An Iron Age and Early Medieval cemetery at Collierstown 1, Co. Meath:
Interpreting the changing character of a burial ground

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An Iron Age and Early Medieval cemetery at Collierstown 1, Co. Meath

Interpreting the changing character of a burial ground

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ABSTRACT

Our understanding of Iron Age and early medieval burial practice has been transformed by a number of recent archaeological excavations and includes the findings from a late Iron Age–early medieval enclosed cemetery in Collierstown Td, Co. Meath, which was excavated by the author in 2006/07. However, by defining the site under such strict terms misrepresents the complex nature of its development. A more appropriate consideration of its form and function indicates a succession of individual monuments, each reflecting a milestone in local societal evolution in the period AD 400–800. The thesis is a progression from a previously excavation report and offers a more in-depth study of the site and its surrounding environment, both natural and human, as well as the range of rituals and practises that marked each stage in the evolution of the site.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the staff of the School of Archaeology, University College Dublin for their support and advice over the period of the my studies, including Prof. Gabriel Cooney and especially Dr. Graeme Warren. I am indebted to Dr. Aidan O’Sullivan for guidance and encouragement in his supervision of this thesis, and for allowing me the opportunity to participate in the Early Medieval Archaeology Project (EMAP).

I would like to thank Donald Murphy for facilitating access to archive materials. To my colleagues at Archer Heritage Planning Ltd, Aidan O’Connell & Ciarán McGuinness for assistance with OxCal 4.1 and for commenting on early drafts of the paper. Also to Vicky Ginn (QUB) for helpful comments and support. The Collierstown excavation was carried out as part of the M3 Clonee to north of Kells motorway. I offer my thanks to former colleagues and staff at ACS Ltd, those who participated in the excavation and those specialists who contributed to the post-excavation analysis. Also Mary Deevy (National Roads Authority) and Dr. Eoin Grogan for advice and guidance over the duration of the project.

Finally, I am thankful for the support and patience of my wife Karin Bäckman; sons Jonas & Henrik and parents Frank & Nano O’Hara.

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“...[to] consider the understanding of monuments at an altogether more detailed level... raises a whole series of new issues. We need to focus on a smaller area, and on sequences calibrated at much finer intervals...To do so means [addressing] more detailed questions...How far do the changes in the character of monuments reflect corresponding changes in the way in which they were used...How were these monuments related to the landscape in which they were built? And how far can that relationship be used to identify developments in the [life] of the community”.

Richard Bradley (1998, 86)
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1. Preamble
Our understanding of Iron Age and early medieval burial practice has been transformed by a number of recent archaeological excavations. A late Iron Age–early medieval enclosed cemetery in Collierstown Td, Co. Meath (NGR 294743 258825; 112m OD; E3068; A008/015; Figures 1, 2;) was excavated by the author in 2006/07 and reported in various ways (O’Hara 2008a, O’Hara 2009a–b). It is a monument type most often classed as “ancestral” or “familial” (O’Brien 1992; 130–137; O’Brien 1999, 53; O’Brien in press, 189–214), “secular” (Stout & Stout 2008; 70) or as “undeveloped” cemeteries (Thomas 1971, 50–1; Mytum 1992, 99–100; Halsall 1995, 18–19), each describing collections of burials without a known ecclesiastical connection. However, by defining the cemetery under such strict terms misrepresents the complex nature of its development. A more appropriate consideration of its form and function indicates a succession of individual monuments, each reflecting a milestone in local societal evolution in the period AD 400–800.

These transformations were set against a backdrop of wider social evolution, which at a macro-scale was embodied by the transition from prehistory to the beginnings of the historical period, and which forced major structural transformations in all major subsystems: ideology, society, subsistence economy, technology and trade’ (Mytum 1992, 21; Warner 1988, 55). It is within this milieu that we must examine changes at a site level. In the changing character of Collierstown, we have a canvas on which radical social change at the beginning of the early medieval period can be drawn.

1.2 Aims & Objectives
The purpose of this thesis is to explore the development of a Irish cemetery, offering an interpretation which seeks to explain how a typical Late Iron Age burial ground evolved over a number of centuries according the beliefs, needs and ideological intentions of local communities.
The thesis is a progression from the basic archaeological excavation report previously completed (O’Hara 2009b), and offers a more nuanced study of the site and its surrounding environment, both natural and human, which examines in-depth the range of rituals and practises that marked each stage in the evolution of the site. Key to this study is the reinterpretation of the vast site archive with a more informed understanding of the stratigraphy and development of contemporary surrounding sites also excavated as part of the M3 motorway and which were not completed when the original excavation report was being prepared.

