like Fanning, is considered a pioneer of ringwork research in Ireland (Arbuthnot 2010:16). The issues with identifying ringworks can be seen even at this early stage, as within the next two decades quite a few of the sites identified as ringworks by Twohig were later discounted by other academics, namely Terry Barry (Barry 1983:195-203).

Twohig argued that the ringwork castle would have been a significant element in the Anglo-Norman conquest due to most of the Anglo-Norman soldiers originating from southern Wales, which has a high density of ringworks (Twohig 1978:9).

Twohig's brief article has paved the way for future research. Barry built upon Twohig's argument for the significance of ringworks in Ireland by suggesting that they might have filled the gaps where a motte castle was not present in Anglo-Norman dominated areas and produced the first distribution map of ringwork castles (Barry 1983:300). In a later publication he argued that, if the ratio of Irish ringworks to motte and bailey types was the same in Ireland as in England (2:1), then there could be over 100 ringwork sites in Ireland (Barry 1987:50). As of 2019 there are 125 sites identified as ringwork castles in Ireland.

In a bid to explain why there are so few identified ringwork castles in Connacht and Munster, Graham published a paper in 1978 in which he argued that ringwork castles may have replaced motte and bailey castles as the chosen Norman fortification after 1200 (Graham 1988:126-127). This theory is highly controversial, as a result it is often disregarded rather than debated. 1200CE is roughly 31 years after the Anglo-Normans arrived in Wexford and the most recent excavations at Carrick identify the site as not only the first Anglo-Norman settlement in Ireland, but also a ringwork (Shine et al. in press). Keirin O'Conor refutes Graham in his 1993 thesis on earthworks castles in Leinster and shows that there is little evidence for motte castles being used at all in the immediate post-conquest period (O'Conor 1993:116). Additionally, O'Conor identified 19 ringwork sites in Leinster, nine of which are considered definite ringworks and ten possible ringworks (O'Conor 1993:60-61).

In 1997 T. McNeill published 'Castles in Ireland: Feudal power in a Gaelic world', in which he harshly criticized the study of ringwork castles in Ireland. McNeill states that without a proper classification in place and a method for identifying them in the field; '…. there is nothing to prevent anyone from finding them anywhere' (McNeill 1997:60). McNeill believed that the identification of ringworks should only be accepted if documentary evidence can corroborate a castle existing in that location in the first place (McNeill 1990-262).

O'Keeffe (2000) agreed with McNeill, but shared O'Conor's concerns with the correct identification of ringwork castles, arguing that there is no easy morphological way to distinguish a ringwork from a ringfort.

A ringfort is described by Herity as 'a circular or pinnular enclosure, usually with an inner bank and outer ditch, an entrance marked by a causeway over the ditch and a fairly level internal area often elevated a little over surrounding field level and generally sheltered by the banks' (Herity 1987:125). However, it is also considered one of the least meaningful classifications in Irish archaeology, the term was introduced in the 20th century and has been used to name many varied Irish native enclosures (Fitzpatrick 2009:271-272). The ringfort is the most common monument in Ireland, and it has previously been suggested they were discouraged by the Anglo-Norman overlords which affected their inconsistent distribution. It is more likely that akin to the ringwork castle, the factors that affected distribution were more human than archaeologists tend to like (Lynn1975:34). In a study of the ringforts of Co. Wexford, Bennett states that there are 400 ringforts in the county, with a varying diameter between 14m and 50m but the majority sat between 25m and 30m in diameter and with an average entrance gap of 2.2m (Bennett 1989:51-59).

O'Keeffe believes the only difference between the ringwork and the ringfort is the perception of use and culture that archaeologists place upon them in fitting with the time period (O'Keeffe 2000:30). The issues regarding the misidentification of ringwork castles in the field is valid, especially for those identified during the 1970s and 1980s, but the statement that there are no observable morphological differences between a ringwork and a ringfort perhaps comes from a lack of detailed and considered research into these two site types.

Menz's paper argues against this, stating that although there are examples of larger ringforts, most ringworks are between 30-60m in diameter, which is substantially greater than that of a standard ringfort (Menz 2017:93). Additionally, ringworks are recorded as having much more elaborate defences than a ringfort, although this cannot be visually ascertained without excavation. Once subsurface material is reached, the level of defence should be assessable (Menz 2017:93).

One of the main contributors to medieval archaeology in Co. Wexford is Billy Colfer, whose work has greatly informed this research project. Colfer identified 11 ringwork castles/possible ringwork castles in Co. Wexford, including the site of Kilpipe, which is over the border in modern day Co. Wicklow but within the old Wexford border (Colfer 2013:49). The National Monuments Archive disagrees with three of Colfer's classifications (Ballyorley, Castlesow and Enniscorthy). Colfer has also commented on the distribution of ringworks and other Anglo-Norman defensive structures, producing a map which shows the dispersal of Anglo-Norman fortifications spread across Co. Wexford defendable features are spread across Co. Wexford (see figure 6) (Colfer 2013:4).

Figure 5. Anglo-Norman settlements in relation to the frontier zones in Co. Wexford. Image from Colfer 2013:49. Reproduced with permission.

3.6.1 The Archaeology: Earthworks

In 2011 Emma Arbuthnot published her PhD thesis on 'The Ringwork Castles of medieval Leinster and Meath', which synthesized and analysed all previous research into ringwork castles. Her thesis aimed to create a new methodology for identifying and classifying these sites in the Irish context, and recommends four elements for a complete classification: 1. Morphology; 2. Siting in the landscape; 3. Siting in relation to high medieval settlement; and 4. Documentary evidence. Using this model, Arbuthnot concluded that 21 of the 51 sites she investigated (41%) were definite ringworks, 24 (47%) were possible ringworks and six (12%) were not ringworks. Confirmed or possible ringworks represent 88% of the sample (Arbuthnot 2011:219). Of the sites Arbuthnot surveyed, she found 33% were next to rivers that were accessible during the Anglo-Norman period, and 33% at the summit of natural ridges (Arbuthnot 2011:138). Additionally, Arbuthnot calculated the ringwork to motte ratio in Leinster and Meath as 1:12 (Arbuthnot 2011:159).

Immich's more recent re-evaluation of ringwork castles in Co. Tipperary similarly rejected a large proportion (66%, or 18/27) of the sites previously classified as ringwork castles (Immich 2015: iv). Immich found that in Co. Tipperary most ringwork castles were located on glaciofluvial deposits (13.5%), 71.4% of timber castles were found next to a river or wet field and 46.4% of castle sites were immediately adjacent or within the same townland as a church (Immich 2015:5). She consequently modified Arbuthnot's model, suggesting that historical documentary evidence should take higher precedence over morphology, as it does not share the same shortcomings of archaeological misinterpretation (Immich 2015:171). Her key elements for identifying a ringwork castle are (Immich 2015:70–71):

- The rampart must be a minimum of two metres above the surrounding earth and it must be enclosed by a bank and ditch
- The ringwork castle must be situated on a raised area, particularly in low lying wetlands
- The castle must have a strategic or defensive location in the landscape to control a valley or waterway crossing.

Most importantly for this research, Immich highlights the issues still facing the identification of ringworks in the field. For example, according to Immich the enclosed bank of a ringwork is limited to 35-50m in diameter, whereas Menz states it can be between 30-60m in diameter. This is over 10 metres difference in classification. The additional classification by Doyle, and O'Conor, of Great Island as a ringwork with a possible diameter of 250m increases confusion to the specifications for the morphology of this site type (Immich 2015:38, Menz 2017:93). For Immich the most important factor is the physical and cultural siting of the ringwork in the landscape, stating '…. In order for a castle to be classified as a ringwork, the earthwork of a site must be in a location that can be described as strategic or at minimum, defensive' (Immich 2015:39). This has been mirrored in most publications on the subject, and Barry (1983), O'Keeffe (2000), Arbuthnot (2010) and Twohig (1978) all agree.

Menz's 2017 PhD thesis 'Convergence on the Frontier: A study of Medieval Ireland' is the most recent publication on ringwork castles in Ireland, analysing their role in the Anglo-Norman conquest and subsequent colonisation (Menz 2017). Menz identified three phases of colonisation—expansion, consolidation, domination—and believes the ringwork was central to the expansion phase, being the first form of Anglo-Norman defendable settlement (Menz 2017:93). Menz suggests that ringwork builders preferred moderately elevated and drained sites above pastoral land, which coincides with both Immich, Barry and Arbuthnot (Menz 2017:93). Menz believes that ringworks, due to their larger area, would have been able to hold more people, horses and soldiers in comparison to the smaller motte sites, which served as refuges and private or capital houses (Menz 2017:94). Menz highlights the significance of ringwork castles as symbols of power in a colonial landscape and believes their strategic positioning not only physically dominated the area but also acted as a physical reminder to the Irish people of the continued colonisation that was occurring by the Anglo-Normans in a frontier landscape (Menz 2017:97). Menz does not attempt to reclassify ringwork castles like Immich and Arbuthnot, but instead evaluates their role in the conquest of Ireland. In doing so she has highlighted the physically dominant nature of the ringwork castle and placed them at the for-front of the colonisation by the Anglo-Normans into Ireland originating in Co. Wexford.

3.6.2 The Archaeology: Excavations of ringwork castles in Ireland, England and Wales

The archaeology of ringwork castle sites has provided data unobtainable through any other means, which is especially valuable as a means of dating building phases and separating ringwork from non-ringwork phases. The below examples of excavations were chosen for key reasons. Trim and Ferns castles represent two of the earliest stone castles in Ireland, and Trim is one of the best surviving castles in the country. This reminds us of the strategic nature of ringwork castles which pre-dated the stone castles at each site. The Dromore ringwork in Co. Antrim appears to be a unique site, suggested to be the first example of a modified natural mound serving as a ringwork platform, and its perceived association with a nearby motte site is equally significant. The excavation by Leslie Alcock at Dinas Powys, Glanmorgan, Wales, is one of the finest examples of the phases which may antedate ringwork castles and showcases the strategic modifications of pre-existing sites for new purposes.

Trim and Ferns Castles, Co. Meath and Co. Wexford, Ireland.

David Sweetman (1978, 1979) excavated both Trim and Ferns castles, two of the most impressive ringwork castles in Ireland. Built by Hugh de Lacy in c.1175 only six years after the first wave of Anglo-Norman knights arrived in Ireland, the castle at Trim is one of the best standing stone castles in Ireland, but had three or more building phases, only the first of which is likely to have been a ringwork (McNeill 1990:308). Sweetman's conclusions regarding Ferns castle in particular— that it is situated above a previous ringwork based on the dating of finds in the external fosse—have been heavily criticised. O'Keeffe and Coughlan argue strongly that the evidence does not conclude these finds were connected to an earlier structure (Sweetman 1979:243, O'Keeffe and Coughlan 2003:135). Although historical documentation concurs with Sweetman's theory, further investigation needs to be undertaken at the site to confirm its ringwork classification (Arbuthnot 2010:20).

Dromore Ringwork, Co. Antrim, Ireland.

The ringwork castle at Dromore in Co. Antrim was excavated in 1964 when work undertaken by a farmer damaged the site; as such the excavations were limited (Collins 1968:59). The site is located on the western side of the valley of the River Main, and prior to excavation appeared as a D-shaped, flat-topped mound with scarped edges (Collins 1968:59). It was roughly measured to 3m above the surrounding ground level and had an obvious gully which

may have represented the robbing of a possible souterrain (Collins 1968:59). No clear evidence of an entrance to the site was found and upon excavation the mound was discovered to be a naturally gravelly hillock that was adapted into a ringwork with few alterations (Collins 1968:59). The top of the site appeared to have been leveled, the edges has been scarped and a bank added to the top of the scarp, as well as a small ditch added to the exterior (Collins 1968:59). The excavation identified three house structures inside and extensive burning (Collins 1968:62). House sites 1 and 2 were circular and defined by rainwater gullies, house 3 was rectangular and was identifiable prior to excavation by the remains of walling (Collins 1968:63-64). Large amounts of souterrain pottery sherds were found, along with 17 pieces of flint, possibly for fire starting (Collins 1968:65). The archaeologist, A.E.P Collins, believed that the site may have been the first example of a lightly modified natural mound serving as a flat-topped ringwork (Collins 1968:65). Interestingly, Collins also dated the site to the 12th century, suggesting that it was built prior to the Anglo-Norman invasion in c.1169; he also suggested a possible relationship between this site and a large motte site nearby (Collins 1968:65).

Dinas Powys, Glanmorgan, Wales.

The site known as 'Dinas Powys' in Glanmorgan, Wales, is an intriguing ringwork castle site showcasing centuries of occupation and modifications. The site has 6 phases (Alcock 1963: vii):

- Phase 1: Evidence of Iron Age pottery, animal bones and flint flakes.
- Phase 2: Incomplete hill-slope fort.
- Phase 3: Presence of Romano-British material.
- Phase 4: Fifth/sixth centuries, intense occupation of the site. Enclosed by basic earthworks, dry stone houses present, middens filed with pottery, glass, metal working, possible court and hall of a chieftain.
- Phase 5: A substantial ringwork is constructed.
- Phase 6: Ringwork features were reinforced with additional banks and ditches that may have been linked to the Norman conquest.

The site was excavated in the 1960s, but the banks were still present prior to excavation (Alcock 1963:5). The nearest water source was identified roughly 400m away and the site has been described as occupying a strong natural position (Alcock 1963:74). The excavations suggested that the earthen defense of bank 1 was reinforced with vertical timber-work, and there were four banks and ditches recorded (Alcock 1963:73-74). The evidence from the excavation shows the site enjoyed trade with Ireland, the continent and the Mediterranean (Alcock 1963:5). The excavation also showed that there were few traces of habitation during the ringwork phases (Phases 5 and 6) of the site, and substantially more during phase 4, a time when defenses around the site were quite feeble (Alcock 1963:93). This may suggest that during the ringwork phases the site was used by few men as a purely military site and occupied only when necessary. Alcock notes in his evaluation that this site plays into the debate as to whether the ringwork castle existed in England and Wales prior to the Normans. She specifically addressed the general argument that the ringwork was part of the feudal system introduced by the Normans, and as such could only be Norman (Alcock 1963:87), by pointing out that ringwork sites in northern Europe antedate the earliest known mottes, and there is speculation that some British ringworks may be earlier than mottes and therefore pre-Norman in date (Alcock 1963:87). Thus, arguing that the ringwork castle may not be only Norman.

Chapter 4 Methods

4.1 Introduction:

The study area for this research project is County Wexford in the southeast of Ireland. Wexford is within the borders of the medieval lordship of Leinster, but because the border of Co. Wexford has changed since medieval times, the study area also includes the area of Kilpipe in modern Co. Wicklow (Colfer 2002:3) (Figure 1). Wexford was chosen for various reasons; it was the site of the Anglo-Norman Invasion in 1169 and subsequently contains the first ringwork castle in Ireland – Carrick—located above the river Slaney (Shine et al. in press). Wexford also contains a concentration of ringwork castles in reasonable proximity to each other, providing a discrete data set. Additionally, as 'ground zero' for the Anglo-Norman conquest and the subsequent land grants to Anglo-Norman knights, Co. Wexford should contain some of the oldest ringwork sites in Ireland, the location of which may reveal a relationship between this site type and the frontier landscape.

4.2 Limitations for this project

This project has certain limitations that were identified and addressed. First, the ringwork is an earthwork and, as such, can be easily destroyed/modified by cultural and natural processes. This means that obtaining accurate dimensions as a variable in the identification of ringwork castles can be difficult, especially at those sites with little surface material remaining. This was addressed as far as possible by comparing contemporary measurements from archaeological survey with measurements obtained from previous survey records of the sites. These include the OSI historical mapping, previous archaeological surveys and research. In some cases, however, it was not possible to obtain accurate measurements.

4.3.1 Identifying and locating sites

The first phase identified the number of definitive or potential ringwork castle sites in Co. Wexford. For the purpose of this research any site that has been discussed as a possible ringwork in modern literature was included. The Archaeological Survey of Ireland (ASI) database was searched first using the Historic Environment viewer tool to generate a list of ringwork castle sites (National Monuments Service online 2019).

The National Monuments Service record office holds the files associated with these sites. The files contain the initial survey results, literature, maps, photographs and classifications, none of which is available online. Hard copies of the files were recorded by hand on the 31st May 2019.

As some of these sites are no longer visible, and some areas have more than one monument, the Ordnance Survey Ireland (OSI) maps were also consulted. Reviewing historical sources is key to researching the ringwork castle site type. Ireland has the useful resource of the OSI and its online interactive maps from 1837, as well as nationwide aerial photography (Ordinance Survey Ireland online 2017). The overlay of historic maps, especially the six-inch black and white map (1837-1842) and the six inch Cassini map, with the aerial premium map can reveal the location of monuments that are no longer visible (Figures 7-9). This data overlaid with the land grants and land divisions on historic maps shows the location of the monuments within Anglo-Norman land grants. This can reveal possible options for the builders of these sites and their function in a frontier landscape (Colfer 2013:31)

Key secondary sources were then reviewed for further mentions of ringwork castle sites, including the *Archaeological Inventory of County Wexford*, Moore (1996), Colfer (2002, 2013), Sweetman (1999), Doyle and Brown (2016) and Barry (1983; 1987). This generated a list of 16 potential ring-work castle sites in Co. Wexford (Table 1).

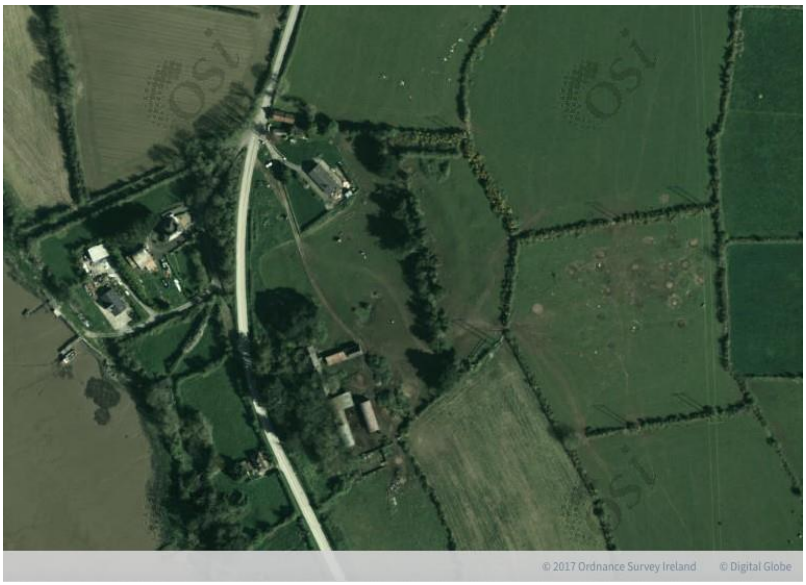


Figure 6. OSI 2017 Aerial Premium, Great Island 1 site.

Figure 7. OSI Historic Map black and white 1837, Great Island 1 site.

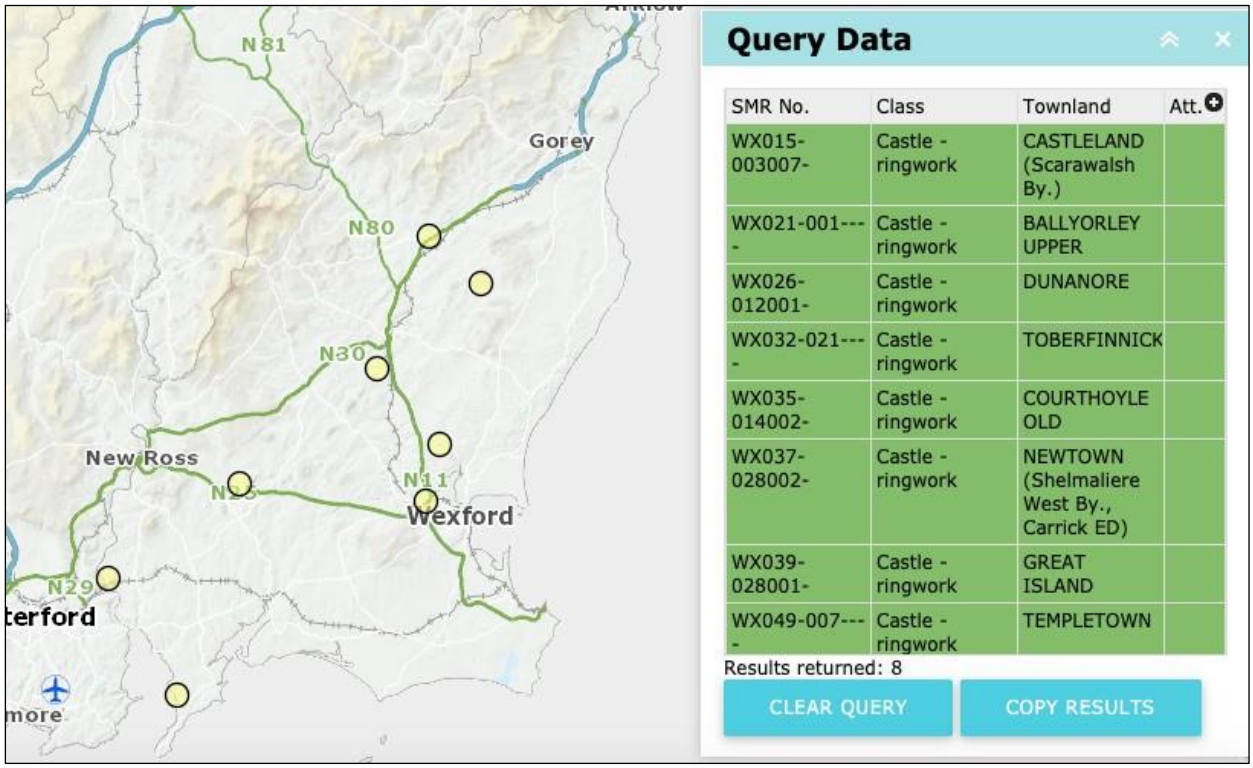
Figure 8. Overlay of the Aerial Premium and Historic Map black and white 1837 at Great Island 1 site.

Table 1. Ringwork castle site identifications for county Wexford from the ASI, Archaeological Inventory of Co. Wexford and published literature.

SITE NAME	SMR NO.	ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF IRELAND (2019) CLASSIFICATION	ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVENTORY OF COUNTY WEXFORD (1996) CLASSIFICATION	CLASSIFIED AS RINGWORK IN OTHER LITERATURE
BAGINBUN	050:015002	Re-classified as 'linear earthwork'	Possible Ringwork	Yes
BALLYHOGE	WX032-014	Promontory fort inland	Ringwork	Yes
BALLYORLEY	WX021-001	Ringwork	Ringwork	Yes
CARRICK (NEWTOWN)	WX037-028002	Ringwork	Ringwork	Yes
CASTLESOW	WX032-022	Motte castle	Motte	Yes
COURTHOYLE	WX035-014002	Ringwork	Ringfort	Yes
DUNANORE	WX026-012001	Ringwork	Ringwork	Yes
ENNISCORTHY CASTLE	NA/ Reg Number-15603115	Not classified	Moated site	Yes
FERNS CASTLE	WX015-003001	Ringwork	Possible Ringwork	Yes
FINSHOGE	WX034-009	Ringfort Unclassified	Ringfort	Yes
GREAT ISLAND 1	WX039-028-001	Ringwork	Ringwork	Yes
GREAT ISLAND 2	WX039-028004	Ringfort with interior well	Well site	Yes
KILPIPE	WI039-016	Motte castle	N/A	Yes
KINNAGH	N/A	No	Ringfort	Yes
TEMPLETOWN	WX049-007	Ringwork	Ringfort	Yes
TOBERFINNICK	WX032-021	Ringwork	Ringwork	Yes

4.3.2 Initial Site Evaluations and Permissions:

Of the sixteen sites, eight are listed as definitive or possible ringworks by the Archaeological Survey of Ireland, and one (Kinnagh) is not listed on the ASI. Descriptions of each site are provided on the ASI to varying levels, although all have detailed dimensions for present monuments (see figure 10 for the Co. Wexford sites classified as ringworks from the ASI).



SMR No.	Class	Townland	Att.
WX015-003007-	Castle - ringwork	CASTLELAND (Scarawalsh By.)	
WX021-001----	Castle - ringwork	BALLYORLEY UPPER	
WX026-012001-	Castle - ringwork	DUNANORE	
WX032-021----	Castle - ringwork	TOBERFINNICK	
WX035-014002-	Castle - ringwork	COURTHOYLE OLD	
WX037-028002-	Castle - ringwork	NEWTOWN (Shelmaliere West By., Carrick ED)	
WX039-028001-	Castle - ringwork	GREAT ISLAND	
WX049-007----	Castle - ringwork	TEMPLETOWN	

Results returned: 8

CLEAR QUERY COPY RESULTS

Figure 9.. Archaeological Survey of Ireland Historic Environment Viewer – Wexford Ringworks. Shows the sites classified as ringworks according to the ASI. Sourced January 2019 online - http://webgis.archaeology.ie/historicenvironment/

From the ASI and documented descriptions the sixteen sites were split into two groups: those on private land and those owned by the state. A local college was contacted to make preliminary discussions with landowners, which proved successful at five sites. The researcher visited those five landowners, plus two others, to initiate contact and explain the research project; permission was then sought for a second visit in which photographs and site descriptions were taken. Permissions were also granted at six of the sites for a drone survey. The landowner for one site (Ballyhoge) could not be identified. Additionally, the site of Kinnagh has been completely built over by modern structures and the archaeologists who conducted excavations there in 2003/2004 stated that its classification as a ringwork was a

mistake. For this reason, this site was not visited and was removed from the sample. Two additional sites, Finshoge and Great Island 2, were discovered late in the field season. After documentary research it was concluded that these sites would not be visited in person, as Finshoge no longer has features visible at ground level and Great Island 2 is without a bank or fosse.

The site of Carrick is currently under excavation, but permission to access the field reports, geophysical reports and site plans was given by the Irish Archaeology Field School (Shine et al. in press).

The site of Dunanore is on state owned, Coillte-managed land and, as such, research permits were applied for and granted for geophysical test surveys and topographical surveys. Upon visitation to Dunanore on the 30th of May 2019, it was obvious that thick vegetation on the site would need to be cleared; this took place on the 4th of June 2019 by Coillte employees. The site was then visited again for recording purposes.

4.4.1 Field Recording Data Collection

Twelve sites were visited and recorded for this research. Recording was conducted to various levels of detail depending on site condition, accessibility, visibility and previous research. (Table 2). All twelve sites were recorded to a basic level, including photography of any visible archaeological remains/earthwork evidence, accompanying descriptive notes of the site's morphology, location and surrounds, and landowner knowledge.

The exceptions were the sites of Ferns and Enniscorthy castles, which were only recorded via photography due to the landscape being heavily altered and no surface evidence of a previous ringwork castle being visible. In total four sites were not visited, some due to the lack of remaining archaeology visible and others due to landowner permissions.

4.4.2 Aerial Drone Surveys:

Drone surveys were able to be undertaken at six sites: Templetown, Great Island 1, Courthoyle, Toberfinnick, Castlesow and Dunanore. Four of these sites were chosen based on their lack of visibility at ground level (Group 1- Templetown, Great Island 1, Courthoyle and Toberfinnick) and two because they contain the most intact earthwork monuments of the sample (Group 2- Dunanore and Castlesow). An additional two sites have aerial survey data available from other sources: Ballyorley was recently thoroughly surveyed as part of a wider research project and Carrick has recently had aerial surveys undertaken (Shine and Mandal 2018, FitzPatrick and O' Drisceoil 2016).

The drone used for these surveys was a DGI Mavic Pro. It was deployed to a maximum height of 400m to encompass the surrounding area and was then flown lower to the ground in the proximity of the recorded monument to survey for shadowing on the ground surface. Aerial photographs were taken at various heights and angles to best show the site and its features. These images were then edited in Photoshop to adjust the colour saturation to distinguish any possible shadowing and remains or outlines of features. For the sites in group 2 the drone was again deployed to a maximum height of 400m in order to capture the monument in the context of its surrounding landscape. The drone was then brought down to the optimum level to show the monument at different angles, highlighting differences in height between earthworks and surrounds. In addition to the ground level photographs taken at these sites these images also serve as the base for showing the visible features at each site, including entrances, the ditch, bank, interior and fosse.

Table 2. Showing sites visited and methods applied in addition to any relevant notes.