In this dissertation I will:
- Explain and interpret the specific stratigraphical development of the cemetery at Collierstown 1;
- Provide an overview of the development of the surrounding landscape in tandem with the evolution of the Collierstown site;
- Suggest a classification for the site in a review of the nomenclature that is often associated with sites of this type and period; and
- Identify and discuss a range of overlapping themes dealing with activity at the site, in particular evidence for high-status mortuary rituals of the sixth century AD.

### 1.3 Source materials
The primary source material for this thesis is the site archive for Collierstown 1. Selected archives for surrounding contemporary sites excavated as part of the M3 were consulted and access to these was kindly facilitated by Donald Murphy. Secondary sources include a vast amount of literature relating to early medieval society, settlement and burial practices, in particular the works of Dr. Elizabeth O’Brien (1992, 2003, in press) on the form and development of Irish burial rites over the course of the early medieval period. Of particular benefit in this regard was the bibliographies and site gazetteers compiled through the work of the Early Medieval Archaeology Project (Harney et al 2008; Sands et al 2008). Further information relating to comparative sites was primarily accessed through the Excavations Bulletin, which is available on-line and contains summary accounts of all the excavations carried out in Ireland from 1970 to 2005.
1.4 Structure of the thesis

The remainder of this thesis comprises four parts:

(1) A general background to the site and its surroundings as well as an overview of early medieval burial in relation to ‘secular’ cemeteries.

(2) A detailed description of the main phases and stages of development at the site from the fifth to ninth centuries AD.

(3) A themed discussion of the evidence for high status rites and rituals during the sixth century AD.

(4) A concluding chapter that summarizing the principal outcomes of this study, that illustrates this paper’s work’s contribution to ongoing scientific debate into Early Medieval archaeology and society.

Note on style

Archaeological deposits in the following thesis retain the unique feature number (F#) assigned to it during the excavation. This is not intended as a full publication of the excavation results and only those features and artefacts relevant to the subject matter of this thesis are discussed. For clarity, the excavation registration number E3068 is omitted from referenced artefacts (372:1 instead of E3068:372:1)
CHAPTER 2
BACKGROUND

2.1 Location
Collierstown townland (Skreen By) is situated on the floor of a short U-shaped glacial valley, between two elevated limestone ridges on which are sited the archaeological sites of Tara (to the northwest) and Skreen (to the northeast). It is an area recently termed the Tara-Skreen Valley (Newman 2005, 374), otherwise the Gowra (or Gabhra) valley, from the River Gowra, which flows roughly north-westwards along the valley floor, joining the River Skane in Dowdstown Td, from which it joins the River Boyne (ibid.).

2.2 Previously known archaeological monuments in the landscape
There are a small number of recorded archaeological sites within the townland (see Table 1 below; Moore 1987; Figure 3), while the distribution and classification of recorded monuments for surrounding areas (RMP sheets 32 & 38) reflected a widely settled early medieval landscape, with surviving ringforts in Collierstown (ME038-003), Danestown (ME032-007), Lismullin (ME32-025), Skreen (ME032-032), Cabragh (ME032-054) and Trevet Grange (ME038-019/ ME038-021). Souterrains in Lismullin (ME032-021/ ME032-049), Monktown (ME032-046/ME032-051) and Kilbrew (ME038-032) and a crannóg at Lagore Big (ME038-027), the latter being the principal residence of the Uí Chernaig dynasty between the seventh and tenth centuries AD (Price 1950).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RMP</th>
<th>NGR</th>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ME032–039</td>
<td>295064, 259419</td>
<td>Barrow possible</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ME032–040001</td>
<td>295632, 259363</td>
<td>Cross (fragment; present location)</td>
<td>Late medieval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ME032–040002</td>
<td>295632, 259363</td>
<td>Tomb fragment (present location)</td>
<td>Late 16th-century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ME038–003</td>
<td>295455, 258579</td>
<td>Ringfort (rath/cashel)</td>
<td>Early medieval</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) for Collierstown Td
There are a similar number of unclassified ‘enclosures’ dispersed among these monuments, many of which probably have early medieval horizons and which may fall into the emerging subcategory of the ‘non-circular’ settlement (O’Sullivan & Harney 2007, 83–87; Kinsella 2010). There are also a network of early church sites and holy wells whose foundations may well lie in this period (e.g. Dunshaughlin, Trever, Kilbrew). Discoveries of previously unknown early medieval sites in Baronstown, Ross and Lismullin strengthen an impression of a densely populated and managed early medieval landscape surrounding Collierstown (see Figure 3).

2.3 Discovery

A collection of five extended inhumations was identified during test trenching of the route of the M3 motorway in 2004 (Clarke 2004). It was suspected at the time that the graves were positioned around an upstanding mound, with further mounds in a linear arrangement to the northeast parallel to the Collierstown Road. Geophysical survey of the site detected an outer enclosure of approximately 50 m diameter, and an inner enclosure of approximately 20 m diameter enclosing these graves (Nicholls 2006; Figure 4). A second site, a 12 m diameter enclosure, was identified 300m to the northeast and may be an example of a ring ditch. Following the commencement of excavation, the mounds were quickly determined to be post-medieval in date, related perhaps to clearance of roadside ditches along the Collierstown Road (L1005-0).

2.4 Excavation

There were two main elements to the site (see Figure 5):

1. The burial activity, subdivided broadly into 4 groups (see Section 2.4.1), and
2. The enclosing ditches, encompassing a 3-fold development (see Section 2.4.2).

2.4.1 Burial activity

A small sample of burials was recovered from the site, totalling sixty-one inhumations and included a small quantity of disarticulated bone. The assemblage might be considered as a medium-sized cemetery when compared to other excavated early medieval burial sites in Meath (see Table 2 below), which appear to have served local farming communities. As a contrast, take the minimum interments of 100 burials at Colp West, Co. Meath (O’Brien 1999, 181–182, fig 32a) and 1500 burials at Cabinteely, Co. Dublin (Conway 1999), both of which were probably associated with neighbouring
monastic or ecclesiastical sites and served a larger, perhaps more clustered community than Collierstown.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Townland/ Site name</th>
<th>No. of burials</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Johnstown 1</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>Clarke &amp; Carlin 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knockmark</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>Baker 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratoath</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>Wallace 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raystown</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>Seaver 2005; 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colp West</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Gowan 1989a-b; O’Brien 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ninch</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>McConway 2002; 2003; 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Collierstown 1</strong></td>
<td>61</td>
<td>O’Hara 2008a; 2009a-b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betaghstown</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>O’Brien 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratoath</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Wallace 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowth (Site M)</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Stout &amp; Stout 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ardsallagh 1</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Clarke &amp; Carlin 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowth</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Eogan 1974; 1977; 1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boolies Little</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Stout &amp; Stout 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloncowan</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Baker 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betaghstown</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Stout &amp; Stout 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cushintown 2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Buckley 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claristown 2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Russell et al 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarsfieldstown</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Stout &amp; Stout 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macetown</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>O’Connor 1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiltale</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Rynne 1974</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2** Location and numbers of burials at early medieval cemeteries in Co. Meath

The burial activity at Collierstown is subdivided into the initial burial and four subsequent groups (Groups 1–4). Demographically, the Collierstown cemetery had a strong adult bias with 55 of the 61 burials classified as adult. Of these, eleven were assessed as female (a further seven as possible female), nine as male (ten as possible male) and finally eighteen for which sex could not be adequately determined. Combining the females/possible females and males/possible males categories, the ratio of identified females to males was 0.9:1, which is within expected parameters for a typical cemetery adult population group (expected to be close to 1:1) suggesting no bias in favour of gender. Infants and children (but not juveniles) did not feature among the cemetery population until late in the burial sequence, suggesting they were deliberately excluded (cf. Carrowkeel, Co. Galway where 70% of interments between AD 650–850, and 93% of between AD 850–1050 were non-adults (Wilkins & Lalonde 2009, 66–67)). A similar pattern was observed at Parknahown, Co. Laois (Tara O’Neill pers. comm.), where the profile was 50% adults, 18% juveniles, and 32% infants from a total of 600 burials. Overall, the osteological analysis of the Collierstown skeletons concluded that poor–
moderate levels of completeness and preservation affected quality and quantity and the
demographic and pathological information normally retrievable from analysis (see
Coughlan, in O’Hara 2009b).