SITE	METHODS	VISITED	NOTES
BAGINBUN	Photography and descriptive notes	Yes	Visited on the 9th June
BALLYHOGE	OSI maps and ASI review	No	Inaccessible due to landowner permissions
BALLYORLEY	Photography and descriptive notes	Yes	Visited on the 8th June
CARRICK	Photography and descriptive notes	Yes	Visited on the 20th May
CASTLESOW	Photography, aerial survey and descriptive notes	Yes	Visited on the 8th June Aerial survey on the 7th June
COURTHOYLE	Photography, aerial survey and descriptive notes	Yes	Visited on the 23rd May Aerial survey on the 31st May
DUNANORE	Photography, aerial survey, topographical survey, geophysical survey and descriptive notes	Yes	Visited on the 20th May Aerial survey on the 7th June Topographical survey on the 10th-12th June Geophysical survey on the 26th June
ENNISCORTHY	Photography	Yes	Visited on the 8th June
FERNS	Photography	Yes	Visited on the 8th June
FINSHOGE	OSI maps and ASI review	No	The ASI and OSI mapping records this site as no longer being visible at ground level.
GREAT ISLAND 1	Photography, aerial survey and descriptive notes	Yes	Visited on the 23rd May Aerial survey on the 31st May

GREAT ISLAND 2	OSI maps and ASI review	No	The ASI and OSI mapping records this site as no longer being visible at ground level
KILPIPE	Photography and descriptive notes	Yes	Visited on the 20th May
KINNAGH	OSI maps and ASI review	No	The archaeologists describe this site as being covered by the modern farmyard. Excavations were conducted to approve build permissions.
TEMPLETOWN	Photography, aerial survey and descriptive notes	Yes	Visited on the 22nd May Aerial survey on the 31st May
TOBERFINNICK	Photography, aerial survey and descriptive notes	Yes	Visited on the 23rd May Aerial survey on the 7th June

4.5.1 Dunanore:

The site of Dunanore was chosen as a detailed case study because it is a reasonably intact bank and ditch monument, is easily accessible and is owned by the state. It is also in an area used by the public for walking, and as such there is no livestock interference and the interior of the site was able to be cleared of ground vegetation by Coillte. Both geophysical and topographical surveys were conducted at Dunanore to record obvious and subtle extant surface and sub-surface features. A profile across the site was also produced to show the monument's changing elevation features, including the bank and ditch.

A site grid was implemented with reference points in the car park that were later tied into the national grid. This facilitated both the base plan and the subsequent geophysical survey. The car park post points are numbered 150 CR.P and 151 CR.P. Four pegs were placed in the interior as well as base point 001. The pegs were placed in a rectangle, 20m by 15m (figure 11).

4.5.2 Topographical Survey:

The equipment used to construct the base plan was a Topcon electronic total station GTS-220 series, model 223. A topographical survey was undertaken at the site of Dunanore to produce a map of the site's surface morphology. The survey systematically recorded both the interior and exterior of the monument. The interior was completed taking measurements a metre apart across it, and visible features had additional points taken to show their size and depth relevant to the rest of the interior. The interior bank was recorded at its highest point around its entirety and then at the points where the bank met the interior ground. Along the cliff edge side of the monument points were recorded along the fence line to ensure the safety of the surveyors. The exterior was recorded along the base of the ditch and the edge of the ditch and then across the height of the exterior bank. The surrounding landscape was surveyed to provide context. A possible second bank and ditch on the exterior was not recorded as it was unclear whether it was a modern or original feature and was heavily overgrown with brambles; the base was also slippery and unsafe.

A profile of the site was created from a point 2m inside the interior to the bottom of the second possible exterior ditch. Points were taken across the interior surface, at the maximum height of the interior bank, halfway down the bank on the exterior, at the base of the ditch, at the height of the exterior bank, at the ground level path and at the base of the second possible exterior bank.

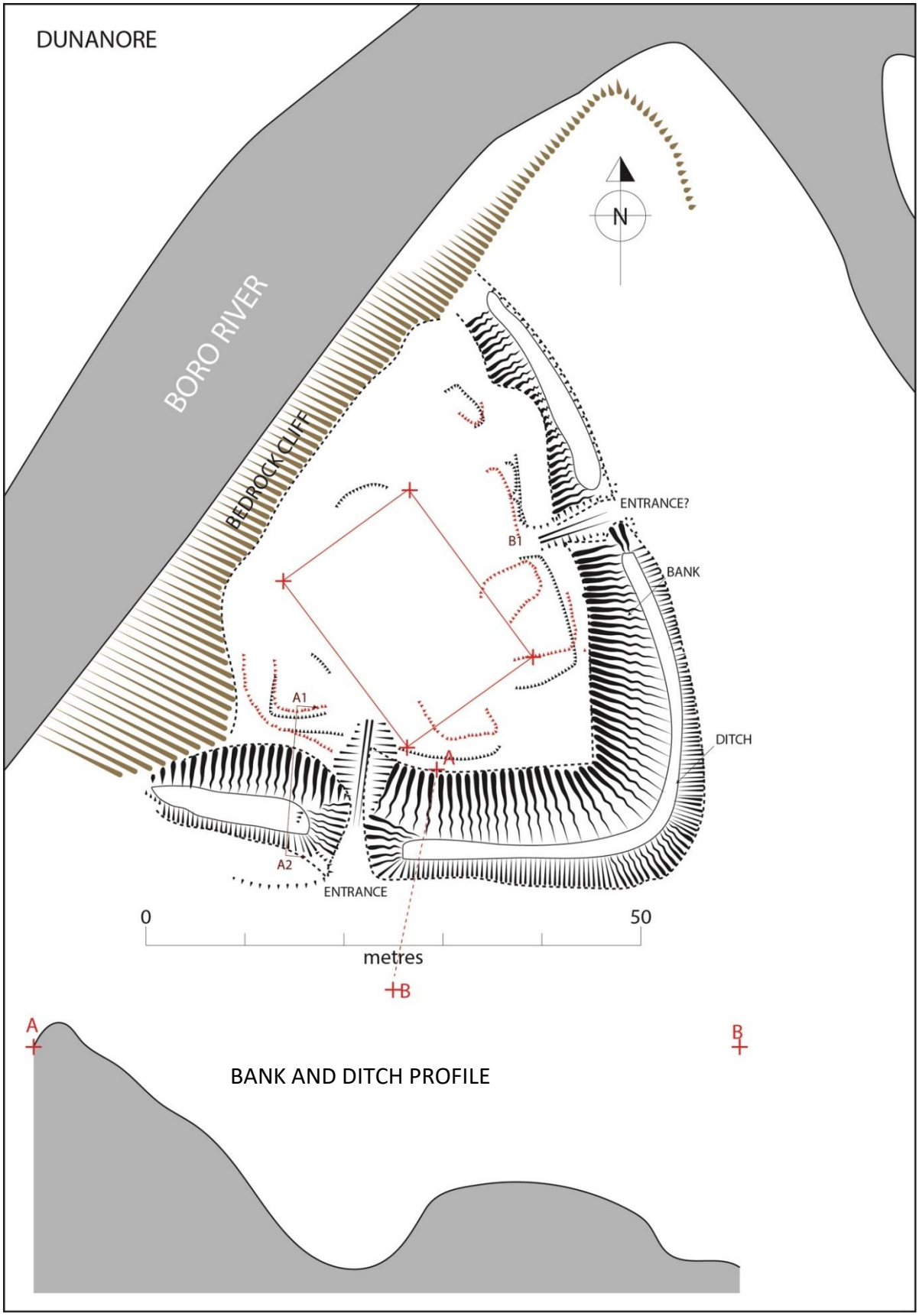


Figure 10. Site plan and profile of Dunanore (after a survey by Conor McHale and original surveys by Grace Dennis-Toone and the IAFS). The internal features mapped are shown in red. Those in black are from the McHale survey. The geophysical survey grid is depicted by the red box.

4.5.3 Geophysical Survey Magnetometry:

Geophysical testing was conducted at the site of Dunanore (Conyers 2018). The results were unreliable. It was also suspected that the geophysics would not work at the site due to dense tree roots and magnetic interference (Conyers 2018). Figure 11 above shows the area within the site that was used in the geophysics test survey.

4.6 Analytical Methods:

Reevaluation:

The aim of this thesis is to identify genuine ringwork castles/possible ringwork castles in their historic setting. In order to do this the fourteen sites that have been previously or currently classified as ringworks in Co. Wexford were re-evaluated. This research project adopted the method created by Arbuthnot (2011) with some alterations. Arbuthnot's method uses four criteria and the monument must have strong evidence in at least two criteria to classify. The four categories are (Arbuthnot 2011: 71):

1. Morphology
2. Siting in the landscape
3. Siting in relation to high medieval settlement
4. Documentary evidence

Morphology is the most difficult criterion to evaluate, since the morphology of ringworks is highly variable and still under debate. For the purpose of this research a ringwork is defined as a circular or sub circular platform enclosed by a minimum of one bank and ditch. Arbuthnot's morphology criterion measures a ringwork as between 35m-50m in diameter; this research project extends that diameter to 30m-60m, with exceptions to this rule (Arbuthnot 2011:71). Often a ringwork's enclosed area is raised above ground level and is defended by banks and fosse of variable layout (Arbuthnot 2011:71). For example, some sites may have an external bank or an external fosse, or two banks and an intervening fosse (Arbuthnot 2011:71).

Siting in the landscape refers to the strategic and naturally defensible features of a location, for example river crossings or mountain passes that can be controlled and monitored, such as Carrick, which overlooks the river Slaney and its associated ferry-crossing (Arbuthnot

2011:71). Ringwork sites can also be positioned on inland or coastal promontories, such as Templetown on the crest of a hill at the cliff's edge overlooking the coast on the Hook Peninsula (Arbuthnot 2011:71). Some ringworks utilise the natural topography to defend the enclosure, including cliffs on one side that act as a defence. For example, Dunanore's sitting on the river Slaney is protected on two sides by cliffs (Colfer 2013). Arbuthnot believes that in most cases the Anglo-Norman builders were confined to building with a manor, and that, while the location may not be completely defendable, it should nevertheless be the best such position available in the area (Arbuthnot 2011:72).

Siting in relation to high medieval settlement refers to the proximity to a high medieval site, which is often represented by a church, but, like morphology, this can be difficult to ascertain as a ringwork may be associated with a church site more than one hundred metres away (Arbuthnot 2011:72). Churches are used as a key referent for high medieval settlement because they are often what remains, but other features such as house sites, tower houses and deer parks should also be included (Arbuthnot 2011:72). As stated by Simpson, 'church and castle side by side are hallmarks of the Norman conquest' (Simpson 1969:82). Arbuthnot makes it clear that a lack of high medieval settlement alone cannot be reason enough for disregarding a site as a ringwork castle, and that, although we associate the ringwork timber castle with Anglo-Normans, this is not to say that Gaelic lords may not have replicated Anglo-Norman building choices (Arbuthnot 2011:73). The results were produced using the Historic Environment Viewer from the National Monuments Service and overlaying the historical maps available from the OSI. The results were split into three distance categories: within 200m, within 500m and within or over a kilometer from the exterior features of each site.

Documentary evidence includes historical records (including maps), place names, local histories/traditions and historical geography (Arbuthnot 2011:73). These sources can provide an encompassing history of the site. Historic literature and administrative documents can reference a castle and, should this castle's location coincide with an earthwork, this is considered evidence for the earthwork being a ringwork castle (Arbuthnot 2011:73). Additionally, historical evidence can reveal the location of a manorial estate and should an earthwork be located within this manor, it can be considered supporting evidence for ringwork classification (Arbuthnot 2011:73). Cartographic evidence in the form of historic

maps such as the OSI maps mentioned previously, can show evidence for castle sites, earthworks and other monuments (Arbuthnot 2011:74). Place names and local histories/traditions can often provide information not accessible in historical sources or modern literature. Place names in Ireland can be attributed to Gaelic or Anglo-Norman origins. Arbuthnot draws attention to the use of the word 'castle' in townlands that held medieval castles, such as Castlesow, which is the words 'castle' and 'sow' referring to the river Sow (Arbuthnot 2011:73). Additionally, townland names can contain the name of the family that held the land in the medieval period (Arbuthnot 2011:74).

Chapter 5 Results

5.1 Introduction

As described in Chapter 3, previous literature, the records of the National Monuments Service and historic maps were investigated to produce a list of possible ringwork sites in County Wexford. From this, sixteen sites were identified. In this chapter, the four key criteria identified in Chapter 4—morphology, siting in the landscape, siting in relation to high medieval settlement, and documentary evidence—are applied to each site to determine whether it is a ringwork castle, a possible ringwork castle or a misclassified site.

5.2 Morphology

All sixteen sites varied in diameter (Table 1). Of these sites, 71% fell within the standard classification for a ringwork (30-60m). The remaining 29% were between 100-250m in diameter (figure 13). The clear outlier is the site of Great Island, which has a diameter of 250x200m. The most common site diameters are 40x30m and 20x30m (figure 12).

Table 2. Shape and diameter of the sites.

SITE	SHAPE	DIAMETER
BAGINBUN	sub circular/broken	187x65m
BALLYHOGE	sub circular	49x38m
BALLYORLEY	Sub-circular area	26m
CARRICK	sub circular	40x27m
CASTLESOW	circular area	Interior 16x13.5 Exterior 26.5x23.3
COURTHOYLE	sub circular	90x70m
DUNANORE	D-shaped	38x36m
ENNISCORTHY	NA	NA
FERNS	NA	27.5x18.5m
FINSHOGE	circular area	37m
GREAT ISLAND	sub-circular/D-shaped	250x200m
GREAT ISLAND 2	sub circular	100x62m
KILPIPE	sub-circular/D-shaped	41.5x32m
KINNAGH	unknown	unknown
TEMPLETOWN	circular area	40x50m
TOBERFINNICK	sub-circular/D-shaped	28x21m

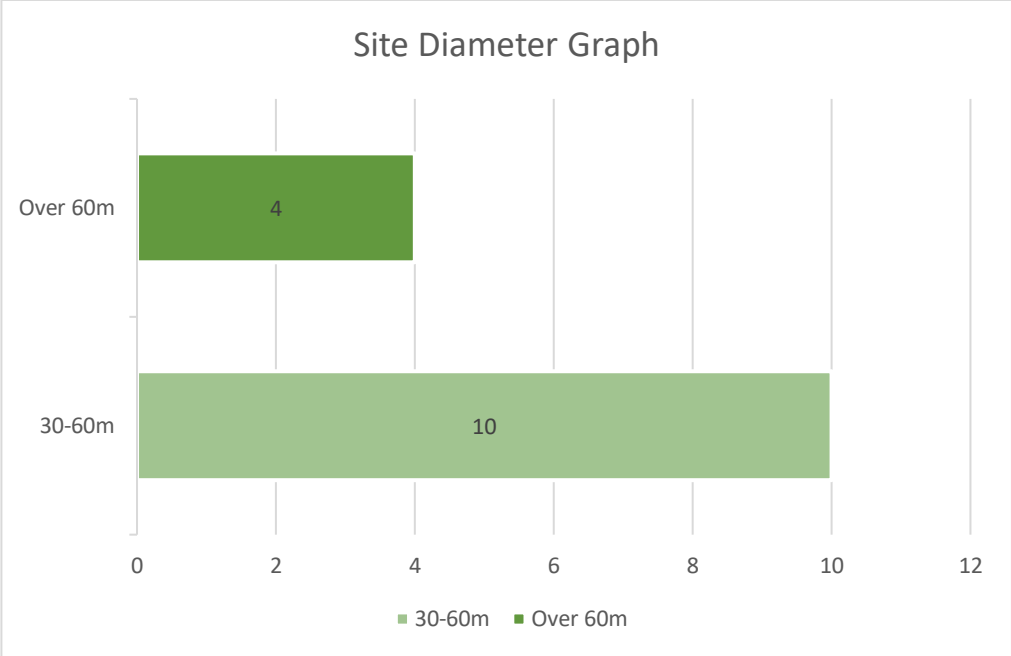


Figure 11. Site diameter graph showing sites within 30-60m diameter.

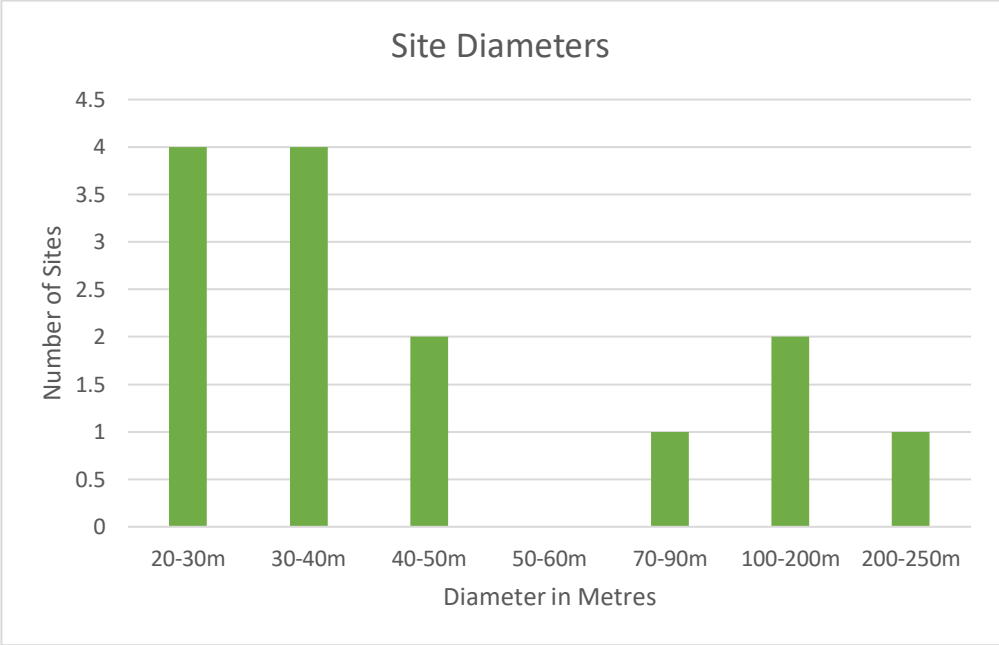


Figure 12. Site diameter graph.

The primary features of a ringwork castle include a bank, ditch and fosse, all visible traces of which were recorded to determine their dimensions. Where these features were no longer visible or only partly visible, the records from the National Monuments Service were used to provide dimensions. All the sites have been modified over the centuries, and the majority (twelve) have been modified heavily (table 4). As such, data relating to the dimensions of the bank, fosse and interior platform are the least reliable in terms of classifying these sites.

Table 3. Dimensions for the bank and fosse at each site with relevant notes.

SITE	BANK	FOSSE	CURRENTLY VISIBLE	NOTES
BAGINBUN	Height:4m Width:12m	Width:6m Depth:1m	Yes	Very soft ground close to cliff edge. A cluster of broken mounds indicate the location of the site? (SMR).
BALLYHOGE	Not Visible	Width: 4-8m Depth 0.5m	Partly	Deterioration and modification present. Fosse is poorly preserved on the E side. The N S and W sides are defined by steep cliff. Dimensions taken from previous research (Arbuthnot 2010:229).
BALLYORLEY	Width:15m Height:1.8-2.3m	Width: 8-12m Depth:0.5m	Yes	Obvious structure in flat field. Bank is clear. Ditch has been filled in/modified in recent past.
CARRICK	Height:2.15m	Width: 5.6m Depth:2m	Yes	Well preserved site, a modern replica round tower stands in the interior. Bank and fosse intact. Interior presently under excavation.
CASTLESOW	Height 1.5m	Inner – Width: 5m Depth: 0.5-1.5m Outer - Width:3m Depth:1m	Yes	The area around the site is open with little vegetation cover, the interior of the site itself is thick with vegetation, the bank and ditch have been heavily modified and, in most areas, removed completely. Site appears as a hill, but the peak still contains a platform with possible surrounding bank. Modern buildings are present in the interior and the site has a steep descent to the river.
COURTHOYLE	Unknown	Unknown	No	Little remains of the site; the interior would have been underneath modern farmyard. The landowner suggested a small mound as the remains of the site, as

				suggested to him by an archaeologist who visited the property for an assessment. The mound stands at roughly 1m at its peak.
DUNANORE	Width:9m Height Int:0.7m Height Ext:5.2m	Width: 2.5-4m Depth: 4m	Yes	Site is well preserved and is an obvious monument. The bank and interior are substantial and on the southern side the ditch is still deep.
ENNISCORTHY	Unknown	Unknown	No	Site has changed drastically since the proposed earthwork era. A stone castle stands over the ringwork site today.
FERNS	Unknown	Width:2.5m Depth:1.2m	Partly	Site is occupied by the later medieval stone castle. A ditch is visible, but it has no proposed relation to the earlier earthwork. Ditch dimensions taken from Sweetman's excavation (Sweetman 1979:229).
FINSHOGE	Width: 4m Height:2m	Width:5m Depth:2-3m	Partly	A circular interior is visible, fosse and outer bank are still present. Dimensions taken from previous research (Arbuthnot 2010:283)
GREAT ISLAND	Width:5-11m Height:1m	Width:10-12m	Partly	Semi-circular bank visible at ground level with a broken second bank and possible ditch. This aligns with the historic map of the property.
GREAT ISLAND 2	Unknown	Unknown	No	Site no longer visible at ground level.
KILPIPE	Width: 1.5-2.5m	Width:3.5-4 Height:1.5	Yes	Site indicated by substantial earthen mound with obvious manmade features. Bank has been modified and little remains of the ditch, but site is still identifiable.
KINNAGH	Unknown	Unknown	No	Site completely built over by farmyard.
TEMPLETOWN	Unknown	Unknown	No	Ste not visible at ground level. The area marked on the historic maps has no remaining earthwork features.
TOBERFINNICK	Width:10m Height:1.5m	Width:8m Depth:3.4m	No	Unclear at ground level, heavily overgrown and on a steep descent. Dimensions taken from previous survey (SMR).

5.3 Siting in the landscape

As stated in Chapter 4, a ringwork does not have to be in a naturally highly defensible location but should be in the most defensible location offered by the surrounding landscape. The results show that 75% (12) could be located in the most defensive situation.

Of all sixteen sites 31% (5) use a natural cliff edge as a defensive boundary on one or more sides. Two sites, Baginbun (or Ramstown) and Templetown, are on the coast and the cliffs are substantially steeper than at the other sites. Templetown is located in proximity to cliffs on the headland, this makes attack from the west highly unlikely and increases the sites defensibility. Baginbun, in comparison, uses the cliffs as a literal boundary, with the bank and ditch ending at the edge of the cliff face.

Six sites (37%) are within 100m of a river or stream, five of which are positioned on a major river (see figure 14). Carrick overlooks the River Slaney, as does the site of Enniscorthy castle, Dunanore is on the edge of the Boro River, and the sites of Great Island 1 and 2 are at the edge of the River Barrow. A further 37% of sites are within 500m of a waterway, showing that the majority of sites (n=12 or74%) are no more than 500m from a waterway. Templetown, Baginbun, Ballyorley and Ferns are all more than 1km from a river or stream.

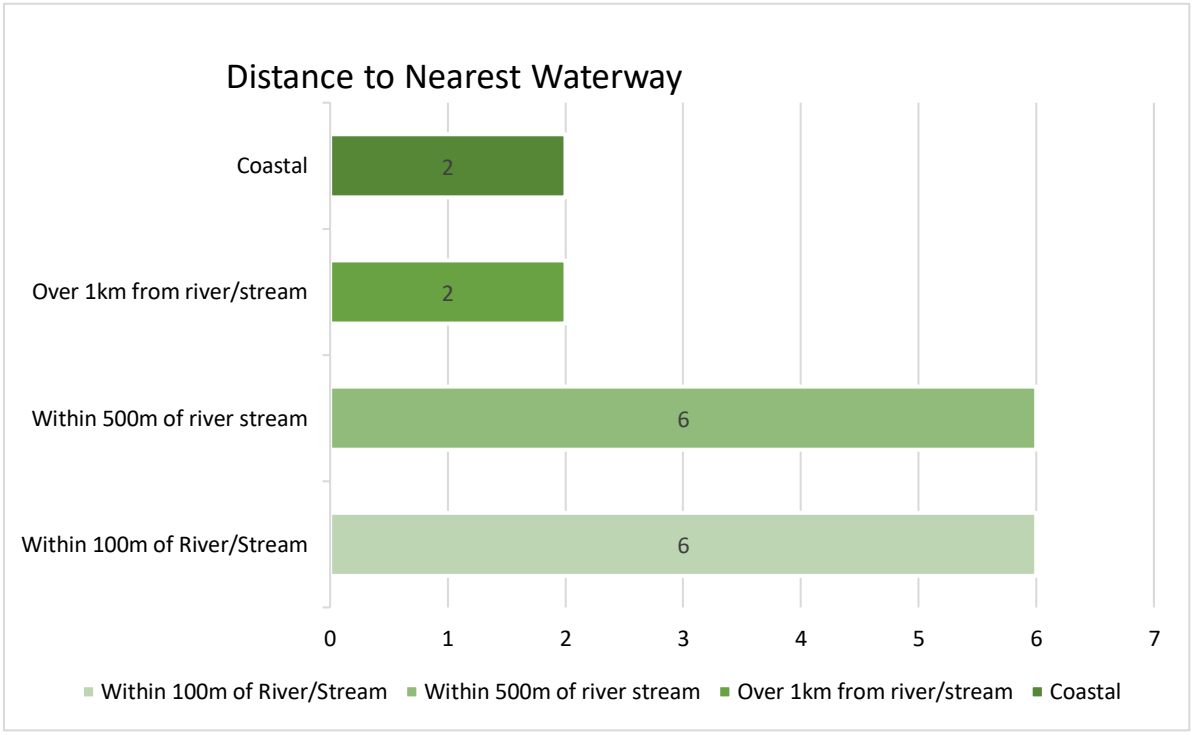


Figure 13. Distance to nearest waterway graph.

5.4 Siting in Relation to High Medieval Settlement

There is variation in the distance between sites and nearby high medieval settlement. Nine sites (56%) are within a kilometer of a high medieval church, but one could not be associated with any high medieval settlement within the townland (table 5 and figure 15).

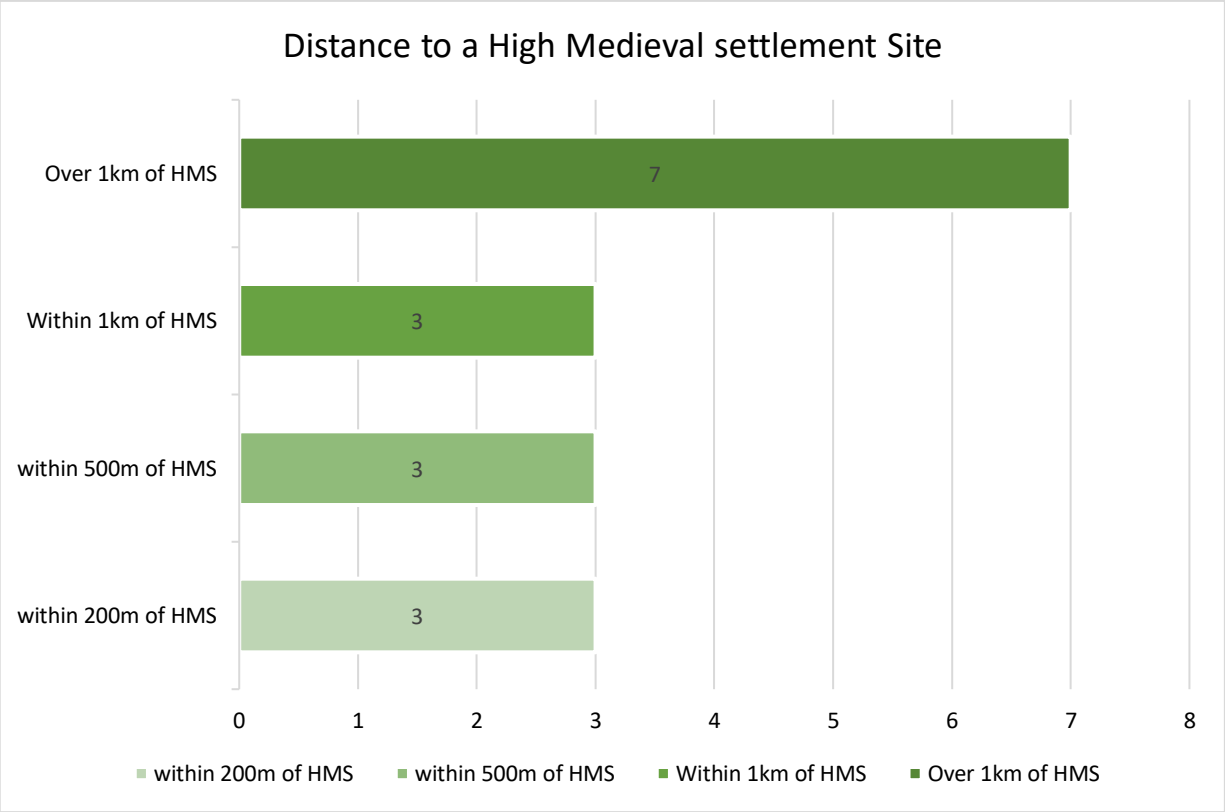


Figure 14. Distance to a high medieval settlement site

Table 4. Table showing the distance to high medieval settlement for each site and relevant notes.