2.4.2 Enclosing elements
Four separate episodes of enclosure enveloped the burial activity. Initially, these
enclosures ditches were segmented features comprising a number of re-cut events. These re-cuts permitted a number of presumptions to be made regarding the overall site sequencing, particularly during the ring-ditch phase, as many of the isolated re-cuts were identical in terms of size and composition. In the latter stages the site was fully enclosed, with no obvious access point within the limits of excavation. The interpretative chronological sequence developed for Collierstown 1 is primarily based on the stratigraphy of the enclosing elements. This sequence is presented in Table 3 and is discussed further below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Brief description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barrow</td>
<td>Primary burial</td>
<td>Single inhumation enclosed by series of segmented ditches forming enclosure 16m in diameter (see Figure 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary burial</td>
<td>Burial Group 1: 9 burials inserted into low mound; Burial Group 2: 13 burials placed around mound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ring-ditch</td>
<td>1–3</td>
<td>New series of segmented ditches dug forming 16m-diameter enclosure. Associated with Burial Group 3 (see Figure 7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cemetery/</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Entire site enclosed by a c.40m-diameter ditch. Possibly associated with Group 4 burials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>settlement</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Backfilling and re-cut of circular ditch with addition of annexe.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 Interpretative chronological sequence for Collierstown 1
2.5 Dating the sequence

Eleven samples were submitted for radiocarbon dating. Burial groups were dated using samples of human bone, while the ditches were dated using charcoal and preserved wood. Conventional and calibrated dates (Reimer et al. 2004) are provided. Probability distributions of individual dates were calculated using OxCal 4.1 (Bronk Ramsey 1995; 1998; 2001) to refine the calibrated range for each event. The terms and designations used in Table 4 are expanded upon in the following sections. A date from ditch F360 (Beta 247010) was omitted from the calibration, as it appeared to be residual material probably displaced from a preceding phase of activity. In keeping with the interpretative approach of this thesis, radiocarbon determinations in the text are derived from mathematical modelling and are thus italicised throughout the text. The laboratory code accompanies each use of modelled radiocarbon data, which allows both the conventional date and calibrated range to be identified if required.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Lab Code</th>
<th>Conventional date (+/- 40 BP)</th>
<th>Calibrated date 2-sigma</th>
<th>Modelled Probability distribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barrow/ primary burial</td>
<td>Burial 48</td>
<td>250161</td>
<td>1550</td>
<td>AD 422-596</td>
<td>AD 409–530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrow/ Group 2 burials</td>
<td>Burial 47</td>
<td>247005</td>
<td>1530</td>
<td>AD 427-609</td>
<td>AD 449–565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Burial 58</td>
<td>247008</td>
<td>1550</td>
<td>AD 422-596</td>
<td>AD 449–564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ring ditch/ Stage 1</td>
<td>Ditch F63</td>
<td>247009</td>
<td>1530</td>
<td>AD 427-609</td>
<td>AD 490–602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ring ditch/ Stage 4</td>
<td>Ditch F196</td>
<td>247207</td>
<td>1580</td>
<td>AD 401-569</td>
<td>AD 487–595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ring ditch/ Group 3 burials</td>
<td>Burial 1</td>
<td>247001</td>
<td>1550</td>
<td>AD 422-596</td>
<td>AD 489–599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ring ditch/ Late Group 3 burials</td>
<td>Burial 54</td>
<td>247007</td>
<td>1430</td>
<td>AD 559-663</td>
<td>AD 575–657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 4 burials</td>
<td>Burial 18</td>
<td>247003</td>
<td>1460</td>
<td>AD 539-655</td>
<td>AD 567–651</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cemetery/ Settlement Stage 1</td>
<td>Ditch F370</td>
<td>241296</td>
<td>1410</td>
<td>AD 569-671</td>
<td>AD 579–662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>247011</td>
<td>1430</td>
<td>AD 559-663</td>
<td>AD 575–657</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Later burial?</td>
<td>Burial 13</td>
<td>247002</td>
<td>1210</td>
<td>AD 687-937</td>
<td>AD 668–870</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 Summary of radiocarbon dates from Collierstown 1
2.6 Finding a classification

Contributions to Late Iron Age and early medieval burial archaeology in Ireland of recent years have primarily focused on how dual processes of cultural continuity and adaptation resulted in the burial rites and monument forms of early medieval mortuary practice and ritual (O’Brien 1992, 1999, 2003, in press), culminating in the adoption of extended inhumation following the 2nd century AD (O’Brien 1992, 130–133). O’Brien (ibid) argues inhumation was reintroduced around the 1st century AD through wider contact with Roman Britain replacing the native rite of cremation, which had been exclusively practised since the Middle Bronze Age (see Grogan 2004) and developing to its Iron Age form of token cremations, with or without grave goods, placed on the ground surface or in small pits and generally covered by a low mound, enclosed by a ditch and bank arrangement or inserted in existing burial monuments (O’Brien 1992). O’Brien suggested acculturation from both Roman and non-Roman parts of Britain drove this process at individual or community level, and is at the core of broader processes of interaction and acculturation that drove wider societal change (as argued by Mytum 1992, 17-18; and Renfrew 1986, 1-18).

O’Brien’s culture-historical approach to the integration of historical and archaeological sources has its critics (Dickinson 2002, 73), however her research was extremely important in first identifying enclosed cemeteries containing 5th–7th century AD burials as the burial places of familial or kin groups without an association to a church and corresponding to *ferta* or *religa* known from texts (Bieler 1979; 145). O’Brien considers examples of penannular ditches enclosing burials as indicative of Anglo-Saxon influence, stressing the geographical location of much of her evidence in the mid-Leinster region of counties Dublin, Kildare and Meath, though indigenous ancestral forms are perhaps more appropriate forerunners (O’Sullivan & Harney 2007, 158), and has also argued that burial associated with visible monuments may reflect a deliberate acts by emplaced communities (O’Brien 2003, 67), perhaps as part of the formulation and maintenance of territorial relationships, reaffirming earlier boundaries and real or mythical ties to the landscape (see Moore 2007, 79–102), or that intruding groups may have sought to legitimise territorial claims by intertwining themselves with local myths and stories, thus reinforcing territorial claims by ‘possessing’ these myths, a manipulation comparable to the manipulation of family and kin genealogies during the same period (O’Brien in press). Placing burials within existing monuments may be
considered a continuation of ancestral practice rather than seeking intrusive causes; indeed the re-use of existing sites was a characteristic of monumental development on the Hill of Tara. While the Tara region endured its share of intruders over the early medieval period, (see Price, in Hencken 1950; Byrne 2001, Charles-Edwards 2000, 441–468), the archaeological record of local settlements (Baronstown, Castlefarm, Dowdstown, Roestown) suggested local populations remained largely stable over this period, and many settlements enjoyed uninterrupted occupation from the 6th century and after, while many of the prominent pre-7th century local dynasties surviving as landed families in the 12th century AD and thereafter (Bhreathnach 1999, 1–23).

There is enormous variation in burial practices in the period (O’Sullivan & Harney 2007), something at variance with broad models proposed by O’Brien. The term secular cemetery is so broad as to cover a multitude of site types, and works against a more thorough comprehension of a site’s development, and which is a regrettable shortcoming in recent discussions of Site M, Knowth (Stout & Stout 2008). This partially excavated site suggested a succession of increasingly larger enclosures, beginning with a circular enclosure of approximately 50 m diameter, and culminating with an outer ditch c.100 m in diameter. The innermost ditch enclosed a minimum of 52 burials and would qualify as an ancestral cemetery. The link between the burial activity within the innermost enclosure and the non-funerary activity associated with the two outermost enclosures is more ambiguous (see Stout & Stout 2008, 67, fig.32), with semi-industrial activity undertaken at the site from at least the mid-7th century AD. There are similarities perhaps to the cemeteries at Ninch (McConway 2003, 2004), Raystown (Seaver 2006, 73–87) or Johnstown (Clarke & Carlin 2008, 55–86) in this respect, where largely funerary activity was superseded by settlement or industrial activity however the boundaries between these different aspects are usually indistinct. O’Sullivan & Harney (2007, 90–96) term these places ‘settlement/cemeteries’, a poorly understood, ill-defined emerging class which nonetheless has a widespread distribution, occupying a position in the settlement hierarchy between domestic and burial sites, and with strong evidence for industry. Both Johnstown and Raystown had watermills, and Johnstown was also a significant centre for smelting and smithing iron ore (Carlin et al 2008, 87–112). Many of these sites originated as burial sites, and continued to function as burial sites intermittently, throughout the medieval period and long after the 8th century canons denouncing burial outside consecrated ground (O’Brien 1992, 136).
CHAPTER 3
STRATIGRAPHY & SEQUENCE