SITE	DISTANCE TO NEAREST EVIDENCE OF HIGH MEDIEVAL SETTLEMENT	NOTES
BAGINBUN	Over 1km	No known sites affiliated with this site as its occupation was presumably short lived. A manorial settlement is 2km away.
BALLYHOGE	Over 1Km	Medieval parish church 2km away
BALLYORLEY	Over 1Km	Nearest high medieval settlement is outside the site's town land making it unlikely to be associated with the site
CARRICK	Within 1km	Medieval parish church (St Nicholas's) 850m to the south.
CASTLESOW	Over 1Km	Outside the townland
COURTHOYLE	Within 200m	Medieval tower house in the immediate vicinity
DUNANORE	Over 1km	Medieval parish church 2km away in Ballyhoge
ENNISCORTHY	Within 200m	Church site in immediate vicinity
FERNS	Within 500m	Various churches 500m away from the castle site
FINSHOGE	Over 1Km	Outside the town land
GREAT ISLAND 1	1km	Medieval hub at Kilmokea 1km away
GREAT ISLAND 2	Within 1km	See above
KILPIPE	Within 200m	Church and graveyard site in the same field as the site.
KINNAGH	Within 500m	Church site across from the site
TEMPLETOWN	Within 500m	Church still standing in adjacent field
TOBERFINNICK	Over 1Km	Outside the town land

5.5 Documentary Evidence

Table 5 shows they key documentary evidence and notable historical people associated with each site. In most cases the documentary evidence does not specifically refer to the site but discusses a site that, from its description (location, size, surrounds), is likely to refer to one of the sites in this study. The full range of documentary evidence for each site is included in Appendix A, see figure 16 for the land grants given by Strongbow.

Figure 15. The land-grants given by Strongbow, Colfer 2013:26. Reproduced with permission.

Table 5. Key evidence from documentary sources and notable historical person/s mentioned.

SITE	KEY INFORMATION (SEE APPENDIX A FOR FULL DOCUMENTARY SOURCES)	PERSON/S MENTIONED
BAGINBUN	Pre-existing (pre-Norman) promontory fort at the site, Dundonnell. Raymond le Gros and men built camp here (castle, camp, fortification, stronghold) Associated with Strongbow's landing and subsequent camp.	Raymond le Gros, Gerald of Wales, Strongbow, Dermot McMurrough
BALLYHOGE	The Manor of Ballyhoge was held by the Knights Hospitallers in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries.	Knights Hospitallers and Strongbow (lands granted)
BALLYORLEY	Discussed as possible manorial centre for the Prendergast fee of Schyrmal. Possible reference as 'ruined mill' in mid seventeenth century (Civil Survey)	Prendergast family
CARRICK	First Anglo-Norman settlement in Ireland, built by FitzGerald or FitzStephen upon arrival in Wexford. Held as the demesne manor of the Earls of Wexford and used as such by Strongbow and William Marshal.	Maurice FitzGerald, FitzStephen, Strongbow, William Marshal, Henry II
CASTLESOW	Discussed as possible *caput* castle associated with Roche fee of Fernegal. Strongbow granted Fernegal lands to Maurice de Prendergast in c.1172. These lands then passed to Robert Fits Gobert, whom the Roches descend from.	Strongbow, Prendergast, Godebert and the Roche family
COURTHOYLE	May represent the 'house of Hoyle Karrothobren (Carrickbyrne), described as on the boundary of Ross wood by Richard Marshal in c.1232.	Hoyle (Howles), and Marshal family
DUNANORE	May represent the *caput* castle of the large Anglo-Norman manor of Kayer. Held by the de Denne family may have been granted in the late twelfth century. Possible earlier fort at site.	De Denne family
ENNISCORTHY	The area of Enniscorthy served as the *caput* for Duffry which was granted by Strongbow to Robert de Quency in c.1172. It is possible de Quency ordered an earthwork built prior to his death in c.1173. The stone castle has been historically attributed to the Prendergast family who gained control of the Duffry in c.1190.	Strongbow, de Quency, Prendergast
FERNS	Ferns was a political and ecclesiastical centre prior, during and after the Anglo-Norman invasion. A fortified site is recorded in Ferns as Dermot's headquarters pre-Anglo-Norman. During the twelfth century it is unclear	Dermot, Strongbow, Marshal

	who held Ferns. By the mid-thirteenth century Ferns was manor of the Marshal Lords of Leinster.	
FINSHOGE	Luke le Lu held the fee at 'Ballikermuth' which some have interpreted as being within the townland of Finshoge.	Le Lu/Lupus family, Marshals, Prendergast
GREAT ISLAND 1	Greatisland was known as Hervey's Island in the medieval period. Hervey de Monte Marisco was part of the first contingent of knights to come across in c.1169, Dermot is said to have granted Hervey the lands of 'Orbathy' to Hervey immediately after the conquest of Wexford town in c.1169. Hervey is said to have established his *caput baroniae* at Greatisland. The lands fell back to the Marshalls after Hervey's death in c.1205	Dermot, Strongbow, Hervey, Marshal
GREAT ISLAND 2	see above	see above
KILPIPE	Earliest known date for the church site here is c.1179. Theobald Walter is granted the lands in c.1250 by the archbishop of Dublin. It has been suggested the earthwork and church may have been a secondary manorial settlement of the northern border of the Prendergast manor of Kynelaon.	Walter, Prendergast
KINNAGH	Unknown	Unknown
TEMPLETOWN	Henry II granted lands in c.1172 to the Knights Templar, including Kilcloggan (Hook Pen.), which is understood to include Templetown and Hook parishes. There are no known references to a castle in this area at this time. There is a suggestion to a windmill in the area which may refer to the earthwork. A castle in the area was referenced in the later medieval period c.1540/41	Henry II, Knights Templar
TOBERFINNICK	This site may be the *caput* site of the Roche's seat of Fernegal (see Castlesow). One suggestion for the existence of both earthworks is Toberfinnick being that of the Sinnotts who were granted the land on the other side of the River Sow in the thirteenth century. It is not known if the sites existed contemporary to each other or if both were used as castles.	Roches, Strongbow, Prendergast

The results show that eight of the sites are associated with Strongbow and his land grants, five have a direct connection to Dermot McMurrough, and one was granted by King Henry II. Documentary evidence also discusses the pre and post Anglo- Norman use for some sites. From the literature, Irish (pre-Anglo-Norman) settlements existed at Baginbun, Ballyorley, Dunanore and Ferns. At Baginbun a promontory fort existed prior to the Anglo-Normans, who reportedly modified and utilised pre-existing defenses. The stone castle fortifications at Ferns and Enniscorthy were built generations after the site may have been used as a ringwork. The area surrounding the sites of Great Island 1 and 2 has evidence of continuous use and occupation (after the ringwork stage) in the stone castles and leper hospital, as does Courthoyle in its tower house. Templetown and Kilpipe show evidence for continued use and occupation, with a later castle and church at Templetown, and a church at Kilpipe. The site of Carrick has clear origins in the earlier earthwork and was later used as a demesne manor by Strongbow and Marshal; and the town of Newtown evolved out of the site.

5.6 Extensive Past Archaeological research

Some sites in this study have been subject to extensive archaeological research in the recent past or are undergoing work at present, which has provided additional data for this study.

Ballyorley

The extensive study conducted by FitzPatrick and Drisceoil in 2016 was focused on the ruined building to the north-west of the site, which they concluded was a law-school (FitzPatrick and Drisceoil 2016:409). However, this study encompassed the entire enclosure, which was found during the survey and included the earthwork site from this study. Their research concluded that the possible ringwork site has evidence which could coincide with multiple site classifications. They suggested the site may represent any of the following: motte, unfinished motte, bailey or modified prehistoric barrow (FitzPatrick and Drisceoil 2016:408). In opposition to the classifications of ringfort or ringwork castle they noted that the site has no entrance gap (FitzPatrick and Drisceoil 2016:408). The geophysics conducted at the earthwork site found limited magnetic readings, with only a single linear feature possibly representing an internal sub-division (FitzPatrick and Drisceoil 2016:407).

Ferns

The excavations at Ferns Castle were undertaken in 1972 and 1975 by David Sweetman. It was Sweetman's findings from this excavation that led him to conclude an earlier ringwork castle was present at the site prior to the building of the stone castle. The main finding for Sweetman and his team was the discovery of two fosses. Firstly, the stone castle was surrounded by a wide rock-cut fosse that was seemingly constructed at the same time as the stone castle. The second fosse was excavated 10m from the south east corner of the castle and measured 1.2m in depth and 2.5m in width. Sweetman found sherds of thirteenth and fourteenth century pottery in the second fosse, which became the basis for his ringwork argument. Sweetman believed that the stratigraphy of the fosse's layers - with the backfill occurring before the thirteenth and fourteenth century deposits – was evidence for earlier occupation at the site. In addition to this, the excavation of the interior of the stone castle showed that the south eastern side was built on boulder clay. Sweetman suggests this may be representative of a rampart, such as would be present at a ringwork castle.

Carrick

Carrick is located in Ferrycarrig on the river Slaney. The site was excavated by Claire Cotter and Isabel Bennett in the 1980s and is currently being used as a teaching excavation by the Irish Archaeology Field School (for the complete site review, see Appendix A).

The site currently has four (trenches), which have been excavated down to Cotter's and Bennett's excavation levels from the 1980s and then extended further into the in-situ undisturbed archaeology. The bank and fosse have been confirmed as the earliest archaeological features. The bank appears to be made of layers of boulder clays that were piled up during the digging of the ditch (Shine et al. 2018:31). Large stones are present on the bank, which may suggest a stone curtain wall, but this feature is very straight with no curve to follow the enclosure and there is evidence for the extension of the bank inwards into the structure (Shine at al. 2018:33). The earliest interior features are the remains of possible 12th century wooden structures as indicated by post holes associated with a charcoal layer; this layer was dated to 1040-1210 cal. CE, with a 57% chance of it dating between 1120-1210 CE (Shine et al. 2018:34). There is continuous evidence for the ongoing occupation and

adaptation of the site as indicated by 13th and 14th century structures, including six walls that have survived (Shine et al. 2018:36-40).

5.7 Results from the additional archaeological methods applied to Dunanore

Archaeological and other evidence for Anglo-Norman settlement in relation to Dunanore was recorded in more detail for this project, as it was the most intact site in the sample.

The earthwork at Dunanore may represent the *caput* castle of the large Anglo-Norman manor of Kayer (Colfer 2002:49). Held by the de Denne family, it is believed to have been granted to them in the late twelfth century (Colfer 2002:49). The earthwork has been discussed as a ringwork by Billy Colfer (Colfer 2002:49), who also believes an earlier promontory fort may have existed before the Anglo-Normans and was modified to provide the features of a ringwork castle.

The site has an obvious bank and fosse, the deepest part of which measures roughly 5.5m. The site sits roughly 20m above the river and uses the edge of the cliff as a defensive boundary. The current entrance is on the south side, but it is unclear if this is the original entrance; there is a walkway over the fosse from the outer bank.

The interior appears to contain between four to six features, although during the present survey the boundaries between each feature were visually unclear. Previous surveys each recorded five features in the interior (Arbuthnot 2010:260; O'Conor 1987). The most notable internal feature—a possible house site—is just within the entrance on the western side. This feature appears rectangular, with internal dimensions of roughly 5x7m. Previous work recorded this feature as having stone footings 6.8m apart, and walls extending from the visible depression up to 15m in length. There is an additional rectangular feature in the north western section of the site's interior. The south and south-eastern side of the interior was recently cleared of overgrowth. Depressions that possibly indicate the location of buildings/huts are still visible, although their precise dimensions and original shapes are unclear. Previous surveys, particularly from the SMR, recorded an additional three features to the south and south east, two of which were identified as 'circular hut sites' and the third as a second rectangular feature.

Geophysics was tested at Dunanore but proved unsuccessful due to the root systems of the present trees, which fill the interior. The site was surveyed with a total station to produce a topographical plan (see figure 11). This shows the variation in elevation of the site's interior and exterior. A linear section of the bank and fosse was also recorded to produce a profile (see figure 11).

5.8 Analysis and Conclusion

Of the sixteen possible ringwork sites in County Wexford, ten (63%) meet the minimum of three criteria necessary to be reliably classified as a ringwork or possible ringwork, see figure 17. On this basis three sites—Carrick, Dunanore and Kilpipe—are classified as conclusive ringworks, and seven—Ballyhoge, Courthoyle, Enniscorthy, Ferns, Great Island 1, Great Island 2 and Toberfinnick—as possible ringworks (refer to Appendix A for details of each site). Six (38%) sites have been previously misclassified and are unlikely to be ringwork castles. These are Baginbun, Ballyorley, Castlesow, Finshoge, Kinnagh and Templetown, see table 7.

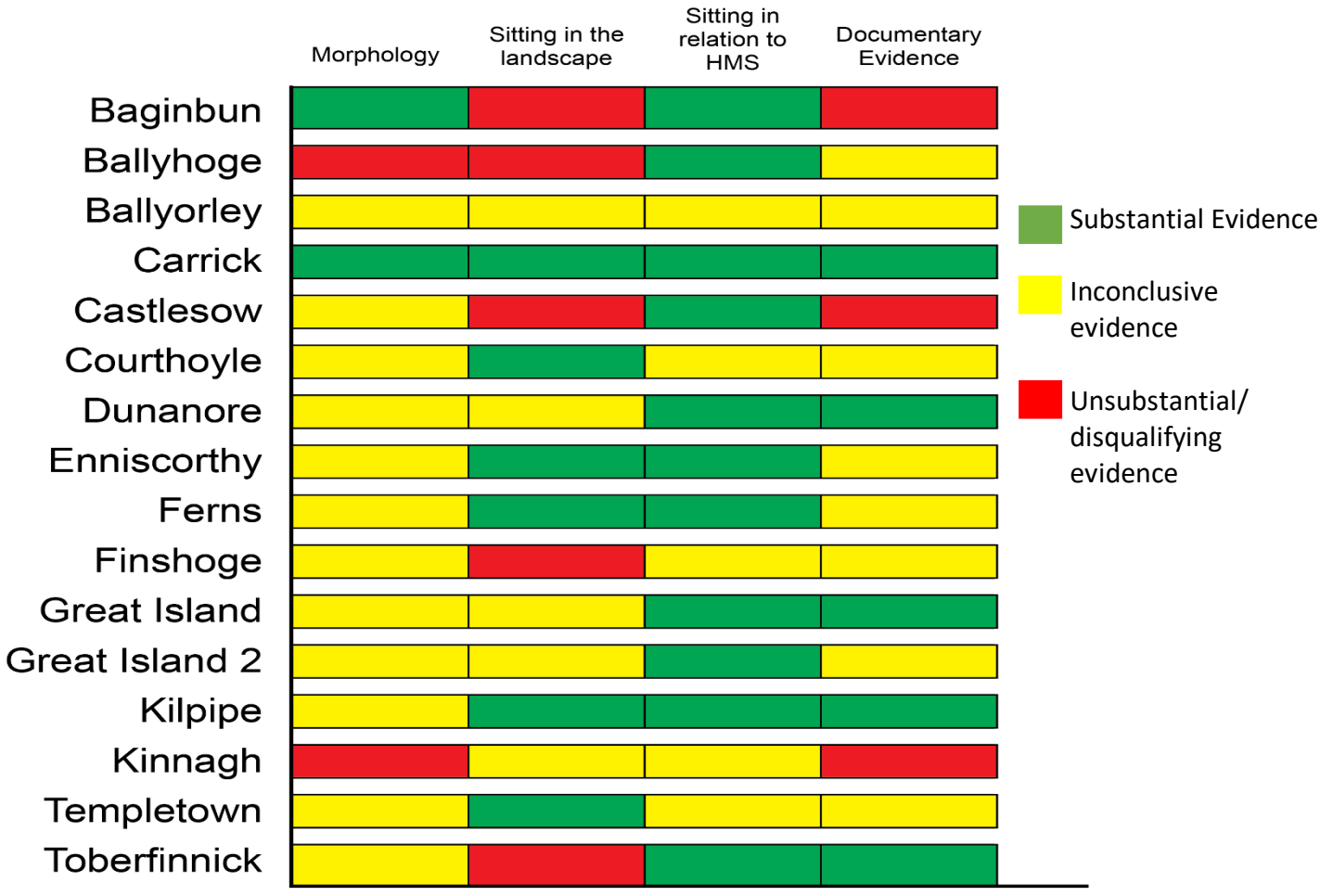


Figure 16. Showing the criteria met by each site.

Table 6. Revised site classifications and reasoning

SITE NAME	REVISED CLASSIFICATION	KEY REASONS FOR CLASSIFICATION
BAGINBUN/ RAMSTOWN	Misclassified	Lacking morphological, documentary and landscape evidence
BALLYHOGE	Possible Ringwork	Inconclusive morphological evidence
BALLYORLEY	Misclassified	Recent archaeological evidence disqualifies the site
CARRICK	Ringwork	Substantial morphological, documentary and archaeological evidence
CASTLESOW	Misclassified	Disqualifying morphological evidence
COURTHOYLE	Possible Ringwork	Inconclusive morphological and documentary evidence
DUNANORE	Ringwork	Substantial morphological evidence and reasonable documentary evidence
ENNISCORTHY	Possible Ringwork	Inconclusive documentary evidence with some archaeological evidence
FERNS	Possible Ringwork	Inconclusive documentary evidence with some archaeological evidence
FINSHOGE	Misclassified	Lacking or disqualifying morphological, documentary and landscape evidence
GREAT ISLAND 1	Possible Ringwork	Inconclusive morphological and documentary evidence
GREAT ISLAND 2	Possible Ringwork	Inconclusive morphological and landscape evidence
KILPIPE	Ringwork	Substantial morphological, documentary and archaeological evidence
KINNAGH	Misclassified	The initial classification has been stated as a mistake
TEMPLETOWN	Misclassified	Lacking or disqualifying morphological, documentary and landscape evidence
TOBERFINNICK	Possible Ringwork	Inconclusive morphological and documentary evidence

Chapter 6 Discussion and Interpretation

6.1 Interpretation of Results

As shown in Chapters Five, of the sixteen sites in Co. Wexford, six were disqualified as ringwork castles, three had conclusive evidence to be classified as a ringwork castle and the remaining seven were classified as possible ringworks due to inconclusive or insufficient evidence. Eight of the ten sites (80%) occupy the most defendable position in the surrounding landscape. As discussed in Chapter Four, a ringwork does not have to naturally defensible but should be located in the most strategic position possible. The two sites that were not in the most defensible position, Courthoyle and Toberfinnick, both have defensibility flaws, although these were considered circumstantial (see Appendix A for further detail).

Of the combined conclusive and possible ringwork sites, 40% were within 100m of a river or stream, 40% were within 500m, and 20% were within 1km. Notably, all ten sites were no more than 1km from the nearest river or stream, with the majority within 100m of the water. The three conclusive ringwork sites were all within 100m of a river/stream.

Of the three conclusive ringworks there is variation in the distance to high medieval settlement. Carrick is situated approximately 850m from the nearest church, Kilpipe is 110m from a church site with the same name, and Dunanore is 770m from a medieval church and graveyard. The remaining seven possible ringworks showed no close proximity to sites of high medieval settlement, although five of these were within a kilometre of a high medieval site.

The results showed that 38% (n=6) of sites previously classified as ringwork castles were misclassified. Of these, two (Ballyorley and Templetown) are currently listed on the National Monuments Service Archaeological Survey of Ireland as ringwork castles. In addition, of the remaining 62% previously classified as ringwork castles or possible ringwork castles, only six are registered as such on the Archaeological Survey of Ireland (Ferns, Dunanore, Toberfinnick, Carrick and Greatisland 1). Results identified all possible ringwork castles to the best of the available resources. The following sites have evidence to classify them as ringwork castles or possible ringwork castles (see table 8).

Table 7. The ringwork and possible ringwork sites of Co. Wexford.

SITE	CLASSIFICATION
BALLYHOGE	Possible Ringwork Castle
CARRICK	Ringwork Castle
COURTHOYLE	Possible Ringwork Castle
DUNANORE	Ringwork Castle
ENNISCORTHY	Possible Ringwork Castle
FERNS	Possible Ringwork Castle
GREAT ISLAND 1	Possible Ringwork Castle
GREAT ISLAND 2	Possible Ringwork Castle
KILPIPE	Ringwork Castle
TOBERFINNICK	Possible Ringwork Castle

6.2 Comparison to Previous Studies

Arbuthnot's study of previously identified ringwork castles in Leinster and Meath found twenty-one (41%) to be definite ringworks, twenty-four (47%) to be possible ringworks and six (12%) to be other site types (Arbuthnot 2011:219). Sixty-six percent of ringworks were between 36-50m in diameter. Fifty-seven percent enclosed interiors raised significantly above ground level - this contrasts with the same site type in England and Wales, where very few were raised significantly above ground level (Arbuthnot 2011:220). The sites were generally on summits of hills/ridges or low-lying positions near rivers. Arbuthnot's results indicate a building pattern by the Anglo-Normans in Ireland that ensured ringwork castles were constructed near pre-existing urban settlements, possibly to control population centers and pre-existing communication routes (Arbuthnot 2011:220).

Arbuthnot states that ringwork castles seemed to be generally associated with small manorial centers that are typically represented in the landscape today by medieval church sites. Some sites appear associated with other representations of manorial centers, such as deer parks or tower houses. As noted by Arbuthnot, the site of Carrick is an outstanding example, as within the site's landscape there is a deer park, two mills and a major ferry crossing (Arbuthnot 2011:221).

Arbuthnot's results showed that 86% of her definite ringwork castle sites were associated with known medieval church sites, but 14% had no known associated medieval church site. In comparison, this study found that 80% of possible ringwork castle sites were associated with a nearby or adjacent church (Arbuthnot 2011:167). The distance between the castle and the church, however, varied greatly. Some ringwork castles have more than 1km between them and the nearest church site, while others only 100m. A similar variation was particularly noticeable in this study as shown in Chapter 5; the results mirrored that of Arbuthnot's, with similar variation in distance between sites and churches or other features of high medieval settlement. As a result, this criterion for classifying ringwork castles is particularly difficult and, in some cases, unreliable (Arbuthnot 2011:221).

The research conducted by Arbuthnot included sites that were included in this study; the following table shows the classifications given from each study. For detail on the classification of each site see Appendix A.

Table 8. Site classifications from this study and Arbuthnot's 2011 study of possible ringwork castles in Co. Wexford.

SITE	ARBUTHNOT'S CLASSIFICATION (2011)	REVISED CLASSIFICATION (DENNIS-TOONE 2019)
BAGINBUN	Ringwork Castle	Misclassified
BALLYHOGE	Possible Ringwork	Possible Ringwork
BALLYORLEY	Possible Ringwork	Misclassified
CARRICK	Ringwork Castle	Ringwork Castle
CASTLESOW	Discarded	Misclassified
COURTHOYLE	Not Included	Possible Ringwork
DUNANORE	Possible Ringwork	Ringwork Castle
ENNISCORTHY	Possible Ringwork	Possible Ringwork
FERNS	Possible Ringwork	Possible Ringwork
FINSHOGE	Possible Ringwork	Misclassified
GREAT ISLAND 1	Possible Ringwork	Possible Ringwork
GREAT ISLAND 2	Possible Ringwork	Possible Ringwork
KILPIPE	Ringwork Castle	Ringwork Castle
KINNAGH	Not Included	Misclassified
TEMPLETOWN	Discarded	Misclassified
TOBERFINNICK	Possible Ringwork	Possible Ringwork

In O'Conor's 1993 study nineteen ringwork sites were identified in Leinster (O'Conor 1993:60). O'Conor classified nine as definite ringworks and ten as possible ringwork castles (O'Conor 1993:61). O'Conor also stated that his evidence agreed that the ringwork castle was used as part of the Anglo-Norman invasion and conquest strategy (O'Conor 1993:122-124). O'Conor's identified ringwork castles in wider Leinster and Co. Wexford included the sites of Baginbun, Ballyorley, Carrick, Enniscorthy Castle and Great Island 1, which are also present in this study. Notably, O'Conor rejected the site of Dunanore as a ringwork castle, arguing that the site was pre-Norman in date and disqualified due to the lack of specific documentary evidence regarding a castle at the site. Distance between the site and a high medieval church site (770m) (O'Conor 1993:342). This thesis differed from O'Conor's research due to more recent and extensive data which was able to be analyzed critically in a smaller study area.

O'Keeffe believes that there is no easy way to distinguish a ringwork castle from a ringfort based on morphology alone. He states that the only difference between the two is the perception of use and culture that has been forced upon them by archaeologists (O'Keeffe 2000:30). However, this was strongly argued against by Menz, who states that, while there are larger examples of ringforts, the general diameter of a ringwork is 30-60m, which is substantially greater than a ringfort. As such, size alone is a strong indicator of the site type (Menz 2017:93). This study found that, of the sites classified as ringwork castles or possible ringwork castles, 67% (n=7) were within the 30-60m diameter range, which corresponds well with Menz's study. Thirty-three percent (n=3; the sites of Great Island 1 and 2 and Courthoyle) were between 100-250m in diameter. Great Island 1 and 2 both have evidence classifying them as possible ringwork sites, but due to their proximity to each other it is unlikely they were in fact both ringwork castles. In addition, the diameter of Great Island 1 was calculated based on the partial remaining bank and ditch, thus the diameter may be inaccurate with a possible measurement of 250x200m if the remains of the earthwork bank were to continue in a D-shaped enclosure. Based on these results it is arguable that a diameter of between 30-60m is a reliable indicator of a ringwork castle.

Menz also states that the ringwork had a unique role in the conquest of Ireland and the subsequent feudal landscape that was constructed because the larger area of a ringwork castle could hold more people, soldiers and horses (Menz 2017:94). In comparison, Menz believes the smaller motte sites were used as private or capitol houses or as refuges (Menz 2017:97). The excavations and research being conducted at the site of Carrick show evidence of the occupation of initial Anglo-Norman knights and men at the site. The excavations revealed 12th century wooden features, including stake-holes and post-holes (Shine et al. 2019:34). The large military presence that has been discovered at Carrick through excavations supports Menz' argument and it is likely excavations at other ringwork castle sites may provide similar evidence.

Immich rejected 66% (18/27) of the sites previously classified as ringwork castles in Co. Tipperary. In terms of the topographic location of sites she identified as earth and timber castles (including ringwork castles), she found that 71.4% of timber castles were located next

to a river or wet field and 46.4% of the ringwork castle sites were immediately adjacent or within the same townland as a church (Immich 2015:iv-5). Results from this thesis have shown that 40% of all possible and conclusive ringwork sites were within 100m of a waterway, 40% were within 500m of a water way and 20% were within 1km of a waterway. Notably, all three conclusive ringwork castles sites were within 100m of a waterway thus cooperating with Immich's finds. Additionally, the three conclusive ringwork castles varied from 100-850m from a church site, but all were within the same townland again agreeing with the results from Immich's study.

The English study of ringworks by King and Alcock had differing results to the above studies in Ireland. Their extensive study showed that ringworks were common along the English Channel and a section of the Bristol channel (King and Alcock 1969:103), but absent from the northern regions of Wales, likely due to the native Welsh population. At a smaller scale, each county had patterns in its ringwork distribution that were unclear. For example, the ringworks of Northamptonshire are all grouped together in the southwest (King and Alcock 1969:103), from which King and Alcock concluded that English ringworks followed localised lordship patterns (King and Alcock 1969:103). This differs to the results of this and Arbuthnot's study, where the ringworks of Ireland are not found in localised groups, possibly due to the rapid colonisation requiring the frontier zones to be continuously moving forward and the lack of existing towns to be subjugated (Arbuthnot 2011).

Arbuthnot considered that King and Alcock's classification method was unsuitable for use in the Irish context because the Irish ringwork castle morphology did not seem to align with the common patterns in the English and Welsh context (Arbuthnot 2010:000). This study reviewed the methods used by King and Alcock, specifically regarding morphology, and came to a similar conclusion. As previously discussed in Chapter 2, King and Alcock's morphological classification scheme included types that were not present in Ireland (Arbuthnot 2010:91). This aligns with the idea that each castle will be bespoke of the environment it is in and, as such, classifying ringwork castles on morphology alone is unreliable.

6.3 Discussion

Research into ringwork castles in Ireland began in the 1970s when the idea of an "Irish ringwork castle" was first accepted. Terry Barry's 1983 publication created enthusiasm for identifying the site type and later work in the 1980s and 1990s saw sites being identified across the country. During the 2000s excitement seems to have died down and the discipline was left with many misclassified sites. As of 2010, there has been a resurgence in interest, with key research into the classification of the site being conducted.

The more recent work has clearly shown the need to revisit these earlier (and less rigorous) classifications. This has not yet been completed across Ireland, with counties in the southwest, west and northwest lacking investigation.

The results of this thesis concluded that only three of the sixteen sites (19%) have conclusive evidence to be categorized as definite ringwork castles. This has serious implications for the accuracy rate of older classifications currently employed and the interpretive frameworks that have been built upon them. On a national scale, if only 19% of all sites classified as ringworks/possible ringworks are actual ringwork castle sites then the collective data of the site type is unreliable. Therefore, our understanding of the density, dispersion and role of the ringwork castle in the feudal landscape of Ireland may be flawed.

Of the three sites reclassified as conclusive ringwork castles in this study, all are within the 30-60m diameter range and all are within 100m of a river or stream, all are within 1km of a church site. Carrick has conclusive evidence of an Anglo-Norman manorial settlement occupying the site and the association between Kilpipe and its church site make it likely a manorial settlement was present there as well. The data collected from these sites may be used to accurately identify other ringwork castle sites in Ireland using the methodology applied in this study.

Each site is still unique, particularly the interior, the shape of the site and the depth/height of the bank and fosse. These variations in morphology speak to the individual contexts of practicality and necessity that these sites represent, which in turn reiterates the importance of a comprehensive methodology when classifying them.

6.3.1 The most and least reliable criteria

The distance to high medieval settlement was quite variable for the sites in this study. Ringwork castle sites in England and Wales were often built close to towns or settlements in order to control the landscape and population, but in Ireland substantial settlements or towns were very uncommon (English 1995:45). As such, ringwork castles in Ireland were more likely to be built near monastic sites, church sites and proto-urban settlements (Arbuthnot 2011:160). The site of Ferns was an established proto-urban settlement prior to the Anglo-Normans, and it is considered that the establishment of the possible ringwork castle at Ferns may have encouraged an established borough (Colfer 2002). The majority of ringworks later functioned as manorial centers in smaller settlements, a transformation which is often traceable by the existence of a church site. Manorial landscapes included more than castles, encompassing features such as deer parks, fishponds, mills and rabbit warrens (Keegan 2004). The presence of any of these features in the landscape lends context to a ringwork castle as more than an isolated feature (Arbuthnot 2011:167). The site of Carrick is a key example: prior to the development of a township it was a manorial center and included a deer park and watermills.

The methodology applied in this study included the documentary evidence as one component, and in many cases corroborative evidence existed. Most of the documentary evidence, however, did not refer by name to the castles, or to an identifiable location, making it difficult to confirm that the castle being written about was indeed the site being researched. McNeill and Immich argue that the historical documentary evidence is of greater importance than morphology, as documents do not share the shortcomings of archaeological interpretation (McNeill:1997 Immich 2017:171). As this thesis has shown, the documentary evidence is circumstantial.

The relationship between ringwork castles and tower houses was investigated by Arbuthnot, and this study as part of the sitting in relation to high medieval settlement criterion. As noted by Arbuthnot, the site of Carrick has a medieval tower house across the river, associated with the Roche family of Co. Wexford (Arbuthnot 2011:184). The tower house was dated to the 15th century and is presumed to have been built to protect the ferry across the River Slaney, which is thought to have existed from the Anglo-Norman period onwards (Roche 1969:43).

The site of Courthoyle was researched in this study and classified as a possible ringwork castle. A tower house is present at the site today, surrounded by modern buildings and situated in the interior of the possible ringwork. The presence of a tower house at the site of a ringwork castle may indicate the ongoing high-status occupation of the site, although this reasoning has also led to the misclassification of ringwork sites, and as such should not be used in isolation. Instead, it should be regarded as a minor rather than a major indictor of a ringwork castle (O'Conor 1993:744, Arbuthnot 2011:185).

The continuing excavations at the site of Carrick will likely provide new information on the use of the ringwork castle, including details on what daily processes occurred during the occupation of the site and the defenses that were applied. Further research-driven excavations of ringwork sites – rather than development-driven studies which have different aims and expected outcomes – may provide morphological results that were previously unknown for ringwork castles, including the interior features that may have been present, a critical area for future investigation.

6.3.2 Key issues in ringwork castle identification

This study aimed to discuss and address some of the key issues with ringwork castle identification in Ireland. One issue that became more relevant as the study progressed was the potential misleadingness of the 'ring' in 'ringwork'. The term obviously suggests the shape of these monuments to be circular, sub-circular or D- shaped, more importantly that the bank and ditch are connected the around the circumference. This study has shown that two of the definite ringwork castle sites do not have complete banks and ditches but use a cliff as part of the continuing line of defense. In addition, O'Conor and Arbuthnot both argue that the site of Baginbun is a possible ringwork, but the earthworks there are linear and broken (see Chapter Six) (Arbuthnot 2011 ii:224; O'Conor 2003:19). The use of natural defenses and linear earthworks at ringwork castle sites in Ireland appears to be more common than that in England, Wales and greater Europe; as such, this begs the question of whether Irish ringwork castles differ significantly to English, Welsh and European examples (King and Alcock 1969, Arbuthnot 2011, O'Conor 1993). The term 'ringwork' is descriptive and has been used before to refer to the Irish *rath* which is, in a literal sense, a ringed earthwork (Johnson 2011:39-67). The addition of the word castle to the 'ringwork castle' label is what distinguishes the Anglo-

Norman fortification from other circular earthworks in literature. The importance of the lack of clarity surrounding the term 'ringwork' is the connotations that the terminology inflicts on a site that may be a ringwork castle and those that do not conform to those associations. And perhaps based on this the site type should be renamed accordingly.

The most frequently discussed issue in ringwork castle identification is the similarity of the site type to mottes and earlier ringforts (Colfer 2013:49, Immich 2015:171). There are more than 45,000 sites in Ireland currently labelled as ringwork castles. It is unknown how many of these may actually be ringworks or how many may in fact be ringforts (Arbuthnot 2011:62). Barry, McNeill and O'Keeffe have all argued that the ringwork castle is indistinguishable from the ringfort based on morphology alone (Barry 1987:45, O'Keeffe 2000:30, McNeill 2000:63). While this is understandable, it is important to note that this argument is based on the morphology of ringwork castles as they are found before archaeological intervention. As noted by Immich (2015), Menz (2017) and Arbuthnot (2011), however, the ringwork castle when excavated makes itself very clear, with the substantial defenses and true dimensions of the bank and ditch revealed.

Where no excavation has taken place, this study found that both documentary evidence and morphology had insights and limitations. A ringwork castle is by nature an earthwork, as such these monuments are rarely well preserved, the bank and ditch are often modified or destroyed completely by agricultural practices and sites often become overgrown with vegetation. This makes the recording of reliable dimensions difficult without excavation. For example, at the site of Great Island 1 a small portion of the bank remains, based on this section of bank the site has been argued as having a diameter of over 250m, which would make it one of the largest ringwork castles in the country. The evidence for this is not concrete and needs to be tested by archaeological excavation (O'Conor 1993:733).

6.3.3 The role of the ringwork castle in the Anglo-Norman conquest and colonisation of Ireland

A key aim of this study was to address the role of the ringwork castle in the Anglo-Norman conquest of Ireland, and to a lesser extent, the Norman conquest of England and Wales. The results from this study shows the dispersion of ringwork castles in Co. Wexford, and as such gives insight into the areas thought most desirable by the Anglo-Norman knights. For example, land may have been chosen in relation to known Irish native settlements, rich agricultural land, areas with control of waterways or land routes. This is a de facto definition of the "frontier" and there is likely to have been skirmishes between the Irish people and the colonizing Anglo-Normans in and around these locations, as shown below in figures 18 and 19. As such these sites are likely cultural hot spots. This data may assist in future archaeological work in various strains of research. And is a step towards a more reliable understanding of Anglo-Norman settlement patterns in the country and their colonial strategy to dominate the landscape of Ireland.

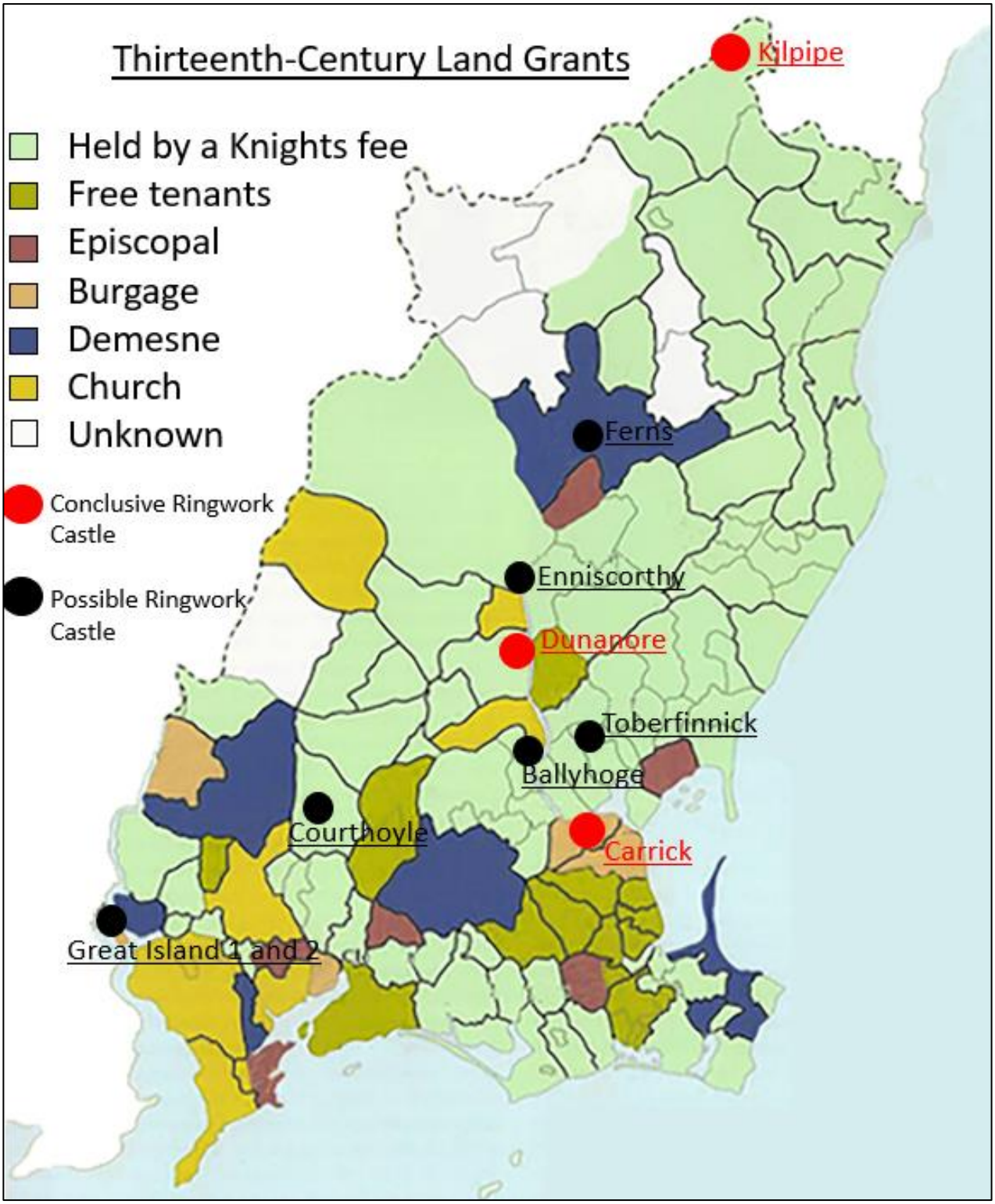


Figure 17. The ringwork castle sites of Co. Wexford in relation to 13th century land grants, base map Colfer 2013:31. Reproduced with permission, edited by Author.

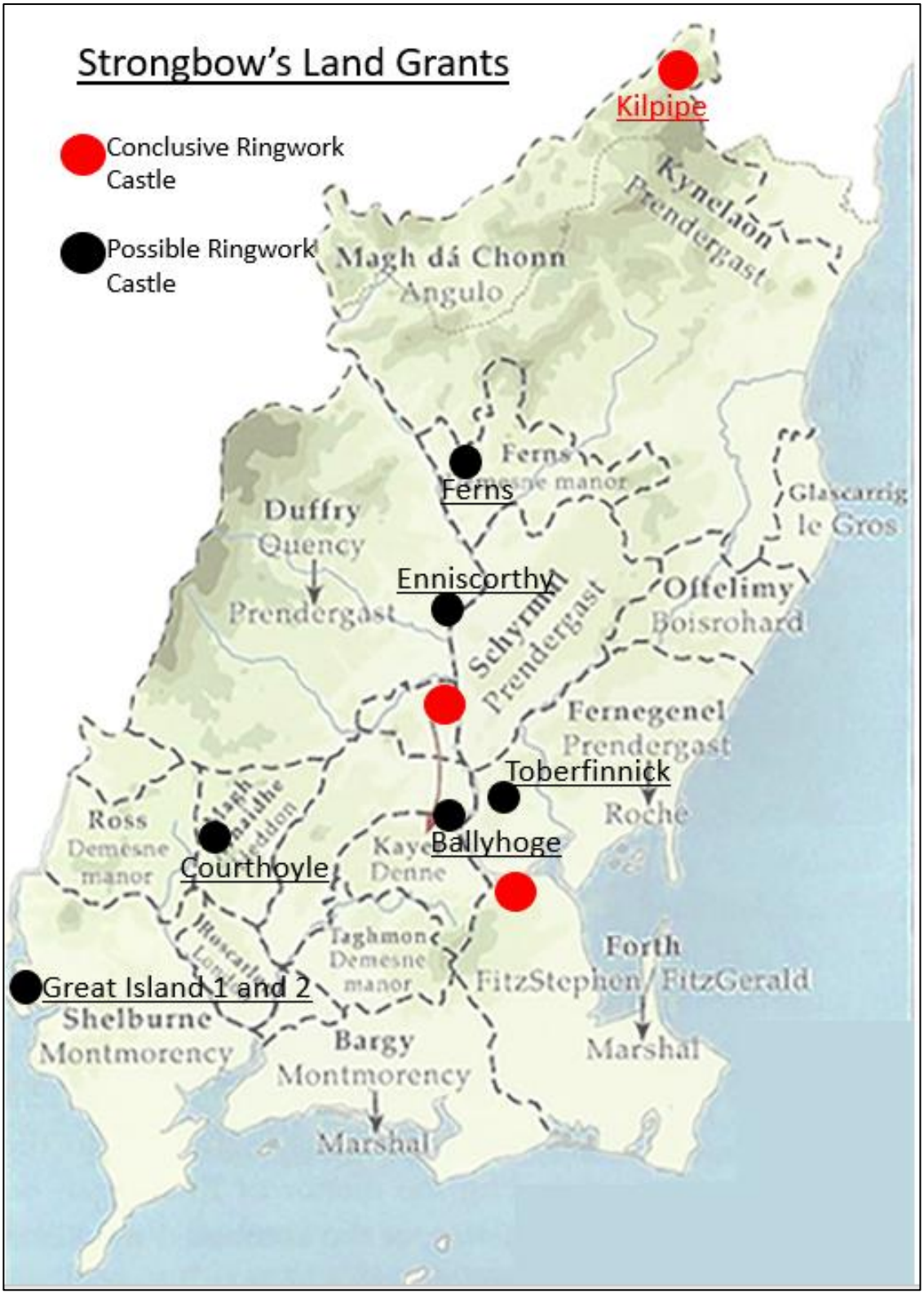


Figure 18. The ringwork castle sites of Co. Wexford in relation to Strongbow's land grants, base map Colfer 2013:26. Reproduced with permission, edited by Author.

The first Anglo-Norman settlement in Ireland is at Carrick (1169), which is classified as a definite ringwork castle. A change of preference from the ringwork to the motte is seen across the medieval Irish, English and Welsh landscapes after 1176. This was only a decade after the initial landing of the Anglo-Norman knights in 1169 (O'Conor 1993:124). The reasons behind such a shift are unclear. In England the castles constructed immediately after the 1066 invasion were ringwork castles, and all siege-works constructed during the reign of Stephen of Blois 1135-1153 were ringwork castles. This suggests the ringwork was the preferred choice for military campaigns in England and Wales, and possibly Ireland as well (King and Alcock 1969:100). Ringworks are certainly quicker and easier to construct and were designed to have more space for horses, men and supplies. Menz (2017:94) however, argues that mottes may have been perceived as superior fortifications that were more intimidating in the landscape. As discussed by Arbuthnot, and King and Alcock, the influence of the builders' or their superiors' preference also likely impacted the decision (Arbuthnot 2011:222; King and Alcock 1969:106). Thereby, in some instances the decision of which castle type to build may simply have been due to personal choice.

In the period following invasion, when the feudal system was introduced to Ireland, the ringwork castle's role is more difficult to understand (Menz 2017:93). Graham states that the colonisation of Ireland is imitative of the development in Wales, England and Normandy with some modification due to local circumstances (Graham 1988:241). The ringwork is likely to have been part of this colonisation process but with differences due to the landscape found in Ireland, particularly the lack of towns and the more rugged nature of the topography. Evidence from previous studies has shown that the ringwork fades out of relevance by the 13th century. The last earth and timber castle constructed in Ireland was at Roscrea between c.1212 – c.1215 (Arbuthnot 2011:206).

The sites of Carrick and Ferns provide an insight into the use of ringwork castles in the sub-infeudation period. The evidence at Ferns shows a possible ringwork castle at the site, as well as a pre-Norman fortification. Various castle structures were noted in contemporary documents as being built and destroyed at this site, and the possible ringwork was likely to have been built and subsequently destroyed between 1176-1179 (Sweetman 1979:243). The site of Carrick is complex for its ongoing use. The original ringwork was constructed during

the initial conquest period, but the site continued to be used and was the demesne manor of the Marshal Lords of Leinster during the 13th century (Shine et al. in press). It is clear, that these two sites at least continued to be occupied and utilised as significant bases in the new colonial landscape of Ireland. Evidence for use or demolition at the other sites in this study is unclear, but Ferns and Carrick have shown that the ringwork castle in Ireland was not just a feature of invasion but a substantial structure worthy of remaining the defendable home and manorial centre of some of the most powerful men in Ireland in the centuries following the initial conquest.

6.3.4 Pre and post conquest occupation at ringwork sites

Although not fully explored in this study, the pre and post Anglo-Norman occupation of sites may provide an insight into their variable morphology and the differences between Irish and British ringwork castle sites.

There is evidence for some ringwork castles being constructed on pre-Norman sites and others being converted into tower houses and stone castles (Arbuthnot 2011:189-211; McCarthy 2007). The site of Dunanore for example, was built at the location of an earlier pre-Norman promontory fort (Colfer 2002:49), the site of Ferns also has evidence of an earlier pre-Norman structure and a clear history of site occupation continuing for centuries (Sweetman 1979:217-245). Drisceoil (2002) and Johnson (2011) both discuss the conversion of pre-existing sites – such as ringforts or *raths* and promontory forts – into castle sites by the Anglo-Normans (Drisceoil 2002:189-201; Johnson 2011:63-67). Arbuthnot discussed the importance for understanding the placing of ringwork castles at earlier pre-Norman sites—perhaps in a similar way to that seen in England and Wales, where ringworks were constructed at pre-existing centres of population —in order to dominate and control the landscape and people (Arbuthnot 2011:222).

The use of ringwork castle sites in the post conquest periods shows that some sites became settlements and towns that did not exist before hand and other sites show an evolution of the proto-urban settlements that excited prior to the conquest. At Great Island 1 the immediate surrounds and presumed interior of the possible ringwork shows evidence of two separate stone castle sites both post the ringwork and a Leper hospital in the 17th century

(Doyle 1993). The sites of Carrick and Ferns, as well as Enniscorthy all have evidence for continuous or re-occupation of the sites, with Ferns and Enniscorthy both having stone castles erected at the sites in the later medieval periods and the castles going through various stages prior to the structures that are still present today. These locations continued to be important for various political and economic reasons, they were likely important places to begin with before the conquest and continued so after, perhaps even more so.

7.1 Future Directions

After the completion of this study further research and future directions became clear. It is imperative that the site type be identified reliably, therefore the classification model outlined here needs to be applied to all possible ringwork sites in Ireland to construct a more robust typology. Considering that this site type is often heavily damaged, it is recommended that site measurements be reviewed carefully and that the Ordnance Survey Ireland maps are consulted for a view of the monuments in the past.

To then understand more fully the role of this site type it would be highly beneficial to produce a comprehensive collection of the dimensions of all conclusive ringwork sites in Ireland, England and Wales. An in-depth comparative study of the ringworks across these three contexts, as well as across greater Europe, would provide new understandings of the evolution of the site type. While it is agreed that each monument is unique to its environment, a wider study may present further trends in the morphology that are currently unrecognised.

The excavation of ringwork sites for the purpose of further understanding their usage and interior features, such as buildings and defenses, would again contribute greatly to the knowledge surrounding the building and role of ringwork castles.

The application of geophysics to ringwork sites which have little or no remaining surface evidence is highly recommended and considered necessary if a large scale classification of the site type is attempted, as the nature of the earthwork makes it extremely vulnerable to destruction and other forms of site erasure.

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APPENDIX A.

INDIVIDUAL SITE CLASSIFICATION PROFILES.

Grace Dennis-Toone

When is a ringwork a ringwork? Identifying the ringwork castles of Co. Wexford with a view to reconsidering Irish ringwork classification.

Baginbun

Revised classification – Misclassified
Surveyed on -
ASI – WX050-015001-
County - Wexford
Province – Leinster
Townland - Ramstown

Figure 1. Section of the broken earthworks at Baginbun.

Background –

The site of Baginbun is so named for its location on Baginbun Head on the Hook Head peninsula, see figure 2. The site is across the water from Bannow Bay where the Anglo-Normans first landed in c.1169. The site is understood as one of the earliest Anglo-Norman fortifications in Ireland. The head is a highly defendable location and the site has long been known for its Anglo-Norman heritage. Present on the head is two earthwork features, identified as two separate sites, one is a linear earthwork that cuts the head off from the peninsula and the other is a series of earthworks that appear to have been a promontory fort. For the purpose of this study only the later was considered a possible ringwork castle for the research.

Morphology –

The site has a diameter of 187x65m and the broken earthworks remaining at the site represent two banks and two fosses, see figure 1. The inner bank measures 3m high from the bottom of the fosse to the top and the outer bank measures up to 4m high. The inner fosse measures 13m wide and the outer measures roughly 6m wide. The site has clearly been disturbed by agricultural practises. The earthworks separate the interior of the site from the head land and utilise the steep cliffs as a boundary.

Siting in the landscape –

Baginbun is situated at a head of the Hook Peninsula, the site is on a promontory above steep rocky cliffs, the defensibility of this site is unquestionable. There are beaches below on either side of the headland, the steep cliffs are sharp and rocky and at their base is tumultuous waters with sharp rocks below the surface. The site is highly defendable but is likely less so without the associated linear earthwork present.

Siting in relation to high medieval settlement and surrounding sites –

There is no known medieval church site in the immediate area which could be considered associated with the earthwork site at Baginbun. It is unlikely that an Anglo-Norman settlement developed at the site, with not documentary evidence or archaeological evidence to suggest it, and the nearest Anglo-Norman manorial center is 2km away at Fethard.

The presumably associated linear earthwork present on the headland is roughly 214m long and isolates the headland from the mainland. It has an inner and outer bank and fosse, the outer bank measures 2m high and 1.5-7m wide, the inner fosse which is between the outer and inner banks measurers 11.5m wide at its widest point (O'Conor 2003:17-31). The outer bank is up to 7m wide and the outer fosse has been removed almost completely by agricultural practices, the remains of the outer fosse at the eastern end measure 7m wide and 50cm deep (O'Conor 2003:17-31).

On the National Monuments Service register there is a site listed as a small feature 10x5m which was recorded as 'Strongbow's Cap[camp]' of the 1839 edition of the Ordnance Survey Ireland map, this feature is not visible at ground level (SMR).

Documentary evidence –

The head of Baginbun was identified as 'Dundonell' by Orpen in the early 20th century, 'Dundonell' is mentioned as the place Maurice le Gros and his men landed at (c.1170) in *The Song of Dermot and the Earl* (Arbuthnot 2011 ii:220). The place name of 'Dundonell' may suggest the site being an earlier Irish promontory fort according to Arbuthnot who translated the name to mean 'the dún or stronghold of Domhnaill' (Arbuthnot 2011 ii:220). Following their landing Maurice constructed a fortification, which has been referred to as a camp,

Arbuthnot argues that the Anglo-Norman sources of the time viewed the site as a castle (Arbuthnot 2011 ii:221).

Historical recounts record a battle taking place at Baginbun shortly after the construction of the fortification, between Irish from Waterford city and the Anglo-Norman knights, the later prevailing against a force that outnumbered them (*Expugnatio Hibernica*: 56-59).
O'Conor has suggested that the event of this battle is what promoted the construction of the earthworks that have been considered a possible earthwork, and that due to the quick pace of events Strongbow never utilized this base that was built for him (O'Conor 2003:30-31).

Conclusions –

The morphology of the site is inconsistent with that of a ringwork, it is a headland cut off by ramparts, and contributes to the debate of what a ringwork castle is morphologically. The excavation of the site may provide new evidence for the argument of the site being a possible ringwork castle, for example the presence of a wooden palisade or other substantial defences. This study concluded that the site has lacking morphological, landscape and documentary evidence and as such identified it as a misclassified site

Figure 2. Plan of the earthworks at Baginbun by O'Conor 2003.
Removed due to copyright restrictions.

Figure 3. Section profile of the Baginbun earthwork bank and ditch, by Arbuthnot 2011.
Removed due to copyright restrictions, available via citation.

Ballyhoge

Revised classification – Possible ringwork castle
Surveyed on -
ASI – WX032-014-
County - Wexford
Province – Leinster
Townland - Ballyhoge

Figure 4. OSi base map showing the location of Ballyhoge possible ringwork site, sourced on 12 June 2019.

Background –

The site is located on a river promontory over a small river, although the site has obvious modification from farming activities the earthwork is still visible. It has been suggested that this site is associated with the Knights Hospitallers and their lands and may have been involved in their control over the River Slaney (Colfer 2002:57-62). The site is overgrown with vegetation as is the riverbed along the small tributary of the River Slaney, see figure 4.

Morphology –

The promontory sitting provides the site with defenses of the cliffs on the northern, western and southern sides, acting as site boundaries. The eastern side has evidence of a fosse measuring 4-8m wide and only 50cm deep this is attributed to extensive modification through farming practices, the interior is 49x38m in diameter, see figure 6.

Sitting in the landscape –

The cliffs of the promontory are 20m high and the site is roughly 1km from the River Slaney. The proximity to the River Slaney provides the location an easily accessible route for travel,

trade and most importantly control of the area, further down the River Slaney is the ringwork castle site of Carrick. Considering the surrounding land, the site would have been defendable, particularly with the utilization of the cliffs. Although on lower ground than further up the tributary the site is located strategically close to the River Slaney.

Sitting in relation to high medieval settlement and surrounding sites –

A pathway that can be seen leading from the site has been interpreted by Arbuthnot to suggest the site may be part of the grounds associated with Brookhill House (19th century), roughly 300m away, and this may attribute for some of the modification seen at the site (Arbuthnot 2011 ii:229). The proximity to the River Slaney and the site of Carrick further down the river suggest the site may have strategic sitting for control of the landscape.

The medieval church of St Johns is 2km from the site, in addition a holly well is situated 30m from the church site. A castle site is also recorded in the area, but no remains of the site are present today, documentary evidence suggest that the castle was present in the landscape by the 16th century (SMR).

Documentary evidence –

The Knights Hospitallers were introduced into Ireland by Strongbow who granted them lands and churches. Documentary evidence has shown that the Knights Hospitallers held the lands and manor of Ballyhoge from the early 13th century, they were granted these lands by William Marshal in c.1210 named then 'Baliocynan', it was Colfer who interpreted this as 'Ballyhoge' (Colfer 2002:202). It is possible the site was reclaimed by the Irish as the Hospitallers possessions in c.1541 make no mention of the manor at Ballyhoge, suggesting the site may have been abandoned (Colfer 2002:206).

Colfer also suggested that the location of the site was orchestrated for the control of the River Slaney, if the Hospitallers indeed inhabited the possible ringwork site during the period from c.1210 then with the addition of the substantial ringwork at Carrick the River Slaney would have been certainly under the control of the Anglo-Normans (Colfer 2002:203).