3.1 The barrow phase
Burial activity at Collierstown began in the 5th century with the inhumation of an adult female (hereafter B48), around which a minimum of two arcuate ditches (F283; F384) were dug, forming a segmented enclosure approximately 16m in diameter (see Figures 6, 8). The ditches defined the western and southern limits of this phase, though there is some evidence that F384 continued further along the eastern side in the and being similar in overall length and form to F283. The presence of a later ditch (F195; see ring-ditch phase/ stage 1 below) may have removed evidence for a closing segment on the northern side. This segmented arrangement was mirrored in the initial early medieval phase at Ardsallagh 2, Co. Meath (see ‘Ringditch 3; Clarke & Carlin 2009, 1–20, illus. 1.4). The ditches appeared to be a single-phase event. No surviving evidence for a mound was recorded; however, it was observed that B48 was approximately 0.2 m deeper than surrounding burials, perhaps evidence for an original low mound at the centre of the enclosure, formed by up cast from the ditches outlined above. The diameter of this mound might be inferred from the clustered arrangement of secondary burials (hereafter Group 1; see Section 3.2.1 below) that succeeded B48, which covered an area approximately 8m in diameter. B48 was a poorly preserved adult female buried perhaps in the mid-5th century AD (AD 409-530; Beta 250161; see Section 2.5). The skeleton was largely intact within a west/east grave. Decayed stone slabs at the NW and SW corners of the cut and along the northern side suggested stone lining; however, later activity may have intruded these stones as a result of soil disturbance. A burnt deposit comprising of fire-reddened clay, charcoal (hazel, cherry, oak) and burnt animal bone (unidentified except for a pig rib fragment) was found over the pelvis area (see Section 4.3 below).
3.2 Secondary burial during the barrow phase

This initial monument became the focus for two separate groups of burials. The earliest of these (Group 1) burials were arguably inserted into the extant mound sealing B48, while the second group (Group 2) avoided the preceding interments yet stayed within the limits defined by the original segmented ditches.

3.2.1 Group 1 burials

Shortly after the burial of B48, seven additional inhumations (B28, B31, B32, B41, B51, B52, B57; see Figure 6) were buried at the site, each dug into the covering mound, and not extending beyond the limits of the segmented ditches outlined above. Group 1 comprised adults/older adolescents, but only three of the skeletons could be adequately sexed (being in each case male). Intentionally positioned stones (flanking either femur of B28, and the pelvis and head of B52) may be used to infer the original presence of wood lining. No Group 1 burial was selected for radiocarbon dating; however, this interpretation places them in the later 5th century AD, (i.e. after B48 but prior to Group 2 (see Section 3.2.2 below). The time span proposed for Group 2 burials hint at a short period of interment for Group 1, perhaps confined to the subsequent generation following the burial of B48.

3.2.2 Group 2 burials

A second group represented by 14 burials (B2, B3, B15, B16, B21, B23, B40, B47, B53, B58–B62; Figure 6) post-dated Group 1. It included eight females and five males (with one unsexed individual) in a mix of graves types dominated by simple dug graves but with increasing numbers of stone-lined (B2, B15, B16, B40, B61) and wood-lined graves (B47, B53 and perhaps also B23 originally). A modelled interpretation of the radiocarbon determination for B47 (AD 449–565; Beta 247005) and B58 (AD 449–564; Beta 247008) suggested a broad range for this group. These burials were distributed unevenly across the site to the north-northeast and south-southeast of Group 1, and an assortment of burial orientations ensured burial was confined within the established limits of the site. The ensuing haphazard plan characterises this group and contrasts markedly to the structured burial plan of the subsequent group. An awareness of preceding burials provoked a concerted effort to avoid unnecessary disturbance, and only one instance of truncation was noted (B40 truncated the cut of B58 without disturbing bone). Preservation quality was mixed, with burials to the south surviving better, perhaps as a
result of being sealed beneath a bank associated with the subsequent ring ditch phase (see Section 3.3 below).