Conclusions –

Though the site is not clearly associated with a medieval church or other high medieval site it is similar in sitting to that of Dunanore and Carrick, both considered to be definite ringwork castles in this study. The strategic nature of its placement is also noted though it is likely to have been abandoned by the 16th century if not earlier. For the unknown nature of the sites, manorial status and lack of castle evidence in the documentary sources it is not considered a definite ringwork site.

Colfer's argument that this site may be associated with the Knights Hospitaller manor and the similar sitting of other ringwork castles in this study have concluded this site as a possible ringwork castle.

Figure 5. OSi Historic Map 1837-1842 showing the site of Ballyhoge has recorded by the survey. Sourced on 12 June 2019.

[redacted]

Figure 6. Section profile of the Ballyhoge earthwork, by Arbuthnot 2011. Removed due to copyright restrictions, available via citation.

Ballyorley

Revised classification – Misclassified
Surveyed on -
ASI – WX021-001-
County - Wexford
Province – Leinster
Townland - Ballyorley

Figure 7. Ground level view of Ballyorley earthwork site.

Background –

The site is located in a flat field which holds a herd of cows. The ditch and bank have been modified by farming activity and the interior of the site is heavily overgrown with dense vegetation including large trees, see figure 7. The site was identified as a ringwork by Billy Colfer(2002), Kieran O'Conor(1993) and Terry Barry(1987), a possible ringwork by Arbuthnot (2011) and is classified as a ringwork on the current RMP. Research was conducted at the site by FitzPatrick and Drisceoil in 2016 with the aim to investigate the possible law school in the field adjacent to the possible ringwork site (FitzPatrick and Drisceoil 2016).

Morphology –

The site is circular with diameter of 26m, the bank has a width of 15m and height of 1.8-2.3m – raised 1.2m above the lowest point of the interior- the fosse measures at 8-12m wide and 0.5m deep – due extensive modification by farming activity, see figure 8. The site has no clear entrance gap which would have been necessary for a ringwork castle, the dimensions for the site are similar to motte sites in Co. Wexford (FitzPatrick and Drisceoil 2016:408).

Sitting in the landscape –

The site is located in a flat field rather than a promontory, or hilltop. However, in the immediate landscape this sitting could be considered strategic as it is raised above the

surrounds. The nearest waterway appears to be a small stream roughly 380m away. The area of Ballyorley has no known evidence for the settlement of Anglo-Normans and the land is understood to have been held by the O'Doran family who practiced hereditary law to the McMurrough lords (FitzPatrick and Drisceoil 2016:383).

Sitting in relation to high medieval settlement and surrounding sites –

To the north-west of the site is a large enclosure inside which is a moated site and a law school, see figure 2 (FitzPatrick and Drisceoil 2016:406). The site of the law school was interpreted as a church site until the research conducted by FitzPatrick and Drisceoil which concluded the site to be the remains of a later medieval law-school, which was likely a later development of a longer standing residency of the O'Doran family, from at least the late 14th century, see figure 9 (FitzPatrick and Drisceoil 2016:409). In addition to this there is evidence for Bronze Age settlement in burials and a *fulachta fia* (FitzPatrick and Drisceoil 2016:409).

Documentary evidence –

There is very little documentary evidence regarding the site, and no known documentation of a castle being present. The law-school and earlier landholding of the area were recorded, particularly by Domnall O' Davoren in c.1566 who wrote that he visited the school-house at Ballyorley 'Baile Orlaith' (FitzPatrick and Drisceoil 2016:383).

Previous archaeological research –

The extensive study conducted by FitzPatrick and Drisceoil in 2016 was focused on the ruined building to the north-west of the site, which they concluded was a law-school (FitzPatrick and Drisceoil 2016:409). However, this study encompassed the entire enclosure which was found during the survey and included the earthwork site from this study. Their research concluded that the possible ringwork site has evidence which could coincide with multiple site classifications. They suggested the site may represent any of the following; motte, unfinished motte, bailey or prehistoric barrow which was modified (FitzPatrick and Drisceoil 2016:408). In opposition to the classifications of ringfort or ringwork castle they noted that the site has no entrance gap, see figure 3 (FitzPatrick and Drisceoil 2016:408). The geophysics conducted at the earthwork site found limited magnetic readings with only a singular linear feature

which may represent an internal sub-division, see figures 10-13 (FitzPatrick and Drisceoil 2016:407).

Arbuthnot classified the site as a possible ringwork castle during her 2011 study, this was largely based on previous classifications and the aforementioned ruined building being a church site (Arbuthnot 2011 ii:236).

Colfer's classification was based on the possibility of the site representing the manorial center of the Prendergast fee of Schyrmal, however the lack of documentary evidence to support this and the absence of a castle being documented at the site makes this unlikely (Colfer 2002:106).

Conclusions –

This study concludes that based on the results of the applied methodology, the previous research conducted at the site – particularly by FitzPatrick and Drisceoil – that this site is not a ringwork castle and is misclassified. Future excavation of the site may provide further evidence for the site's classification as the current data accessible is insufficient for classifying this earthwork site.

Figure 8. Section profile of the Ballyorley earthwork, by Arbuthnot 2011. Removed due to copyright restrictions, available via citation.

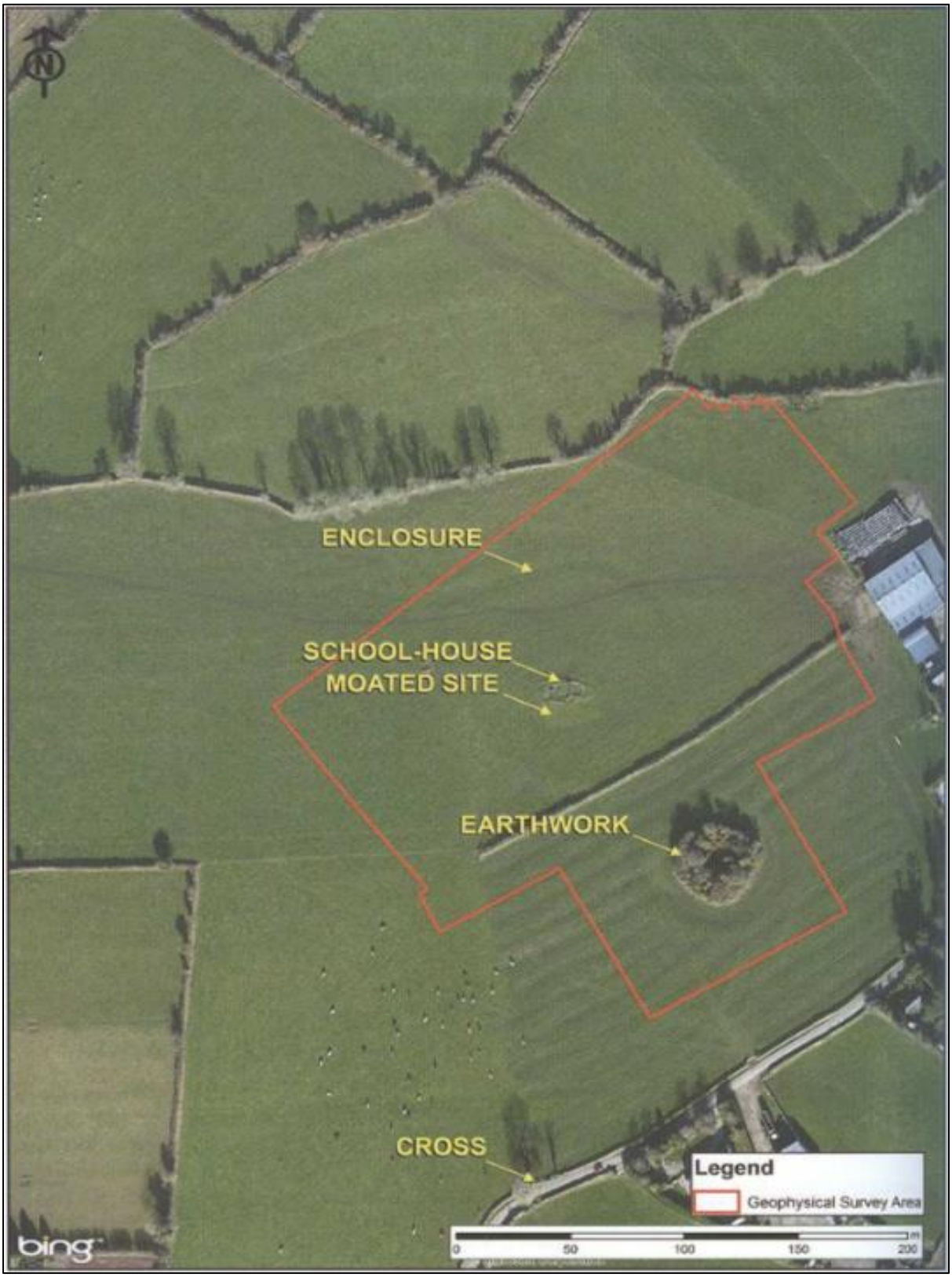

Figure 9. Aerial photograph showing the area submitted to geophysical survey by Fitzpatrick and Drisceoil (FitzPatrick and Drisceoil 2016). Reproduced with permission.

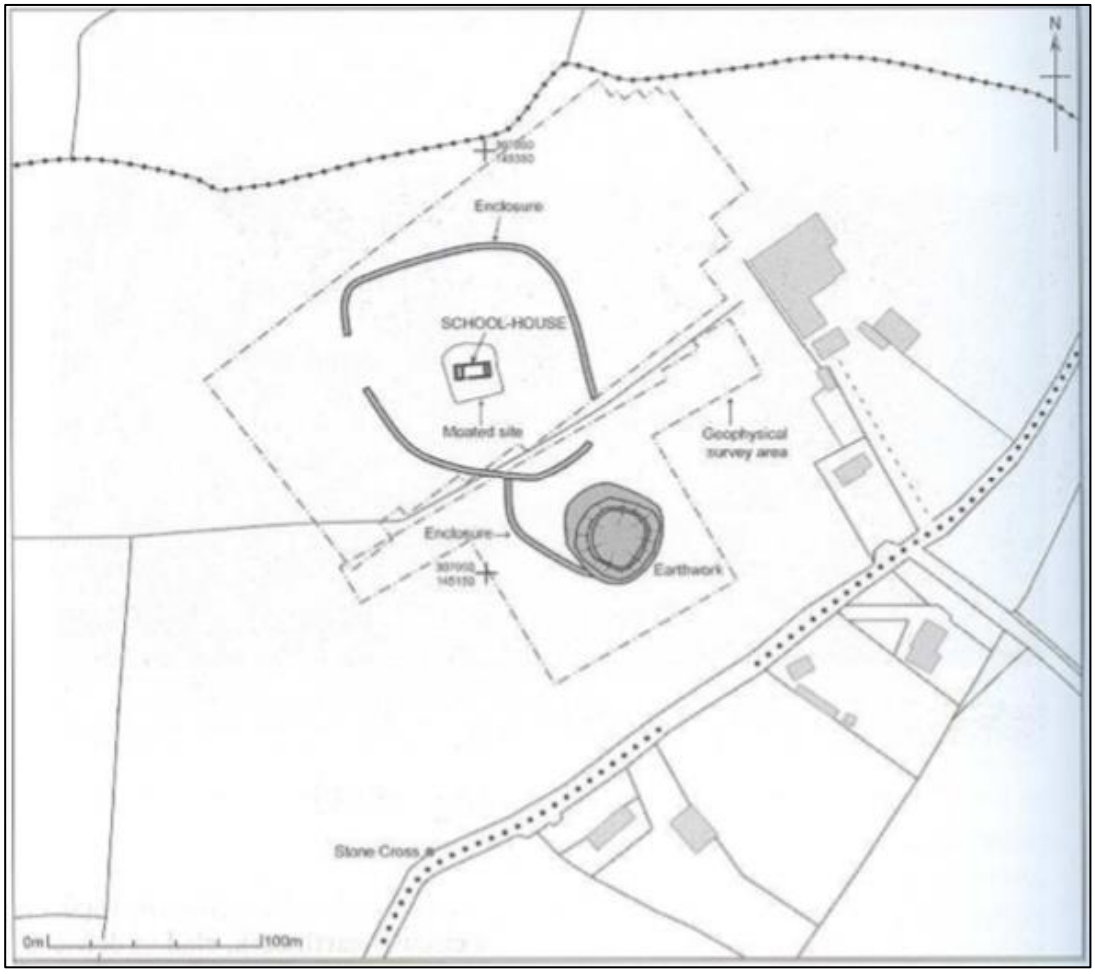

Figure 10. Geophysics area and archaeological sites (FitzPatrick and Drisceoil 2016). Reproduced with permission.

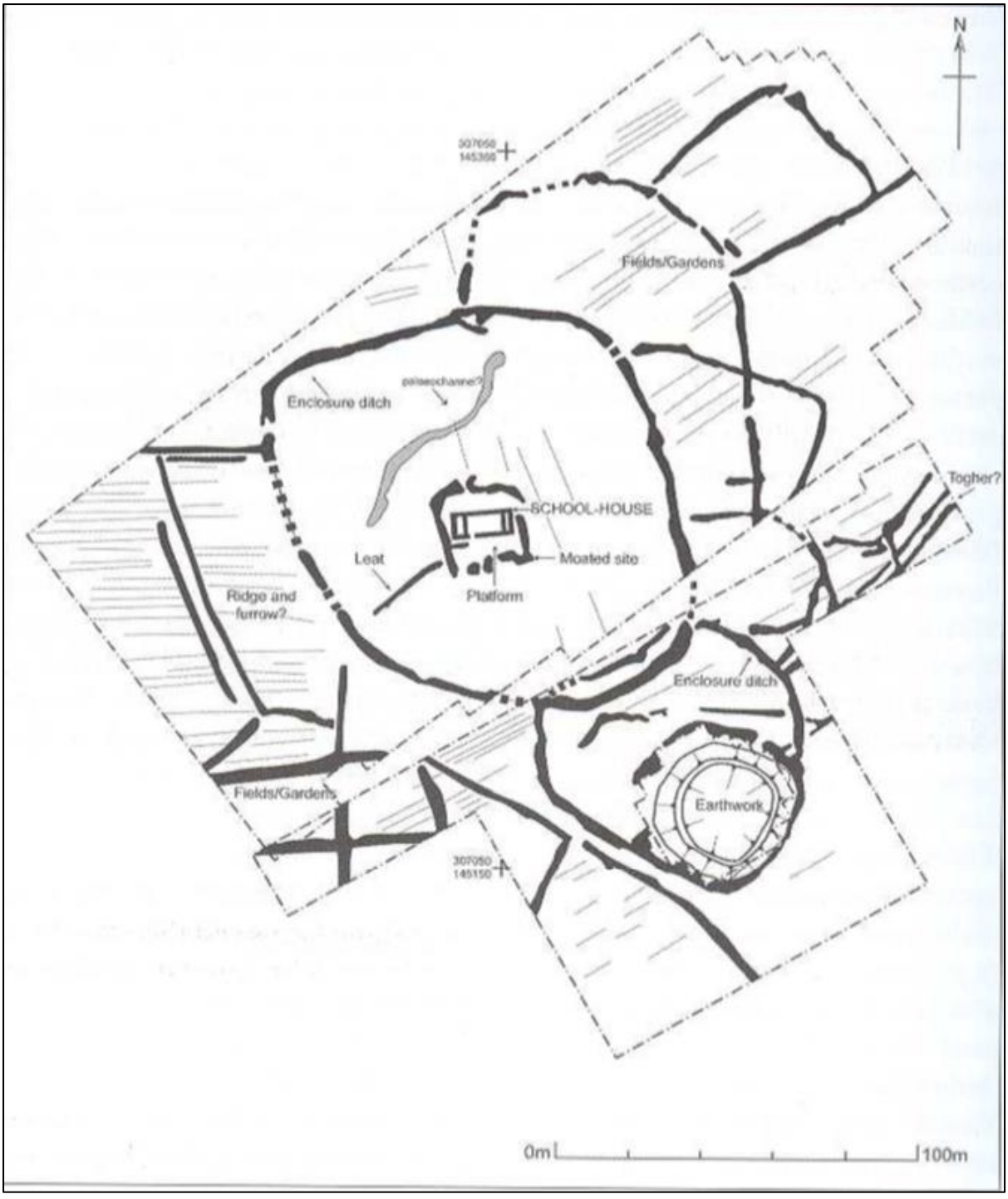

Figure 11. Interpetative plan of archaeological features by FitzPatrick and Drisceoil 2016. Reproduced with permission.

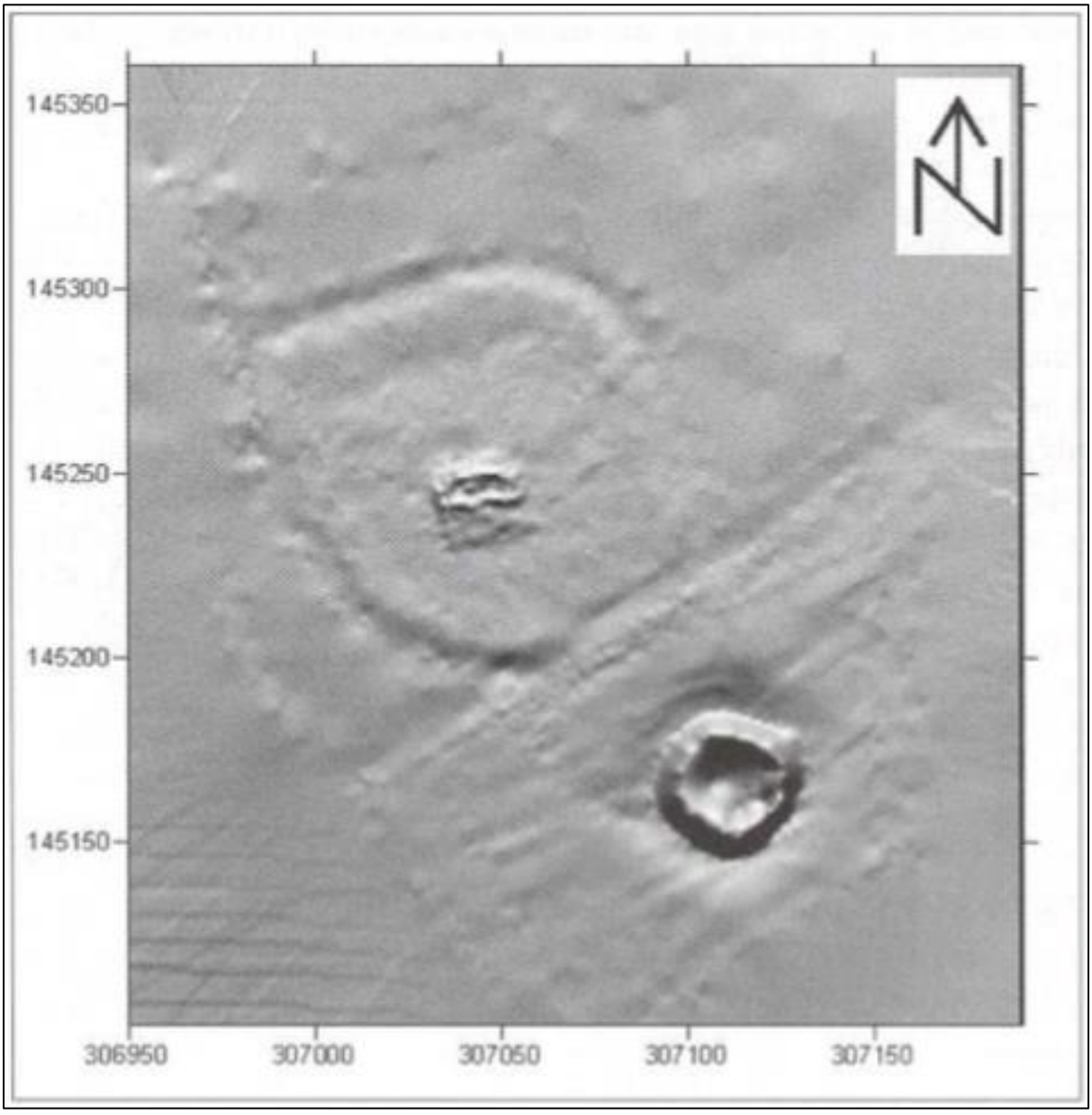

Figure 12. Digital terrain model from topographical survey conducted by FitzPatrick and Drisceoil 2016. Reproduced with permission.

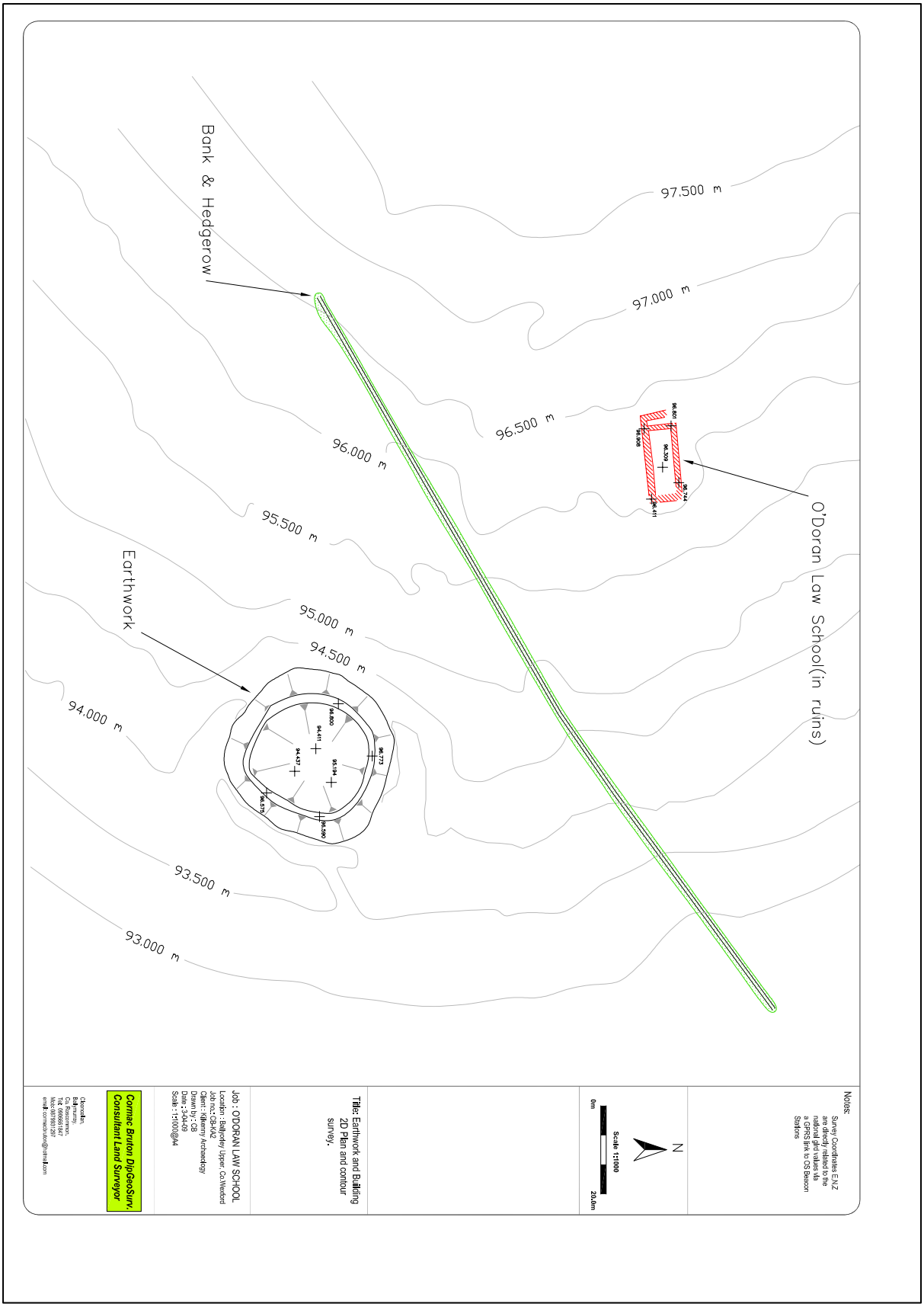

Figure 13. Cormac Burton's Earthwork and Building 2D plan and contour survey for Kilkenny Archaeology. Reproduced with permission.

Figure 14. Aerial view of the ringwork castle Carrick, curtesy of the Irish National Heritage Park and the Irish Archaeology Field School, reproduced with permission.

Carrick

Revised classification – Ringwork castle
Surveyed on -
ASI – WX037-028002-
County - Wexford
Province – Leinster
Townland - Newtown

Background –
Carrick is located in Ferrycarrig on a promontory above the River Slaney, see figure 14. The site is being used as a teaching excavation by the Irish Archaeology Field School. The site had previous excavations by Claire Cotter and Isabel Bennett in the 1980s. It is known as the first Anglo-Norman settlement in Ireland and one of a few definite ringwork castles (Colfer 2002: 49; Shine et al. in press).

Morphology –

The site measures 27x40m in diameter and the bank and ditch are still visible today. Prior to the excavations commenced in 2018 by the IAFS the site was heavily overgrown with a small bridge across the ditch leading to the round tower at the center of the site. The site is sub-circular and described as a partial ringwork due to the cliffs acting as defensive boundaries.

The bank measures 2.15m high and the fosse 5.6m wide and 2m deep, it is unclear how deep the original fosse goes but excavations are planned for the future, see figure 15-17 (Shine and Mandal 2018). Steep cliffs define the site on the north north-eastern side.

Sitting in the landscape –

The sites location is strategic, giving control of the river crossing and river travel by those coming or going to the established town of Wexford. The height of the location also provides complete views of the surrounds and waterway. It is defendable with the addition of the substantial bank and fosse which surrounds the site on the southern and eastern sides. The modern landscape has been heavily modified from the medieval one, a motor way was built through the area in the 1980s, which employed the early excavations of the site, the road way cut through the headland which the ringwork site in its later evolutions had spread out into a town.

Sitting in relation to high medieval settlement and surrounding sites –

Roughly 850m away to the south is the medieval church to St Nichols, the dedication to St Nichols suggest the church was built by the Anglo-Normans, to the south-west of the church is a well site known as St Nichols Well (SMR).

The ringwork castle site evolved into a substantial medieval settlement, manor and later a town. There is some debate as to the explanation of the site, based on Bennett's 1980s excavations the Urban Archaeological Survey stated that the most likely place for the town was the north side of the riverbank. Arbuthnot made the important point that Bennett's excavations were limited, only three cuttings at $4m^2$, at that it is far more likely the township grew on the south side of the river between the ringwork castle and the church site (Arbuthnot 2011 ii:253).

On the north side of the River Slaney is the tower house which is sometimes referred to as the 'Ferrycarrig Castle', it has been attributed to the Roche family in the late medieval period who controlled the ferry crossing as it belonged to the manor of Carrick (Roche 1969:43). The crossing would have been a highly important part of the trade and communication network in the region.

There is documentary evidence for both a deer park and two watermills being present at Carrick, as part of the manorial center established at the site, details can be found in the below section.

Documentary Evidence –

The ringwork castle at Carrick is recognized as the first Anglo-Norman settlement in Ireland, the documentary evidence reflects that, as well as show casing the usage of the site over the years.*The Song of Dermot the Earl* recounts that the site was constructed soon after the first arrival of Anglo-Norman knights in late c.1169, it records the build being attributed to Maurice FitzGerald. In opposition to this the contemporary account by Gerald of Wales states:
'FitzStephen built a fortress on a steep crag, about two miles from Wexford, called Carrick in the vernacular, and improved by artificial means a place naturally well protected' (Scott and Martin 1978:52)

This is one of the rare cases where direct documentary evidence correlates to the construction of a ringwork castle in Co. Wexford. Gerald of Wales goes on to describe the castle as "ill-fortified" during the siege of c.1171 and described the defenses as "flimsy" and made of "branches and sods" (Scott and Martin 1978:80). This does not correlate with the archaeological evidence which shows very strong earthen defenses at the least. O'Conor has suggested this account by Gerald of Wales was edited to his biases and aimed to belittle the structure to his contemporaries (O'Conor 1993:96). *The Song of Dermot the Earl* states the following in regard to the castle and the c.1171 siege that ended with the capture of FitzStephen (Mullally 2002:1776-81):

'In a fortress (chastel) on the Slaney,
According to the chronicle (geste) which relates it thus,
The traitors captured Robert
And imprisoned him on Begerrin Island.
They imprisoned five knights altogether
On Begerrin.'

Clearly stated is the castle on the Slaney from within which FitzStephen is taken. It seems irrefutable that the passage refers to the ringwork castle at Carrick. Although briefly captured form the Anglo-Normans it was retaken by the arrival of King Henry II, also in c.1171

(Arbuthnot 2011 ii:249). It became the demesne manor of the Earls of Wexford and held as such by Strongbow and later William Marshal. The castle may have been abandoned in the period between c.1307-1324, the following account is from an extent of the de Valence family (Dryburgh and Smith 2007:126):

'There is an empty and broken-down castle without a keeper, which extends at no value as nothing can be received from it. Within the close of the castle there is an unroofed and almost ruinous hall and chapel, which cannot be extended likewise'

Notably from this passage is the castle being in such a state that it holds no value, and the hall and chapel also having been abandoned and neglected, also significantly the existence of the castles own chapel. Although the castle was in disrepair the settlement was likely still in use as the above extent also mentioned the 110 burgage plots, noting that three were unoccupied by tenants, suggesting the remaining 107 were occupied (Dryburgh and Smith 2007:85).

It is in the 15th century that the manor of Carrick was held by the Roche family, and the Ferrycarrig castle on the north of the river was built, however the ringwork castle is not mentioned in the records of the Roche lands and assets (Arbuthnot 2011 ii:252).

Excavations –

The following results from the current excavation have been provided by the Irish Archaeology Field School to highlight the significance of researching ringwork sites further. The site was previously excavated by Claire Cotter and Isabel Bennett. The site currently has four cuttings which have been excavated down to the previous excavation layer and further into the in-situ undisturbed archaeology, see figure 18.

The bank and fosse have been confirmed as the earliest archaeological features, the bank appears to be made of layers of boulder clays that were piled up during the digging of the ditch (Shine et al. 2018:31). Large stones are present on the bank which may suggest a stone curtain wall, there is evidence for the extension of the bank inwards into the structure (Shine at al. 2018:33). The earliest interior features are the remains of possible 12th century wooden structures, post holes located were found with a charcoal layer, this layer was dated to 1040-1210 cal. CE, with a 57% chance of dating between 1120-1210 CE (Shine et al. 2018:34). There

is continuous evidence for the ongoing occupation and adaptation of the site, 13th and 14th century structures, including six walls have survived and been recorded (Shine et al. 2018:36-40).

The following table shows the archaeological artefacts and archaeological ecofacts for cuttings 1-4 provided by Shine et al. 2018.

Archaeological Artefacts	**Value**	**Archaeological Ecofacts**	**Value (bags/containers)**
Ceramic Pottery	155	Soil	8
Iron Nails	57	Animal Bone	76
Glass/Pottery Waster	10	Other- (Brick/Plaster/Metal/ Mortar/Stone/)	9
Stone/Flint/Wood	7	Shell/Botanic	6
Total	229	Total	99

Conclusions –

Based on the strong documentary evidence and reliable archaeological evidence, from the past decade and current excavations, this site is confidently classified as a definite ringwork castle in this study. The finds being excavated by the Irish Archaeological Field School may shed new light on our understanding of ringwork castles and the Anglo-Norman invasion and subsequent colonization periods.

Figure 15. Section profile of the ringwork at Carrick, by Arbuthnot 2011. Removed due to copyright restrictions, available via citation.

Figure 16. The bank and fosse at Carrick looking towards the foot bridge.

Figure 17. The bank and fosse at Carrick looking away from the footbridge.

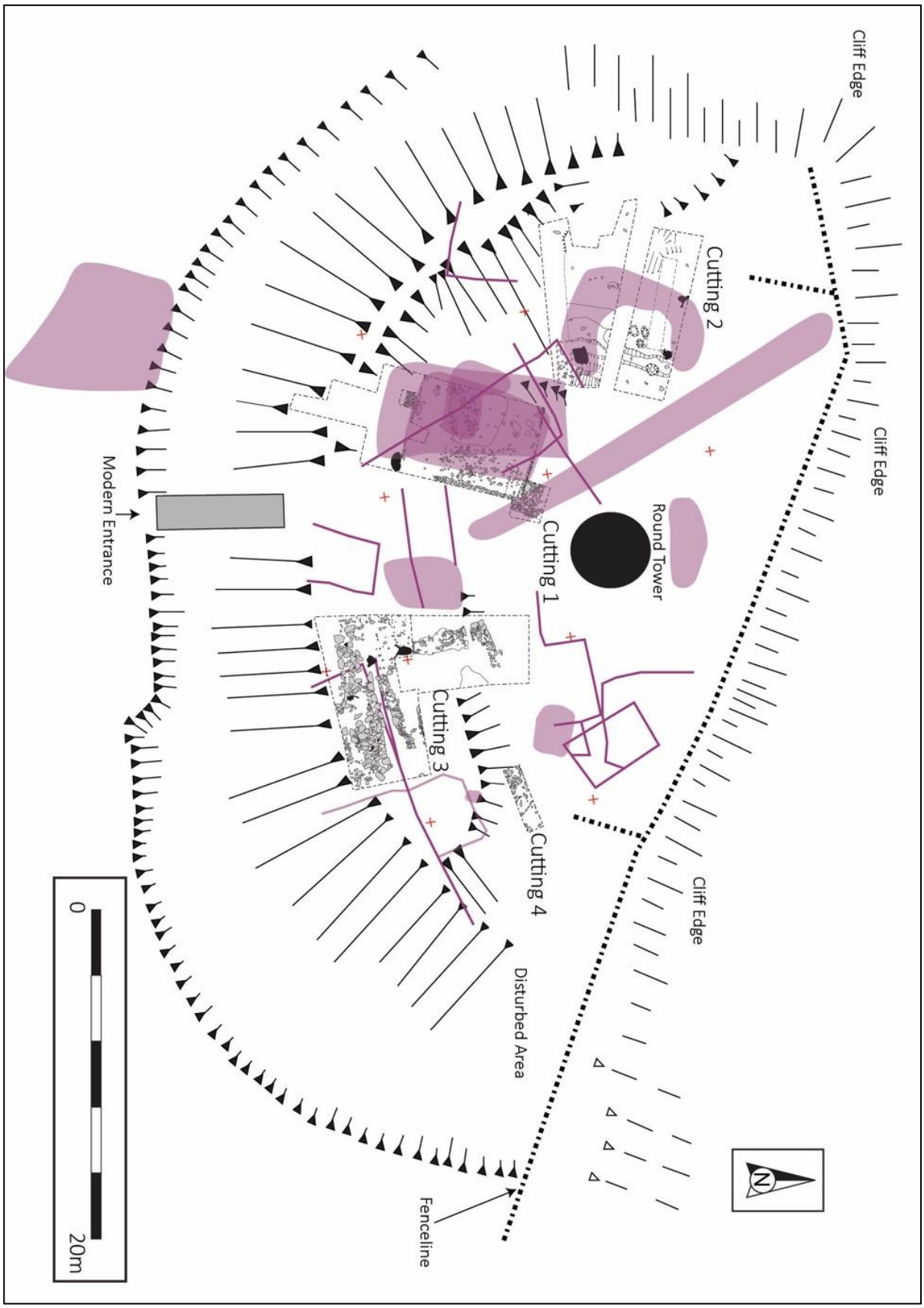

Figure. 18 Site plan curtesy Shine et al. 2018 of the ongoing excavations of the ringwork at Carrick. Reproduced with permission.

Castlesow

Revised classification – Misclassified
Surveyed on -
ASI – WX032-022-
County - Wexford
Province – Leinster
Townland - Castlesow

Figure 19. Aerial view of the earthwork at Castlesow, curtesy of the Irish National Heritage park and Alan Boland. Produced for this thesis.

Background –

The earthwork site at Castlesow is located on a large promontory above the River Sow and across the river form the site of Toberfinnick. Colfer and Barry both classified the site as a possible ringwork castle and the SMR has it listed as a motte site (SMR, Barry 1987:53, Colfer 2002:56). The earthwork features of the site have been modified by farming practices, it sits at the top of a steep hill with the sheer drop down to the river protecting the site on the north side, see figure 19.

Morphology –

The interior of the site is 13x16m and is enclosed by a bank and two fosses, the site is sub-circular. The fosse is 5m wide, 50cm-1m deep below the bank, the second fosse is 3m wide and 1m deep. The bank is 15m high above the ground level and has been heavily modified and distorted by farming activities, see figure 21 and 23. The north side of the site is enclosed by the cliffs 10m above the River Sow. There are two building sites visible in the interior, both roughly 5.2x2.5m, it was suggested by O'Conor these buildings could be original due to the dry-stone walling (O'Conor 1993:477).

Sitting in the landscape –

The location on the promontory above the river is considered strategic, the natural defenses of the location, the proximity to water and the height over the surrounding area make it an attractive positioning. The land across the river is similar with the sheer drops from similar heights to Castlesow which become less severe further north along the river. The site of Toberfinnick is across the river bend from the site, without exact dates for the sites or the length of occupation it is unknown which was constructed first which would provide important context to understanding each site.

Sitting in relation to high medieval settlement and surrounding sites –

The site has no known associated church site or other high medieval settlement, within the townland of Castlesow there are no other known archaeological monuments. As mentioned above the possible ringwork site of Toberfinnick is only 100m away across the River Sow, this site is discussed in detail in the Toberfinnick Classification Profile, see figure 20 and 22.

Documentary Evidence –

Although the name would suggest a castle was present there are no known references to an Anglo-Norman castle in the Castlesow townland. Documentary references record that the lands of Fernegenal, of which Castlesow is within, were given to Maurice de Prendergast in c. 1172, the Roche family eventually gained the land. It has been suggested that the earthwork site at Castlesow may represent the *caput* castle of the Roches of Fernegenal in the form of a motte and possible bailey as well (Arbuthnot 2011 ii:258).

The Roche family enfeoffed land part of the Fernegenal holding to the Sinnott family during the 13th century and the River Sow represented the boundary between the two sections, this may attribute for the proximity of two earthwork sites within 100m from each other (Colfer 1987:77). The current landowner stated that the land on which the site is situated has been in his family since the Anglo-Normand arrival, the Carty family is an off shoot of the Howell family (Harry Carty pers. comms. 13 June 2019).

Conclusion –

The site may represent the *caput* castle of the Roches at Fernegenal, and the sitting is strategic and defensive. However, the morphological evidence for the site would suggest the earthwork is a motte rather than a ringwork castle. In addition to this the lack of documentary evidence and the possible ringwork castle at Toberfinnick across the river would also suggest this site is not a ringwork castle. For these reasons this study has concluded the site is misclassified and likely a motte.

Figure 20. OSi Historic Map 1837-1842 showing the two earthworks of Castlesow and Toberfinnick above the River Sow. Sourced on 18 June 2019.

Figure 21. Section profile of the earthwork at Castlesow, by Arbuthnot 2011. Removed due to copyright restrictions, available via citation.

Figure 22. Aerial view showing the sites of Castlesow and Toberfinnick, curtesy of the INHP and Alan Boland. Produced for this thesis.

Figure 23. Side view of the earthwork at Castlesow. Produced for this thesis.

Courthoyle

Revised classification – possible ringwork castle
Surveyed on -
ASI – WX035-014002-
County - Wexford
Province – Leinster
Townland – Courthoyle Old

Figure 24. Aerial view of the farm yard and surrounding fields showing the section marked on the historic map. Image curtesy of the INHP and Alan Boland. Produced for this thesis.

Background –

Courthoyle is located on soft slopping pastoral land. The site is underneath modern farmyard today, with a small mound being possible remains of the site. There is a tower house present at the site which has had the modern farm buildings built around it. The site is classified as a ringwork castle in the SMR, the Archaeological Inventory of County Wexford and by Colfer (Colfer 2013).

Morphology –

The site is no longer visible at ground level today, prior to c.1970 the site was described as '… a low earthen bank' with a width of 2m and height of 0.5m (SMR). The OSI first edition map (1839) gives the site the dimensions of 90x70m. A possible souterrain was found at the site running North-East form the tower house. A small mound, located in the field behind the modern farm buildings, may be part of the previous bank. During the aerial survey conducted at the site a circular shadow can be seen in the field adjacent to the farm buildings, although this does not match with the OSI first edition 1839 map there may have been some disparity with the maps positioning of the bank, as with the site of Templetown, see figures 25 and 26.

Sitting in the landscape –

The site is located in Courthoyle Old, at the base of the Carrickbyrne Hill, according to the land owner the fields behind the farmyard on the gentle slope down from the Hill were covered by rocks and scrub but reclaimed in the 1950s (Thomas Murphy pers. comms. 16 June 2019). There is a small stream cut along the field boundaries, it appears to be manmade and cut into the rocky sub surface layers. The Carrickbyrne Hill would have made this site difficult to defend had it been covered with the dense forestry that it is today, however this sites location is still considered strategic in the landscape.

Sitting in relation to high medieval settlement and surrounding sites –

Roughly 500m from the site is the church of Hoyle, a graveyard, a granite bullaun stone and basin, and a shale cross. The church of Hoyle, or Chapel of Hoel, Karrickburn, is mentioned by Richard Marshal in a charter describing the forest of Ross in c.1232 (Orpen 1934:55). As mentioned above a tower house remains at the site, on the edge of the possible ringwork castle enclosure. The tower house is 10.3x7.8m, all four walls are still preserved. The Archaeological Inventory of County Wexford describes the tower house as having newel stairs at the south-east, six long-loops or squints on the ground floor embrasures, a garderode chute in the northern wall, and a rectangular window in the western wall, the original doorway may have been in the eastern wall (Moore 1996). Roughly 200m away from the possible ringwork is a substantial ringfort 50x44m, the site is supporting large trees at present (SMR).

Documentary Evidence –

The site has been discussed as the possible house of Hoyle of Karrothobren (Carrickbyrne), which is mentioned in the boundary of Ross Wood, chartered by Richard Marshal (c.1232). The Howell family has been in Ireland since c.1180 and held Carrickbyrne till the 15th century (Moore 1996).

Conclusions –

The association of this site with the nearby medieval church site and tower house suggest the site to be Anglo-Norman along with the record of the land holding by the Howell family. The morphological evidence does not provide much information for the site, though it is unlikely to be a motte, however the existence of a possible souterrain is unusual for a ringwork site.

The tower house would suggest continuous occupation at the site and its development into a possible manorial settlement. This study has concluded the site to be a possible ringwork, excavation and further understanding of the site's morphology would provide clarity on the classification.

Figure 25. OSi Historic Map 1837-1842 showing the bank recorded by the survey, sourced 4 July 2019.

Figure 26. Aerial image showing the shadowing present in the south east field, may indicate the location of the earthwork site. Image sourced from the OSi Aerial Premium 4 July 2019.

Dunanore

Revised classification – Ringwork castle
Surveyed on -
ASI – WX026-012001-
County - Wexford
Province – Leinster
Townland – Dunanore

Figure 27. Aerial image of the site at Dunanore, curtesy of the INHP and Alan Boland. Produced for this thesis.

Background –

The site is one of the most impressive earthwork structures encountered in this study, still dominating the landscape today. The site is within a forest walk along the River Boro, it has commanding views of the surrounding area, see figure 27. The site has been classified as a ringwork castle by Colfer but Arbuthnot had her doubts about the site. Additional surveys conducted at this site including topographical survey, aerial survey and geophysics.

Morphology –

Located on a promontory over the River Boro the site is D-shaped, 36x38m in diameter. The site has an obvious bank and fosse, the deepest part of the fosse measures roughly five and half meters, see figure 32. The site sits roughly 20m above the river below using the edge of the cliff as a defensive boundary on one of its sides. The current entrance is on the south side of the site, it is unclear if this is the original entrance, there is a walkway over the fosse from the outer bank. The bank measurers 9m wide, 0.7m high in from the interior, and 5.2m high form the exterior. The fosse measurers 2.5-4m wide and up to 4m deep, see figure 33. The interior appears to contain between 4-6 features, it is visually unclear the boundaries between each site. Previous accounts have recorded five feature sites in the interior. The most notable internal feature is just within the entrance way on the western side. The site

when visited appears rectangular with measurements of roughly 5x7m. Previous accounts record this feature as being stone-footed with an internal with of 6.8m, with walls extending from the visible depression up to 15m in length, see figure 34. There is an additional rectangular feature in the north western section of the interior. The south and south eastern side of the interior was recently cleared of overgrowth, although areas of depression are visible, their dimensions and original shapes are unclear. The ground is very soft with clear decomposition of root systems and immense leaf litter. The previous accounts, particularly from the SMR record these features to the south and south east as two 'circular hut sites' and an additional rectangular site.

Geophysics was tested at the site but proved unsuccessful. The site was surveyed with a total station to produce a topographical map (see figure 30.) which shows the variation in elevation of the sites interior and exterior. This was done to conserve the state of the site and hopefully show the features in the interior of the site, it also highlights the variation in depth and width that occurs within the fosse on the exterior of the site. A linear section of the bank and fosse was also recorded to produce a profile section (see figures 29 and 31).

Sitting in the Landscape –

The site is located on a river promontory with sheer cliffs acting as a defensive border to the site on the west, south west and north. The site is up hill from the river below and is built up from the surrounding ground level. The positioning of the site at the river's edge increased the defensibility of the site, with attacks only possible from the south and east, see figure 27. The bank and fosse are still in remarkable condition at present and show the clear defensibility and intimidating presence of the site, with the addition of a wooden palisade on the original bank and the added depth of the fosse entrance to the site would have been possible only through the gateway.

Two entrances are visible today, the main entrance way is at the south of the site and has a causeway across the fosse, the bank is cut to allow entrance. The second entranceway is to the east and is much smaller, a cut is still evident in the bank, a causeway is unnecessary here as the fosse is so built up. It unclear when these entranceways were introduced but the southern entrance seems most likely of the two to be the original. The area today is heavily

forested on both sides of the river, it is clear the site is positioned on the highest ground in the immediate surrounds. Visibility from the site is very limited today but it is likely much of the forestry is not contemporary with the site and it is likely the site had a commanding view of the surrounding area.

Sitting in relation to High Medieval Settlement and surrounding sites –

In relation to sites nearby, Dunanore is rather isolated, the nearest high medieval settlement is roughly 770m away in Kilcarby, Figure 28. The burial ground and church site recorded in the inventory no longer remains today, it has been discussed as a possible pre-Norman site due to the associations of the townland name 'Kilcarby' (Arbuthnot 2011 ii:265). According to the Inventory there are no documentary references for this church site. Within the townland of Dunanore only a singular moated site is recorded.

Documentary Evidence –

There is some debate to the origins of the site at Dunanore, O'Conor believes that the name Dunanore itself, translating to 'the fort of the brink' or the 'fort of gold' suggests the site is pre-Anglo-Norman (O'Conor 1987). Billy Colfer however argues that the site may have origins in the pre-Anglo-Norman era as a promontory fort but was used as a ringwork by the Anglo-Normans (Colfer 2002:49). Colfer also draws the connection between the name of the barony 'Kayer' which aligns with the Irish '*cathair'* meaning stone fort (Colfer 2002:49). Colfer argues that the ringwork at Dunanore may be the *caput* castle for Kayer, which is south of Enniscorthy on the west of the River Slaney, and held by the de Denne family, of Anglo-Norman origin (Brewer 1829:464; Colfer 2002:48-49). Arbuthnot remains unconvinced of the sites classification as a ringwork and suggests the area of Wilton nearby as a much more suitable site for a ringwork, however with no evidence of an earthwork or stone castle at Wilton, Arbuthnot is agreeable in considering Colfer's argument (Arbuthnot 2011 ii:266).

Arbuthnot states that the de Denne family already had a strong presence in Wexford during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and it is likely they were granted Kayer in the late 12th or earlier 13th century (Arbuthnot 2011 ii:263). In 1247 - during the partition of Leinster - the manor of Kayer is recorded as being held by William de Denne by the service of three knights (Arbuthnot 2011 ii:263). Notable de Denne names in Wexford include Reginald de Denne

Archdeacon of Ferns from c.1223 to c.1230 and Ralph de Denne who is listed as a witness of the likely forged charter of William Marshals charter to Dunbrody Abbey c.1207, Arbuthnot concludes that it is likely these figures were of the same de Denne family (Arbuthnot 2011 ii:263, Brooks 1950:46).

Conclusions –

The strong morphological evidence and highly defensible positioning are evidence that this site is a ringwork castle. As Colfer stated it is likely the site was modified from an earlier promontory site, perhaps as the site at Ballyhoge is. this study has concluded that the site of Dunanore is one of the three definite ringwork castles in Co. Wexford.

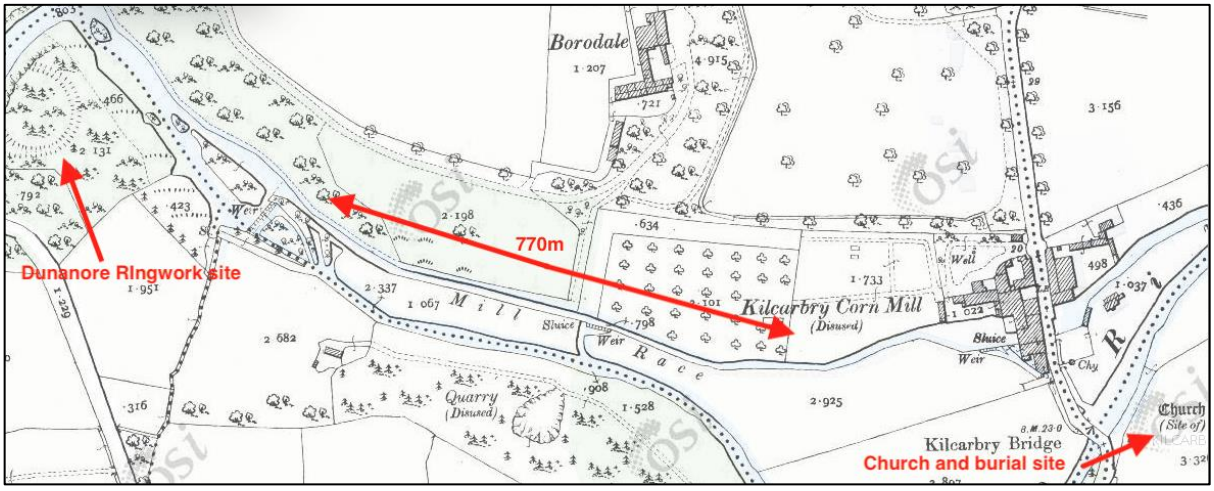

Figure 28. Showing the site of Dunanore in relation to the church and burial site, base map from OSi Historic Map 1837-1842 sourced on 12 July 2019.

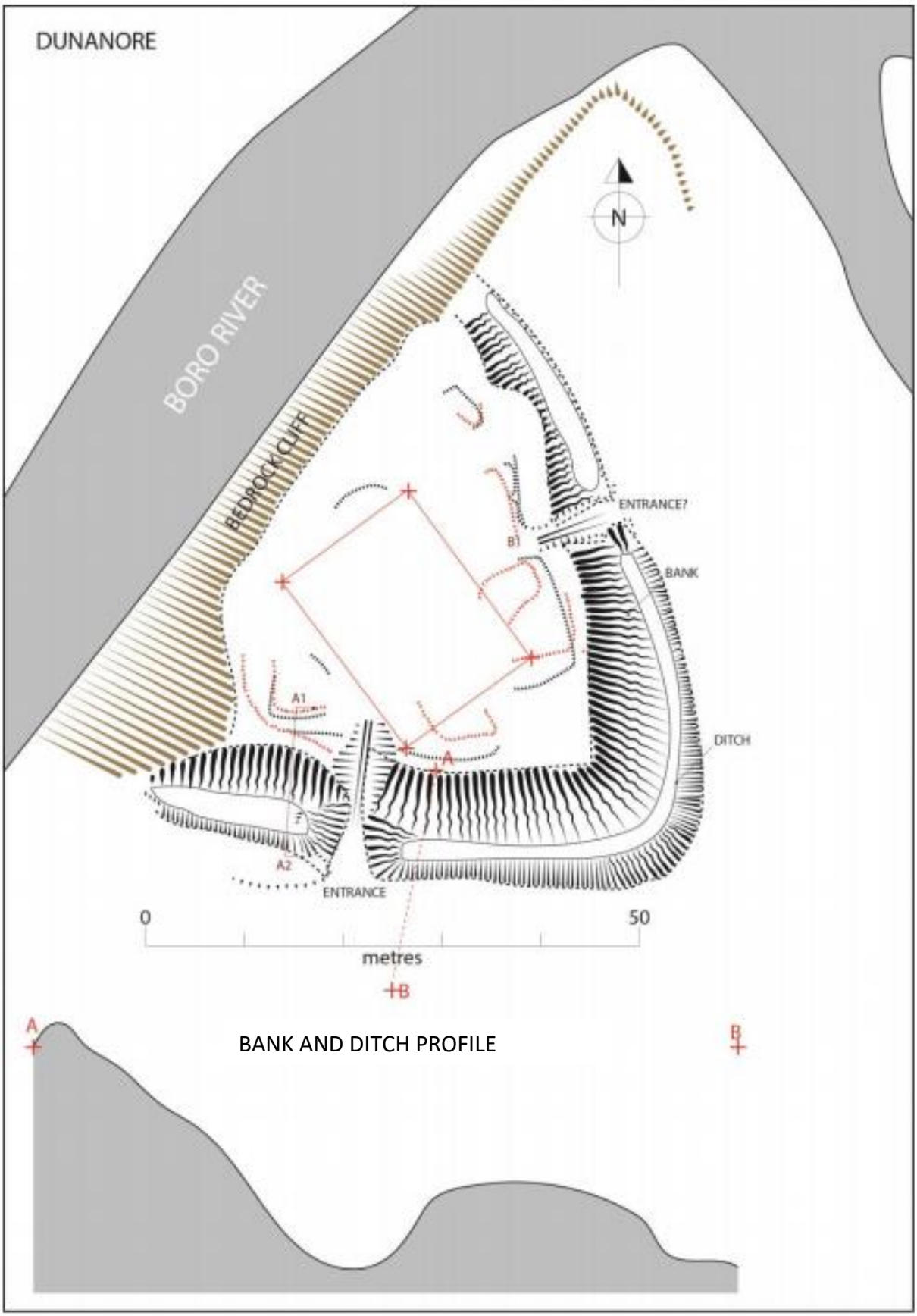

Figure 29. Site plan and profile of Dunanore (after a survey by Conor McHale and original surveys by Grace Dennis-Toone and the IAFS). The internal features mapped are shown in red. Those in black are from the McHale survey. The geophysical survey grid is depicted by the red box.

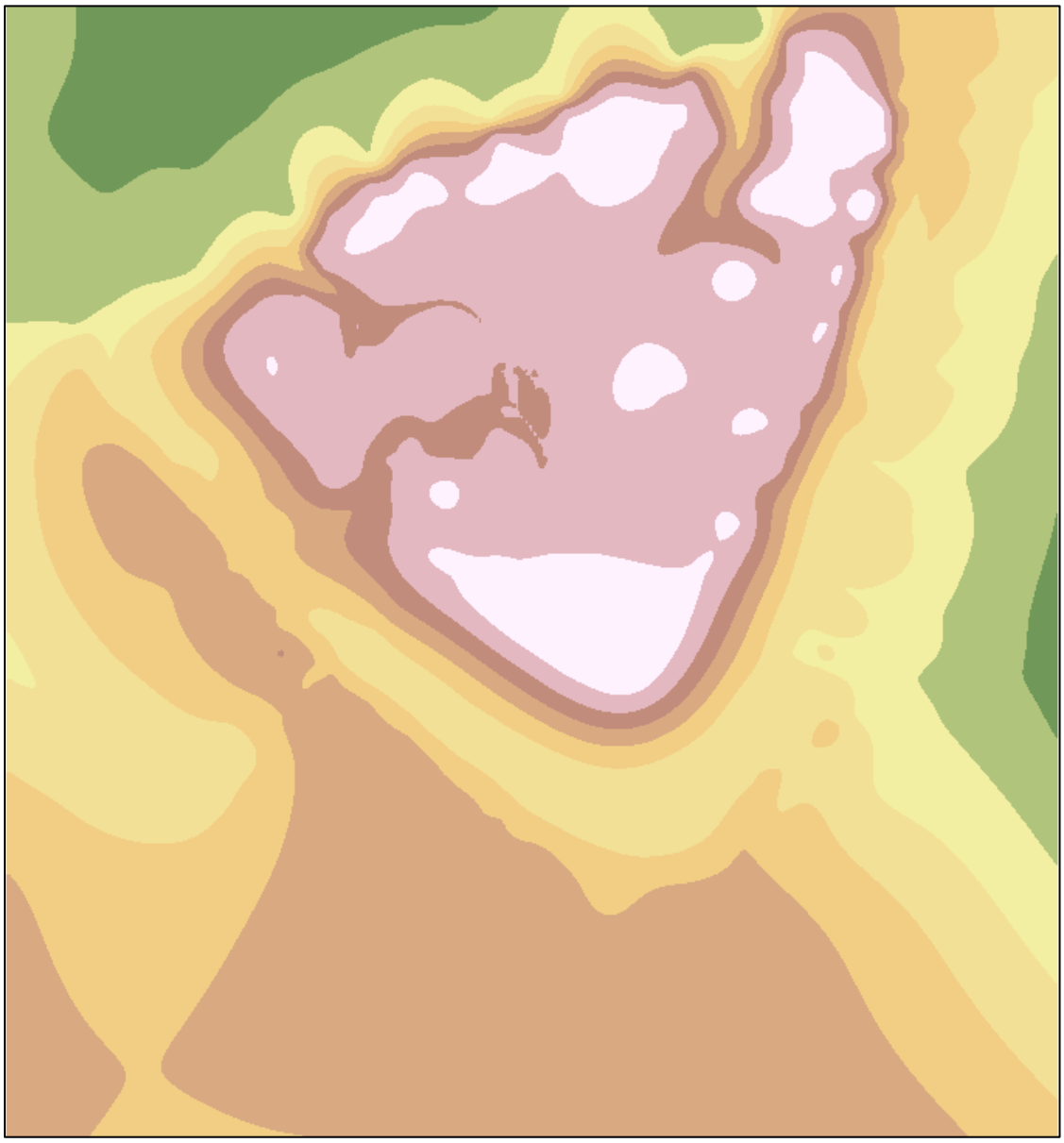

Figure 30. Topographical map from survey conducted by Grace Dennis-Toone and the IAFS.

Figure 31. Image depicting Grace Dennis-Toone and IAFS Richard Reid conducting the topographical survey at Dunanore. Produced for this thesis.

Figure 32. Aerial image of the Dunanore ringwork facing west. Curtesy of the INHP and Alan Boland for the purpose of this study 2019. Produced for this thesis.

Figure 33. Image showing the substantial bank at Dunanore facing north.

Figure 34. Example of the stones present around the possible house sites.

Enniscorthy

Revised classification – Possible ringwork castle
Surveyed on -
ASI –
County - Wexford
Province – Leinster
Townland – Enniscorthy

Figure 35. The stone castle at Enniscorthy, sourced from National Monuments Service; Historic Environment Viewer 10 August 2019.

Background –

The site of Enniscorthy is the large masonry castle that stands today in the town of Enniscorthy, see figure 35. It has been suggested that the castle is situated upon an earlier ringwork castle site above the River Slaney. The site has similarities to Carrick which is also located on the River Slaney, and that of Dunanore which also upon a river promontory.

Morphology –

A rock cut fosse was discovered during excavations in the late 19th century, this prompted the suggestion that an earthwork castle may have been present prior to the stone castle (Colfer 2002:56). Hore stated:

'All that was required to fortify the spot in a primitive fashion was to cut a trench and throw up a rampart on the west side; and such a trench, cut into the rock, we are assured on good authority was uncovered when the foundations for the Athenaeum building on this side were being laid. Such a spot was almost an ideal situation for a "promontory Castle" …' (Hore 1900-1911:37).

The dimensions of this ditch are unknown, and while Colfer agrees that it may be associated with an earthwork castle, O'Conor states it is just as likely it is contemporary with the stone castle (O'Conor 1993:727).

Sitting in the landscape –

The promontory position would have required few additional defenses and is very similar to other promontory ringwork castle sites in Co. Wexford. The site has commanding views over the surrounds and sits over the River Slaney and its crossing giving control of the water way, see figure 36. Arbuthnot and Colfer believe that had an earthwork castle ben situated at this location prior to the stone castle it would have likely been a ringwork rather than a motte they based this largely on the sitting in the landscape and the strong natural defenses (Arbuthnot 2011 gazetteer: 268, Colfer 2002:56).

Sitting in relation to high medieval settlement and surrounding sites –

A medieval church is situated across the River Slaney from the site, dedicated to St Sénan it dates to the early medieval period, it is the only known evidence for pre-Anglo-Norman settlement at Enniscorthy (Arbuthnot 2011:272). Additionally, an Augustinian priory was founded by Gerald de Prendergast and a Franciscan priory was founded in the 15th century. The Augustinian priory was dedicated to St. John and was founded in c.1227 (Arbuthnot 2011 ii:272).

Documentary evidence –

It is clear a settlement grew at Enniscorthy in the Anglo-Norman period, Colfer has argued that Enniscorthy may have had the status of a borough for the de Prendergast holdings as none is recorded at their lands of Schyrmal or Duffry (Colfer 2002:56-58). The earliest reference to Enniscorthy is in c.1226 when the bishop of Ferns was granted permission to hold markets at Ferns, Templeshanbo and Enniscorthy (Sweetman 1875:216). From the 12th century Enniscorthy was the *caput* of the 'Duffry' first given to Robert de Quency by Strongbow, Arbuthnot has suggested it may have been de Quency who ordered a ringwork castle be built at the site (Arbuthnot 2011 ii:269). The lands then went to Philip de Prendergast through his marriage to Maud de Quency, the stone castle at Enniscorthy has been attributed to the de Prendergast family possibly during the 13th century (Arbuthnot 2011 ii:270).

Conclusions –

The stone castle site at Enniscorthy could well have been a ringwork castle site, as is the opinion of Arbuthnot (2011), Colfer (2002), O'Conor(1993) and Hore(1900-1911). Certainly, the site has large similarities to the ringworks of Carrick, Dunanore and Ballyhoge, situated on a promontory with high natural defenses. However, the lack of morphological information regarding the site makes it impossible to conclude the classification, as such the site has been identified as a possible ringwork castle until further data can be obtained.

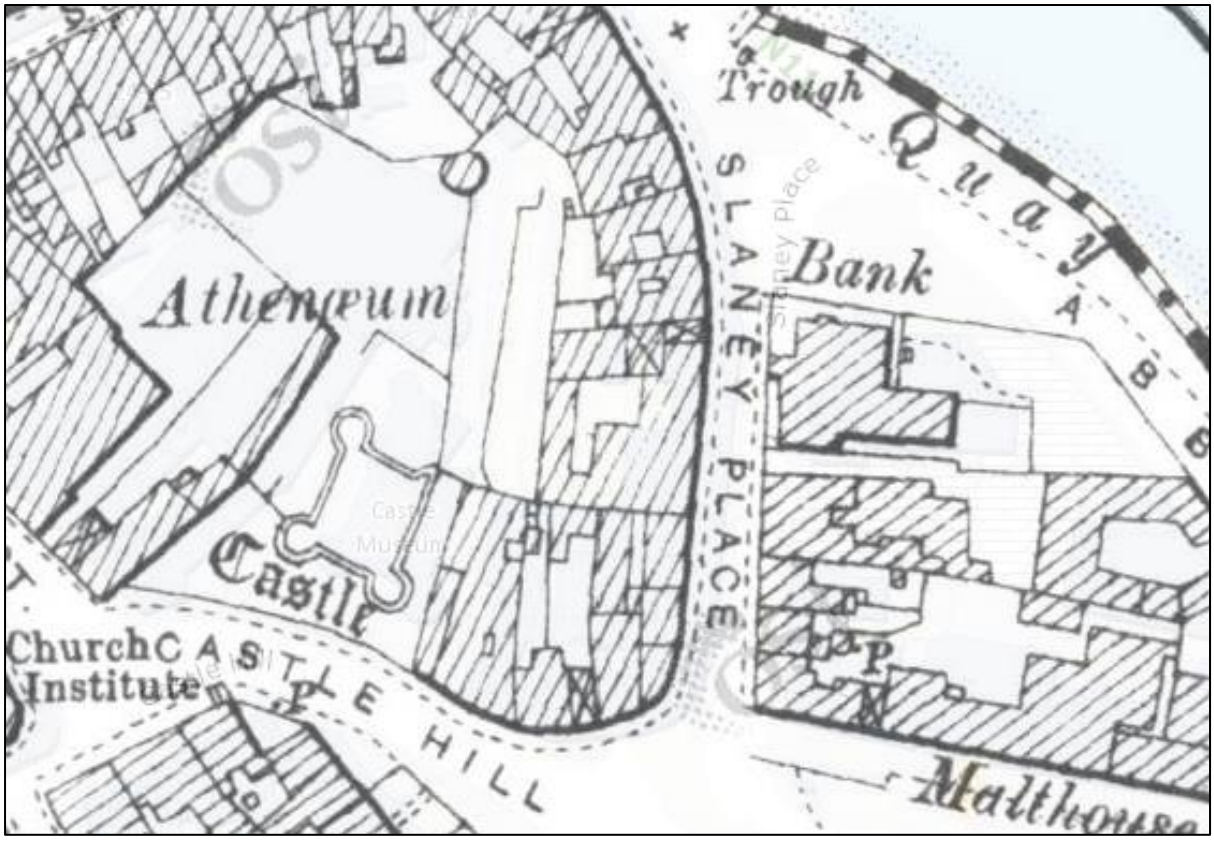

Figure 36. OSi Historic 1888-1913 map of the castle site at Enniscorthy overlooking the River Slaney. Sourced 10 August 2019.

Ferns

Revised Classification – Possible Ringwork
ASI – WX015-003007
County – Wexford
Province – Leinster
Townland – Castleland

Figure 37. Ferns castle showing southern front, and complete south eastern tower.

Background –

Ferns castle is currently a well-preserved stone castle ruin with a complete South Eastern tower, the castle has a substantial dry motte present at the South west wall, see figure 37. Tours operate at the castle in the summer months to showcase the well-preserved medieval tower. The Ferns castle site was identified as a previous ringwork castle by David Sweetman after his excavations at the site produced early medieval artefacts, this classification has been heavily scrutinized and often dismissed in the academic community, notably by Tadgh O'Keeffe. The site is associated with William Marshal who built the stone castle at the site in the 13th century, in c.1649 the castle was surrendered to Cromwell's army.

Morphology –

Ferns castle is a ruined stone castle with a partially surviving South Western tower and basement dungeon and a complete South Eastern tower. The castle ruins are 27.5m x 18.5m (interior), an outer ditch, rock cut fosse, runs along the South West exterior, with a depth of roughly 3.5m, see figures 38 to 40.

Siting in the landscape –

Ferns castle is located at the ancient set of Ferns, the castle is located on high ground in the region, from the top of the south eastern tower the entire surrounds can be seen. The township of Ferns was an important area in medieval Wexford. Ferns was the capitol of Leinster, and the seat of power for the Kings of Leinster. Believed to be founded in the 6th century Ferns is home to a monastery dedicated to Saint Aidan, built in c.598, and the Abbey of St Mary commissioned by Dermot McMurrough in 1158, and where he sought refuge after he was removed from power and under threat by the King of Connaught.

Sitting in relation to high medieval settlement and surrounding sites –

Ferns is a major settlement in medieval Ireland and has a rich historical past. The castle site is located roughly 400m from the epicenter of monuments, see figure 40. The medieval town of Ferns was one of the largest in Ireland. Ferns has two important high medieval church sites in the monastery of Saint Aidan and Saint Mary's Abbey (SMR). In the 13th century Ferns Cathedral was built and was inhabited by Ferns first English bishop, John St. John (SMR). In addition to this are Mogue's Well and a High Cross (SMR). The ecclesiastical center is likely to have originated from a much earlier pre-Norman settlement (SMR). It has been suggested that an earthwork enclosure may have once been present in the vicinity of the Abbey site, it has been suggested that this site may have been a ringwork castle, perhaps an earlier fortification by Dermot McMurrough (Sandra (castle guide) pers.com.. 29 May 2019).

Documentary evidence –

There is evidence that Dermot McMurrough had his stronghold at ferns prior to the Anglo-Norman Invasion, although it is not clear exactly what form his base took it is speculated to be a fortified site, likely a ringwork castle. In the year c.1166 it is recorded that fire swept through Ferns and destroyed many buildings and infrastructure including Dermot's stronghold (Moore 1996). Dermot McMurrough passed away in Ferns in c.1171, and into the mid-thirteenth center the manor of Ferns was controlled by the Marshal family. William Marshal the younger is attributed with the building of the stone castle at the site, likely in c.1224-26. After the Marshal lards the castle was briefly captured by the Irish (c.1315-1316) but eventually fell back to the Kavanagh family who held the castle for two centuries before

surrendering it to Sir Thomas Masterson who eventually lost the castle in surrender to the Cromwellian general Coote (Moore 1996).

Previous archaeological research–

The excavations at Ferns Castle were undertaken in 1972 and 1975 by David Sweetman, it was Sweetman's findings from this excavation that lead him to conclude an earlier ringwork castle was present at the site prior to the building of the stone castle. The main finding for Sweetman and his team was the discovery of two fosses, firstly the stone castle was surrounded by a wide rock-cut fosse that seemingly occurred at the same time as the stone castle build. The second fosse was excavated 10m from the South East corner of the castle and measured 1.2m in depth and 2.5m wide. Sweetman found sherds of 13th and 14th century pottery, this became the basis for his ringwork argument. Sweetman believed that the stratigraphy of the fosse's layers - with the backfill occurring earlier than the deposit of 13th and 14th century – was evidence for earlier occupation at the site. In addition to this the excavation of the interior of the stone castle showed that the south eastern side of the castle was built upon boulder clay, which Sweetman suggests may be representative of a rampart, present at ringwork castles.

In opposition to Sweetman's conclusions from his findings Tadhg O'Keeffe and Margaret Coughlan argue that the results from Sweetman's excavations are inconclusive and unreliable. O'Keeffe and Coughlan argue that the deposit with 13th and 14th century pottery was part of 17th century fill, this immediately denotes the dates Sweetman gave of the fosse, until further excavation this is unlikely to be resolved.

Local Knowledge –

The guides at the visitor center for Fern's castle are a wealth of knowledge, according to guides their local knowledge records Fern's castle as having been a motte and bailey.
In addition to this it is interesting to note there is some small discussion of an earlier site closer to the religious sites that may have been a ringwork.

Conclusion –

The applied methodology and analysis would conclude that the site of Fern's castle has the potential to have had an earlier ringwork castle at the same site. It is important to note that the excavation report that declares the previous site as a ringwork has been heavily criticized and could be considered unreliable. The knowledge of the individuals who work with the site daily must not be overlooked and their opinion of the site is firm in its belief that it was an earlier motte and bailey. As such it is concluded that the earlier site at Ferns Castle has the potential to be a ringwork but, significantly, it also has the potential to be another site type and as such will be classified in this study as a possible ringwork.

Figure 38. The rock cut motte on the southern side of the castle facing west.

Figure 39. The rock cut moat on the southern side of the castle facing east.

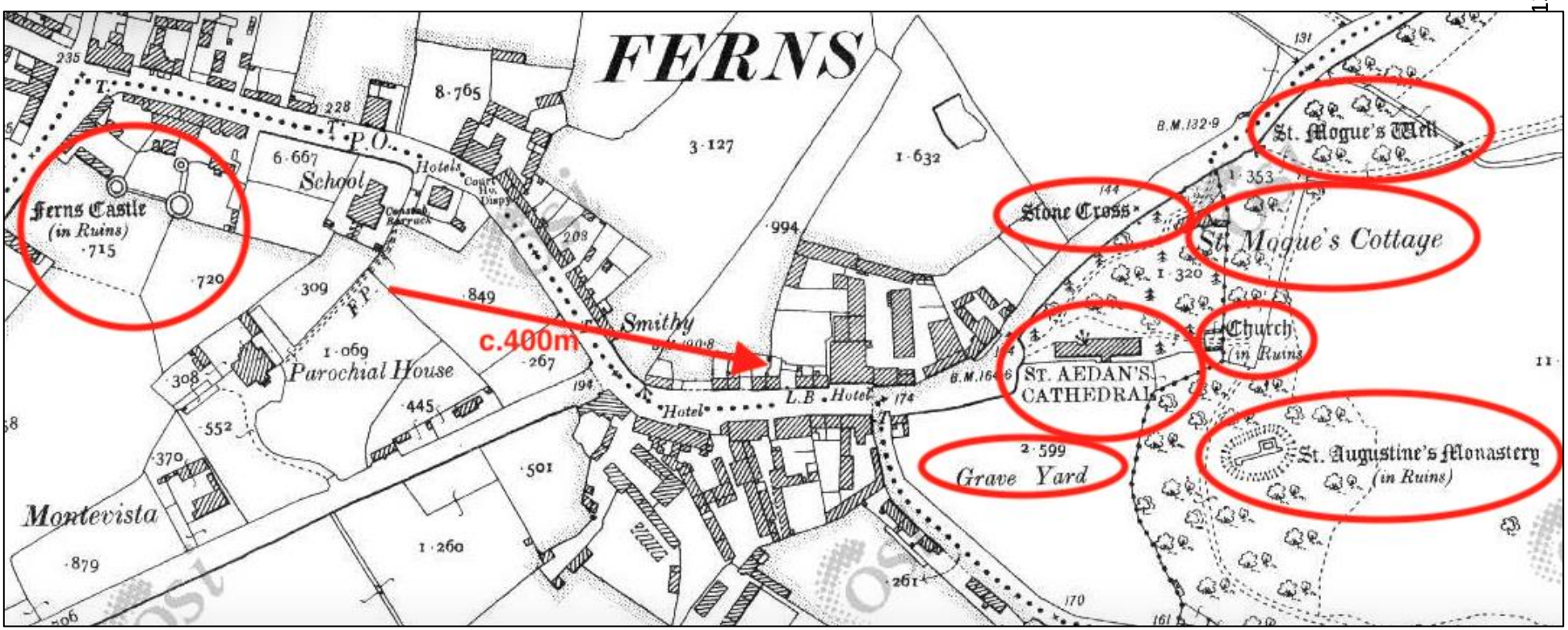

Figure 40. Base map OSi Historic Map 1888-1913 showing the castle as recorded, showing the distance between the castle site and the concentration of sites roughly 400m away. Sourced on 23 June 2019

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Finshoge

Revised Classification – Misclassified
ASI – WX034-008001-008002
County – Wexford
Province – Leinster
Townland – Finshoge

Figure 41. Aerial image of Finshoge from OSi Aerial Premium. Sourced 17 August 2019.

Background –

The site is situated in a low valley field, surrounded by other earthwork sites, see figure 43. Barry (1987) and Colfer (1986) both identified the site as a possible ringwork castle, however Colfer later discarded the site and does not consider it one of the ringwork castles of Wexford (Colfer 2008). Arbuthnot considered the site a possible ringwork castle, and the SMR and Archaeological Inventory of County Wexford records it as an unclassified ringfort and unclassified castle (Arbuthnot 2011 ii:282; Moore 1996; SMR).

Morphology –

This site was unable to visited by the researcher, as such the following description is derived from the Archaeological Inventory of County Wexford (Michael Moore 1996). The site is circular, roughly 37m in diameter (Moore 1996). The site is enclosed by what remains of an overgrown bank, 4m wide 0.5-2m high and with an external flat-bottomed fosse, 5m wide, see figure 42. An outer bank to the south west measures 4m wide and 2m high, the entrance may have been to the do=south of the site. A possible castle site may have existed in the interior, the First Edition OS Map shows a rectangular area labelled as a castle. Billy Colfer visited the site in the 1980s and recorded stone rubble which may have been the remains of said castle site (Colfer 1986:78).

Sitting in the landscape –

This site is situated in a poor position for defensibility, higher ground is prominent to the east and west. It is located at the bottom of a valley next to a stream roughly 20m.

Sitting in relation to high medieval settlement and surrounding sites –

There is no known nearby medieval church in the surrounding area, the closest is 6km in Old Ross (SMR). The site is in a densely occupied archaeological landscape, four ringfort sites are in close proximity to the site, see figure 43 (SMR, Westropp 1918:3-15). The concentration of ringforts so close to this site – one is only 100m away – is unusual for ringwork sites and is not seen replicated elsewhere in this study.

Documentary Evidence –

There is little documentary evidence towards an Anglo-Norman settlement at Finshoge, and no known reference to castle site there either. There was a reference to a 'butt of an old castle' from the 1654-56 Civil Survey, and it is listed as a castle site on the OSi historic maps (1888-1913,1837-1842) (Simington 1953). The land was likely part of 'Ballydermot' which was held by the le Lun family as discussed by Arbuthnot, however this too provides no insight to the usage of the land at Finshoge (Arbuthnot 2011 gazetter:285-286).

Conclusions –

Based on the discussed evidence this site has been classified as 'misclassified' and is highly unlikely to be a ringwork site. The lack of association with a medieval church, manorial center, questionable morphology and a non-defensive position in the landscape coupled with the heavy occupation of ringforts in the area suggest that this site is not a ringwork castle.

[redacted]

Figure 42. Section profile of the earthwork at Finshoge, by Arbuthnot 2011. Removed due to copyright restrictions, available via citation.

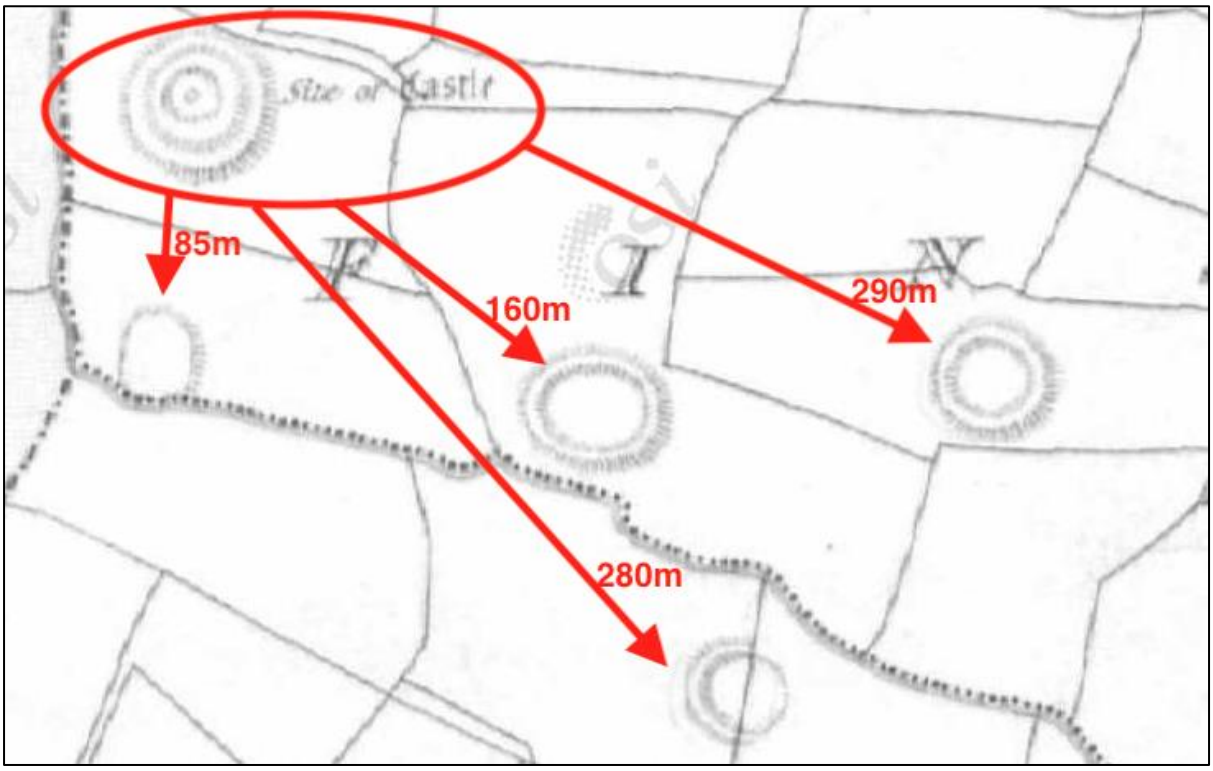

Figure 43. Map showing the surrounding sites and distance between them and the possible castle site at Finshoge. Base map from OSi Historic Map 1837-1842, sourced 17 August 2019.

Great Island 1

Revised Classification – Possible ringwork castle
ASI – WX039-028001-
County – Wexford
Province – Leinster
Townland – Great Island

Figure 44. Aerial image of the site area curtesy of the INHP and Alan Boland, curve in red showing the position of the remaining bank and fosse. Produced for this thesis.

Background –

The site of Greatisland 1 is located on what used to be an island, cut off by the river, the land was reclaimed after the medieval period. It is also known as Hervey's Island and is roughly 1km from the settlement of Kilmokea. The site has commanding views across the River Barrow and is on farmland today. The area of Greatisland has evidence for multiple stages of occupation and is a rich archaeological area. Ian Doyle recorded the site as part of his MLitt in 1994, see figure 47.

Morphology –

What remains of the earthwork is a small bank and ditch on a continuous slope down to the river. It is hard to distinguish the remaining earthworks from the other mounds and ditches present from agricultural practices on the property, see figure 44 and 46. The overlay of the First Edition OS map to the aerial images taken during the aerial survey show that the remains of the bank match up with the recorded site form the map. The bank is 5-11m wide and up to 1m high, the poorly preserved fosse measures up to 1m deep and roughly 10m wide.
The site was given dimensions of 250m E-W and 200m N-S, this was based on the remains of the earthworks had they continued in their trajectory in a D-shaped enclosure (Moore 1996).

If this diameter is correct the site would have included most of the modern property boundary and would be three times the size of the average ringwork (30-60m).

Sitting in the landscape –

The site is well situated in the landscape, built when the area was still and island the earthwork would have added to an already highly defendable location. The site is on a slope that continuous down to the riverbank of the River Barrow and on high enough ground that it has exceptional views of the area and the river itself, see figure 45. Its location would have allowed control over the river way and two possible ferries which were in existence from the island. The ground today is torn up, some parts are waterlogged, and various mounds and ditches exist across the property.

Sitting in relation to High Medieval Settlement and surrounding sites –

The closest medieval church site is located at Kilmokea roughly 1km away from the site, the church has an associated graveyard and there is a large enclosure at Kilmokea within which the church and graveyard sit. The church has no visible remains today, but the graveyard has a high cross present (SMR). The site of Greatisland 2 is roughly 150m away in an adjoining field. There is a circular feature next to the remaining earthworks which is overgrown and referred to by the landowner as the fairy ring, there is no mention of this on the RMP and it is unclear if this site is modern or not. It is likely the settlement at Kilmokea represents the manor for the island, there is a large moated site that has been suggested as the *caput* castle for Hervey de Monte Marisco's manor on the island (Colfer 1986:60).

Two castle sites are recorded in the RMP as being present at the site, there is a circular stone tower built into one of the abandoned farmhouse buildings that may be the remains of one these castles or had been built form the materials. In addition to this there is records of a leper hospital at the site, from the 17th century, although not visible today. Burials have also been discovered at the site, in 1979 several burials were upturned during works being conducted for the new bungalow site (Moore 1996). A stone lined grave, fragments of a cloak or shroud and leather boots were found, suggesting a late medieval date, likely associated with the leper hospital (Moore 1996). During the 19th century a large collection of bones was found at the site as well, exactly where at the site is unknown (Arbuthnot 2011 ii:296). The

present owner stated that the paddock within which the burials were found in 1979 has not been tampered with since for fear of discovering more burials (Brigid pers. com. 28 May 2019).

Documentary Evidence –

Greatisland was also known as Hervey's Island in reference to Hervey de Monte Marisco who was the uncle of Strongbow and held the island in the 12th century after lands were granted to him by Dermot McMurrough (Moore 1996). Hervey was a notable figure in the Anglo-Norman conquest, arriving with the first knights at Bannow Bay in c.1169, present at the battle of Baginbun in c.1170, and a trusted commander who was sent to negotiate with King Henry II on behalf of Strongbow (Arbuthnot 2011 ii:292). After Hervey the lands based to the Marshal Lords of Leinster, c.1231 marks the first mention of a castle at Greatisland:

'….letters were issued to the constables of the castles of Kilkenny, Odoth, Wexford, Old Ross, Dunamase, Carlow, Kildare, Carrick and 'de Insula (the Island), informing them that their lord, William Marshal the Younger, had died..'(Arbuthnot 2011 ii:292).

Though this is not clear where the castle site on the island is it may refer to the possible ringwork at Greatisland. The settlement at Greatisland later became a port for the Marshal Lords in the mid-13th century, and extensive repairs were undertaken at the castle site in c.1286 and may have been a stone castle by this time (Colfer 1986).

Conclusions –

It's clear that Greatisland played an important role in the Anglo-Norman settlement of the area and continued to modify and occupied the site for centuries. The morphological evidence is lacking in this case, the remains of the earthworks provide little to go on and the substantial size of the enclosure that has been suggested by previous researches make it an unusual site. The settlement at Kilmokea has strong evidence for being the manor of the island settlement, much closer to the church site and sat upon an earlier site, this location would also have given control over the entry to the island. However, the Greatisland site is also defendable and, in a position, to control the waterways. Until further research, particularly excavation, can be carried out this site has been classified as a possible ringwork site. It is important to note that it is unlikely both the site of Great Island 1 and 2 are ringwork sites.

Figure 45. Aerial image taken directly above the possible ringwork site looking towards the River Barrow. Curtesy of the INHP and Alan Boland for the purpose of this study 2019.

Figure 46. Aerial image showing the remains of the bank and ditch. Curtesy of the INHP and Alan Boland for the purpose of this study 2019.

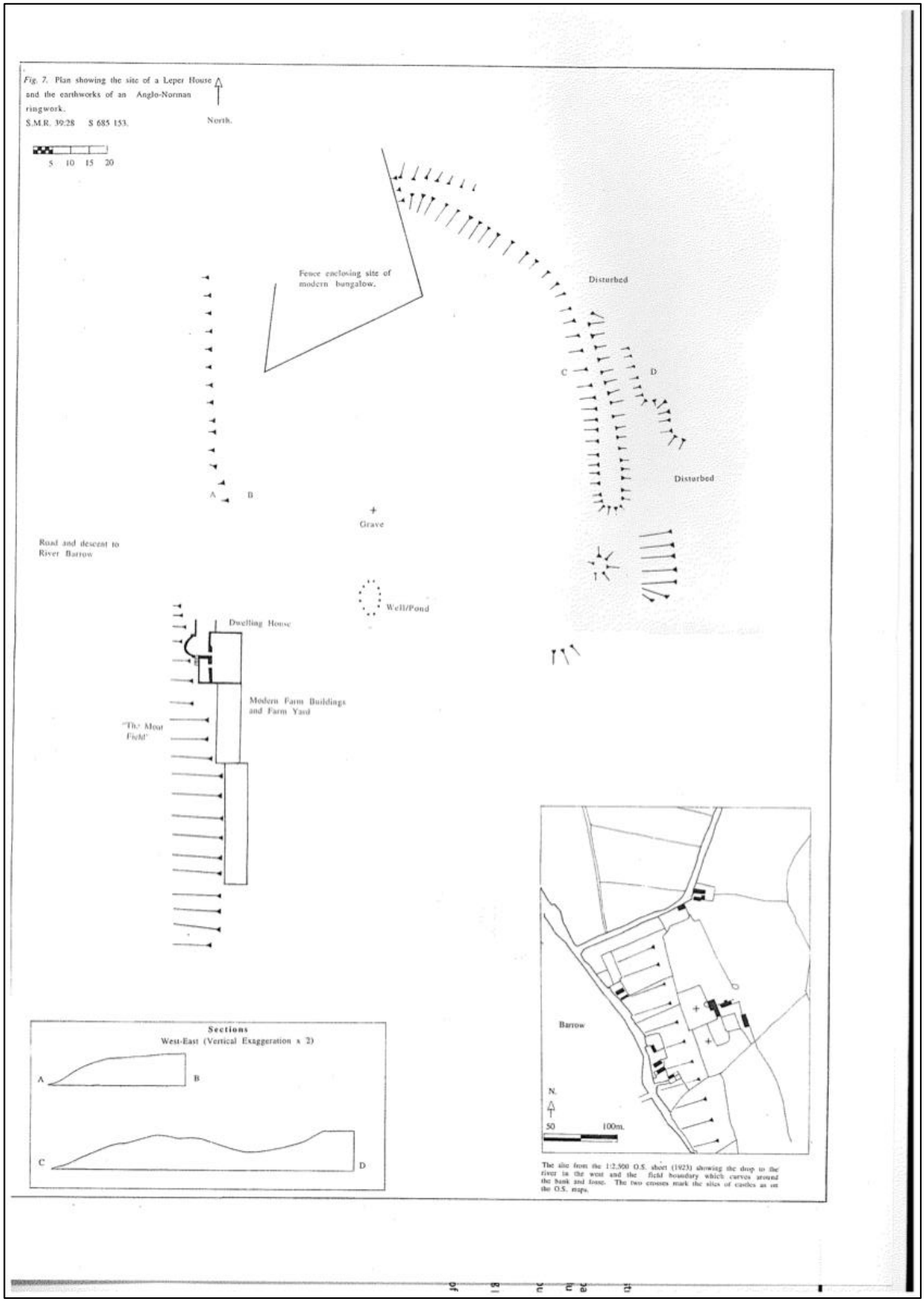

Figure 47. Ian Doyle Great Island site survey 1994. Reproduced with permission.

Great Island 2

Revised Classification – Possible ringwork castle
ASI – WX039-028004-
County – Wexford
Province – Leinster
Townland – Great Island

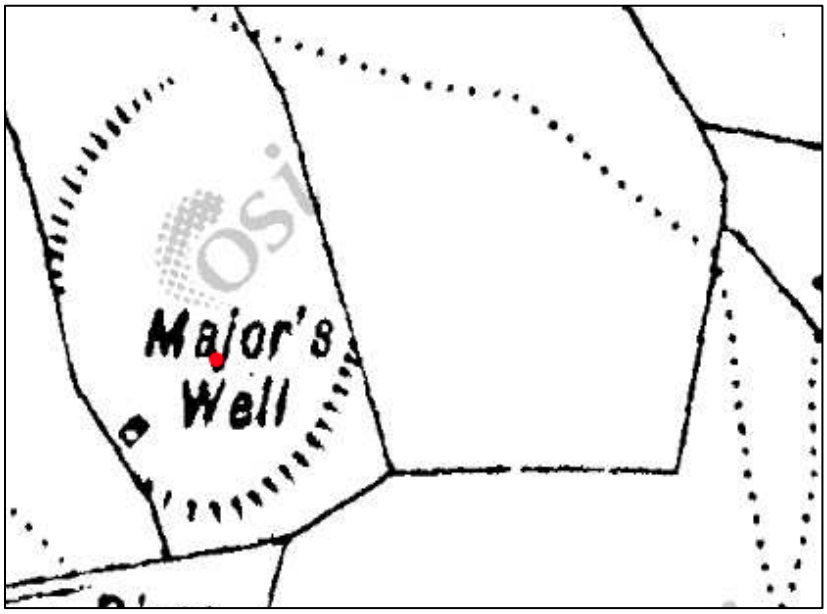

Figure 48. OSi Historic Map Cassini 6inch. Sourced 18 August 2019.

Background –

This site is recorded as a 'large enclosure' in the RMP, a circular enclosure roughly 150m away from Greatisland 1, the site may have been associated with a well site 'Major's Well', see figure 48. Arbuthnot listed the site as a possible ringwork castle in her 2011 study.

Morphology –

The site is 100x62m in diameter according to the RMP, with a slight scarp defining its northern, western and southern side (Moore 1996). Width of the scarp is 5-9m, height 0.5-1m, as recorded in 1996 (Moore 1996).

Sitting in the Landscape –

See Greatisland 1

Sitting in relation to High Medieval Settlement and surrounding sites –

The site is roughly 150m away from Greatisland 1, see figure 49. For further information see Greatisland Site Profile.

Documentary Evidence –

See Greatisland 1.

Conclusions –

As discussed in the Greatisland 1 site profile it is likely one of these sites was a ringwork castle associated with Hervey's manor, like his companions at Carrick the ringwork castle seemed to be the preferred earthwork type by the first wave of Anglo-Normans. The lack of morphological evidence for this site makes it difficult to re-classify, based on its sitting in the landscape and the documentary evidence it has been identified as a possible ringwork castle. As stated in Greatisland 1 it is highly unlikely that both sites represent a ringwork castle, but it is inconclusive which of the two it may been without further research.

Figure 49. OSi Historic Map 1837-1842, showing the sites of Great Island 1 and 2 in proximity to each other. Sourced 18 August 2019.

Kilpipe

Revised Classification – Ringwork castle
ASI – WI039-016-
County – Wicklow
Province – Leinster
Townland – Kilpipe

Figure 50. Site of Kilpipe from adjoining field.

Background –

The site of Kilpipe lies within modern day Co. Wicklow, just over the border from Co. Wexford. It has been included in this study as during the medieval period the Kilpipe was within the Wexford border (Colfer 2002:44). The site is located near a river and with a church site roughly 100m away within the same field. Colfer identified the site as a ringwork as did Sweetman, the SMR recorded the site as a motte castle (Colfer 2002:43; Sweetman 1999:9). In Objection to both O'Conor argues that the site is neither ringwork nor motte but a ringfort (O'Conor 1993:776)

Morphology –

The site was unable to be recorded after locating it due to ongoing agricultural practices, see figure 50. The Archaeological Inventory of Co. Wicklow recorded the site in 1997 and the following dimensions are sourced from there. The site is oval with a flat-topped mound and a diameter of 62x50m external and 41.5x32m internal (Inventory 1997). There is a steep fosse and external bank, the bank measures 3.5-4m wide and 1.5m high, see figure 53. There is access to the site via a ramp.

Although not mentioned on the SMR or in the Inventory, Arbuthnot argues that a bailey is present at the site. Arbuthnot states that a bailey is located to the south east of the ringwork, it is a D-shaped enclosure (Arbuthnot 2011 ii: 328). With the dimensions of 80x50m it is defined by a small bank roughly 50cm high, and 1m wide, an external fosse measures 1.5m wide and 50cm – 1m deep (Arbuthnot 2011 ii:328).

Due to the condition of the site at present this study does not concur or disagree with this statement as the land is too broken to provide a clear picture. It was worth noting that the historical maps make no note of a bailey or other site in the immediate vicinity of the possible ringwork.

Sitting in the landscape –

The site is situated above a small river on hill in a heavily modified agricultural landscape. The site area is higher than the surrounding fields and would provide a good view of the area. It is difficult to ascertain what the landscape may have been prior to the moving of earth undertaken by the landowners; however, the site is still considered defendable, see figure 51.

Sitting in relation to high medieval settlement and surrounding sites –

The site is located roughly 100m away from a church site, see figure 52, the church ruins are likely 18th century, the graveyard area is enclosed by a bank and fosse (SMR). It is possible there was an earlier church at the site. The name Kilpipe suggest an Anglo-Norman settlement may have existed here, and the church and ringwork site were closely associated, perhaps forming the center of an Anglo-Norman manor (Arbuthnot 2011 gazetteer:330). In the area surrounding the site various other monuments are close by, notably another possible castle site. The possible castle site is labeled 'Kilpipe Castle and Rampart' on the OSi historic map (1837-1842) and appears to be a large rectangular enclosure, according to local knowledge the field was named 'castle field' (SMR).

Documentary evidence –

There is much reference to the church site at Kilpipe, likely in existence from c.1179 when first mentioned in a papal bull (Arbuthnot 2011 ii:329). The church continues to pop up in historical sources however the ringwork site is less commonly referenced.

Billy Colfer believes the ringwork at Kilpipe may represent a second manorial settlement of the Prendergast fee of Fernegal (Colfer 2002:43). Prendergast was granted the large holding of Fernegal by Strongbow, the site of Kilpipe lies on the northern border of the land holding (Colfer 2002:43).

Conclusions –

Based on the morphological evidence, sitting in the landscape, sitting in relation to high medieval settlement and documentary evidence this site has strong evidence for being a ringwork castle and likely a manorial center of an Anglo-Norman settlement associated with Fernegal. As such this study has classified the site as a definite ringwork castle and the addition of a possible associated bailey makes the site extremely valuable to our understanding of ringwork castles in Ireland. The ringwork castle in the UK has various cases of ringwork castles and baileys together, something that has not yet been proven to exist in Ireland.

Figure 51. Image showing the height of the interior compared to the exterior ground level.

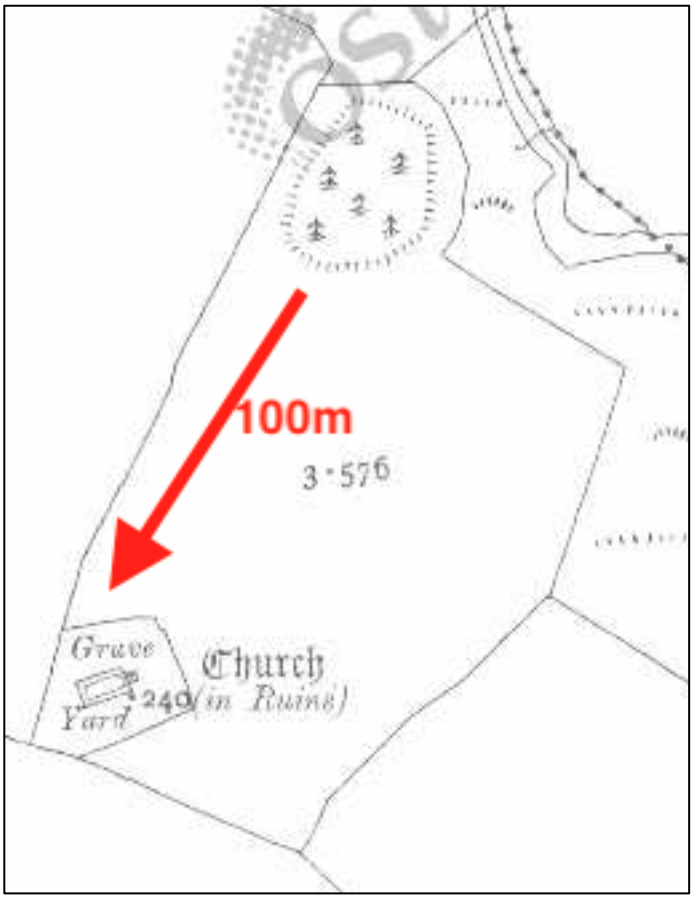

Figure 52. OSi Historic Map 1888-1913 showing the distance between the ringwork castle site and the associated church and graveyard. Sourced 19 August 2019.

Figure 53. Section profile of the ringwork at Kilpipe, by Arbuthnot 2011. Removed due to copyright restrictions, available via citation.

Kinnagh

Revised Classification – Misclassified
ASI – NA
County – Wexford
Province – Leinster
Townland – Kinnagh

Figure 54. OSi Aerial Premium showing the location of the site beneath the modern farmyard. Sourced 20 August 2019.

Background –

The site was excavated by Stafford McLoughlin Archaeology in 2003 as part of planning permissions for the modern build. Originally submitted as a possible ringwork or ringfort site the classification was rescinded by the archaeologist as an error in the report.

Morphology –

The site is under modern buildings, the dimensions for the site are unknown, see figure 54.

Sitting in the landscape –

Located on relatively flat ground the site is 400m from a stream, it is unclear how changed the landscape may be as it is situated in a heavily farmed area.

Sitting in relation to High Medieval Settlement and surrounding sites –

A church site is roughly 300m away with adjacent graveyard, a ringfort is situated roughly 25m away and ritual site 800m away, see figure 55 (SMR). A total of 4 ringfort sites lie roughly within 1km of the site.

Documentary Evidence –

There was no known documentary evidence for the site, or reference to a castle site in the area.

Conclusion –

The site is under modern farm buildings and was originally recorded as a ringwork site by the archaeologist responsible for the heritage impact survey carried out at the property. It was recorded as a possible ringwork due to the large quantities of medieval pottery found. The archaeologist has since advised that this initial classification was incorrect as the size and sitting would not indicate a ringwork but rather a ringfort (Catherine McLoughlin pers. comm. 5th June 2019).

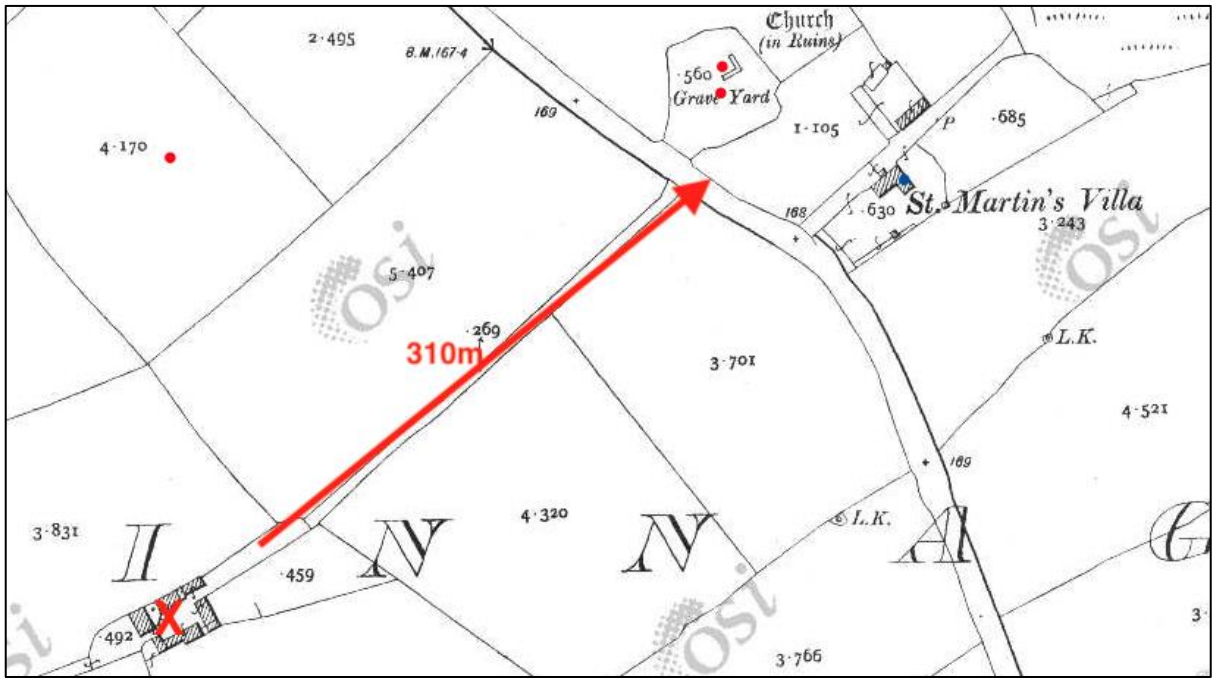

Figure 55. OSi Historic Map 1888-1913 showing the distance from the site to the church and villa sites. Sourced 20 August 2019.

Templetown

Revised Classification –Misclassified
ASI – WX049-007-
County – Wexford
Province – Leinster
Townland – Templetown

Figure 56. Aerial image taken to show the sites location as indicated on the SMR. Curtesy of the INHP and Alan Boland for the purpose of this study 2019.

Background –

The site of Templetown, as the name suggests, has association with the Knights Templars in Ireland. Identified as a possible ringwork castle by Billy Colfer and Terry Barry in the 1980s the site is located near a church on the cliff top of the Hook Peninsula, see figure 56.

Morphology –

The site is hard to distinguish at ground level, however Colfer identified the site and recorded it in 1986. He recorded the site as being 25m in diameter and of a circular shape raised roughly 1m above ground level, see figure 59 (Colfer 1986:77). There has been no reference to a bank and fosse ever existing at the site, making the possibility of it being a ringwork castle highly unlikely.

Sitting in the Landscape –

The site is on the slop of a hill of a small valley, through which a small stream cut. It is along the coastline on the Hook Peninsula with cliffs rising to the north and south of the site. There is a beach area down to the west of the site enclosed by cliffs and rocky water. The Historical Map 1837-1842 shows the site located immediately next to the church site, however upon

investigation Colfer identified the site as being on the hillside further down the field, see figures 57 and 58.

Sitting in relation to High Medieval Settlement and surrounding sites –

The nearest church site is roughly 200m away, attributed with the Knights Templars in the 12th century, although it may have pre-dated them as the church of 'St Aloch' (Colfer 2002:196). The site is ruined today with a 19th century church built at the same site within the fortified stone walls (Moore 1996). A Bullaun stone is still present at the site (0.47x0.33m), as is a medieval grave slab within the graveyard (Moore 1996). Kilcloggan Castle tower house is roughly 1km from the site (Moore 1996). Surrounding sites include three ringforts, a promontory fort and an enclosure on the cliff tops (Moore 1996).

Documentary evidence –

As mentioned above the sites name and assumed associated with the Knights Templars comes from the documentary evidence of the Templars in the area. The Templars were granted the lands of Kilcloggan – which included the town land of Templetown – in c.1172 by King Henry II himself (Colfer 2002:196). The Templars were imprisoned in c.1312 after the disbandment of the order and the lands fell to the Knights Hospitallers (Colfer 2002:196). Although Colfer was one of the original people to suggest the site may represent a ringwork castle, he later remarked that it could also be the remains of a wind-mill mound (Colfer 2002:196). This was based on the size and location of the site as well as the reference to 'iron for repair of a windmill' in the Templars list of possessions (Colfer 2002:196). There is lacking evidence for direct reference to a castle site at Templetown, one is mentioned in the later medieval period which likely refers to the tower house at Kilcloggan.

Conclusion –

The site has no morphological or documentary evidence to suggest it is a ringwork castle, the sitting is defendable but considered not the most defendable sitting in the immediate area. The association with a church site is to be expected of a religious order, their continued use of the church site but apparent abandonment of the earthwork site. Based upon this and the later revisions by Colfer it is unlikely this site is a ringwork castle – it may be a windmill as suggested – but for the purpose of this study it is identified as a 'misclassified' site.

Figure 57. OSi Aerial Premium shows the shadowing of the enclosure Colfer has suggested by the earthwork recorded in the Historic 1837-1842 map. Sourced 22 August 2019.

Figure 58. OSi Historic Map 1837-1842 showing the recorded earthwork site. Sourced 22 August 2019.

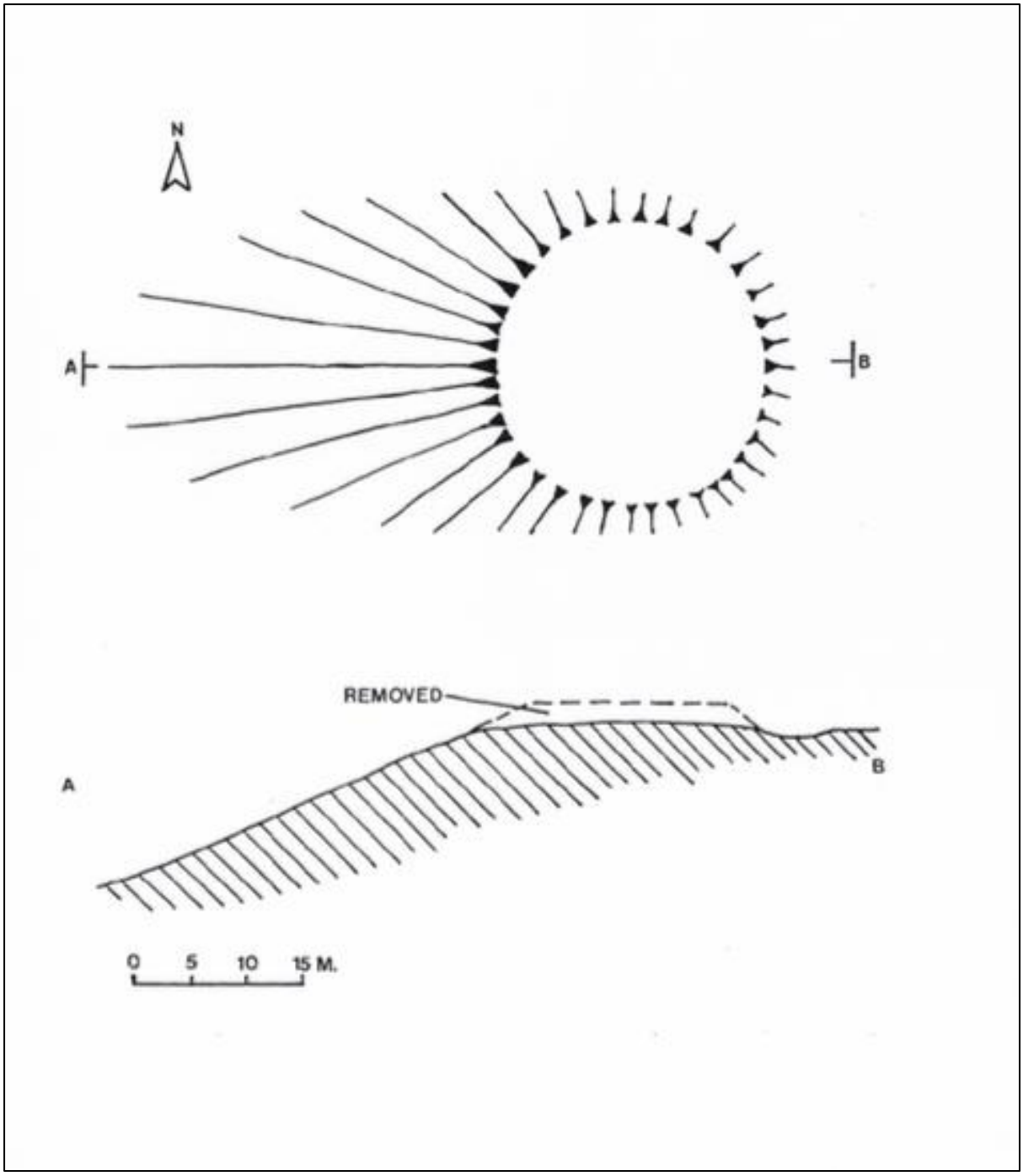

Figure 59. The earthwork at Templetown by Billy Colfer 1986. No longer visible today. Reproduced with permission.

Toberfinnick

Revised Classification –
Possible ringwork castle
ASI – WX032-021-
County – Wexford
Province – Leinster
Townland – Toberfinnick

Figure 60. Aerial image of Toberfinnick possible ringwork. Curtesy of the INHP and Alan Boland for the purpose of this study 2019.

Background –
The site is located above the River Sow, the motte site of Castlesow is roughly 100m away across the river, see figure 60. The site was identified as a ringwork by Billy Colfer and is listed as one on the SMR and in the Archaeological Inventory of County Wexford (Colfer 2002:56; Moore 1996). The site is on a steep slope towards the valley below and very hard to locate on the ground, it is below a farmed field. The area is dense with vegetation, particularly brambles, upon visitation of the site the vegetation could not be breached to record the earthwork. An aerial survey was conducted to capture the site from the air, the site cannot be clearly seen in the images and it is likely the morphology of the site has been changed in the recent past by rainfall and vegetation growing through it.

Morphology –
The dimensions and description used for this site were sourced from the Archaeological Inventory of County Wexford, taken by Michael Moore in 1996. The site is described as a sub-circular grass and shrub covered area with dimensions of 28x23.8m. The site is enclosed by an earthen bank; width 10m, internal height 1.5m, external height 3.5m. A flat-bottomed

fosse is present with a width of 2.5-8.5m and depth of 1.5m. There is a scarp of 5-6m wide and 6.6m high and there appears to be no visible entrance (Moore 1996).

Sitting in the landscape –

The site is located on a promontory above the River Sow, see figure 60. Considering the location above the river bend and valley the site would likely have had a complete view of their surroundings and easy access to the river and the resources it bears. The promontory sitting also makes attack difficult from all sides but the north west. This location is considered highly defendable and strategic in nature.

Sitting in relation to High Medieval Settlement and surrounding sites –

There is no known high medieval church site or settlement in the townland f Toberfinnick, a ringfort lies to the north west of the site roughly 300m away (SMR). The site of Castlesow is located 100m away across the River Sow on the opposite promontory, this site is discussed in detail in the site profile for Castlesow (SMR).

Documentary evidence –

Documentary references record that the lands of Fernegenal, of which Toberfinnick is within, were given to Maurice de Prendergast in c. 1172, the Roche family eventually gained the land. It has been suggested that the earthwork site at Castlesow may represent the *caput* castle of the Roches of Fernegenal in the form of a motte and possible bailey as well (Arbuthnot 2011 ii:258). The Roche family enfeoffed land part of the Fernegenal holding to the Sinnott family during the 13th century and the River Sow represented the boundary between the two sections, this may attribute for the proximity of two earthwork sites within 100m from each other (Colfer 1987:77). The site of Toberfinnick has been suggested as the manorial center of the Sinnott lands (Colfer 1987:77). It is reiterated by Arbuthnot in her study that there is no evidence to suggest that both sites operated as castles at the same time and that the Sinnott family are unlikely to have built their castle directly across from the Roche holding at Castlesow (Arbuthnot 2011 ii:311).

Conclusions –

Due to the morphological evidence and the defensibility of the sites location it is possible this site is a ringwork castle. However, the lacking association with any high medieval settlement

or documentary evidence of a castle at the location makes it difficult to identify the site. This study has classified the site as a possible ringwork castle until further evidence is available.

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Figure 61. Aerial image of the site from the side. Curtesy of the INHP and Alan Boland for the purpose of this study 2019.

Figure 62. Aerial image of the site from above. Curtesy of the INHP and Alan Boland for the purpose of this study 2019.

Figure 63. OSi Historic Map 1837-1842 showing the two earthworks of Castlesow and Toberfinnick above the River Sow. Sourced on 18 June 2019.

Figure 64. Section profile of the ringwork at Kilpipe, by Arbuthnot 2011. Removed due to copyright restrictions, available via citation.