3.3 The ring ditch phase

These final Group 2 burials heralded the closing stages of what can be broadly termed the barrow phase. A total remodelling of the existing cemetery followed at some stage prior to the mid-6th century AD whereby all previous earthworks were levelled and replaced with a circular arrangement of three segmented arcuate ditches (Figures 7, 8). There were no finds associated with this initial stage; however, successive re-cuts (Stages 1–5 below) provided the setting for ritual activity that resulted in the deposition of animal bone and exotic pottery, often separated by naturally accumulated sediments perhaps reflecting periods of inactivity (see Figure 8). The cemetery builders of this phase did not construct a mound; rather they chose to have a concentric inner bank, no direct evidence for which survived. However, as noted above, the relatively improved preservation quality of burials B58–B62 may perhaps have been as a consequence of being sealed beneath an associated bank (see Section 3.2.2 above). The position of the bank can be determined from the space between the enclosing ditches and the outermost Group 3 burials (3m on the eastern/western sides, 5m on the northern/southern sides; see Section 2.6 below, Figure 7). These earthworks were intended to enclose the next group of burials (Group 3; see Section 3.4 see below), a group that disregarded the arrangements of the preceding interments, and which would be associated with evidence for episodic graveside or commemorative feasting.

3.3.1 Stage 1

A stage defined by the excavated curvilinear ditches F63 (24m x 2.38m x 0.68m), F288 (16m x 1.8m x 0.75m) and F195 (11.10m x 1.36m x 0.56m), the latter following the alignment of F283 (Barrow phase) quite closely and may have removed evidence for an earlier ditch on the same alignment, being on average 0.20m deeper than F283. A charcoal sample from this stage suggested a date of AD 490–602 (Beta 247009) for this stage.
3.3.2 Stage 2
The stage was initiated with a re-cutting of each of the Stage 1 ditches outlined above, respectively F409 (18.5m x 1.17m x 0.43m), F369 (13.10m x 1.75m x 0.50m) and F260 (10.70m x 0.99m x 0.18m; see Figure 8) and was notable for its exotic and elite artefact assemblage, including imported pottery from the eastern Mediterranean (Bii-ware; PRSW) and Gaul (E-ware; See Section 5.4 below), and a whalebone sword hilt (69:3) of Rynne’s sub-Roman form and comparable to known examples (Hencken 1950, fig 24D; Rynne 1980, 95, fig 1; see Section 5.4 below). A small quantity of iron slag (344g; see Wallace in O’Hara 2009b) from F409 suggested limited iron working on the site in this period, perhaps no more than itinerant blacksmithing, although some ritualised activity might perhaps be inferred. Contemporary early medieval literature described blacksmiths using various allegorical devices that recalled supernatural, pagan associations and imbued the craft into cycles of rebirth and regeneration (Kelly 2001, 62). The association of Phocaean Red Slipped Ware (PRSW; 69:2) and E-ware (69:1; see Doyle in O’Hara 2009b) within these features intimated a deposition date of c. AD 550 (Ian Doyle; pers. comm. in O’Hara 2008b).

3.3.3 Stage 3
The stage was initiated with a re-cutting of certain ditches detailed above (See Figure 8). F259 (7m x 1.12m x 0.23m) was a short truncated re-cut of F409, while F261 (10.70m x 0.99m x 0.37m) was a re-cut of F260. Finds included further sherds of Bii amphorae (207:1; 207:3; 208:2) and relatively frequent charred grains (oats, barley and assorted grasses).

3.3.4 Stage 4
An important horizon in the development of the ring ditch phase witnessed the deliberate backfilling of F259 and its replacement by an approximately concentric, curvilinear ditch (F24: 9.50m x 2.13m x 0.44m) located 4m east of its predecessor. This ditch was interpreted as an extension to an increasingly congested cemetery, possibly towards the final Group 3 interments (see Section 3.4.1 below). The exact chronology of this development is unclear and difficult to determine on the stratigraphical evidence as the only burial group (Group 4) to truncate F259 also cuts F24. F196 (5.06m x 1.42m x 0.75m) was a short arcuate ditch or pit immediately northwest of the western terminal of F369 (Stage 2 above). F196 may represent an expansion of the site in the same manner
as F24 above. Seven deposits which shared the banded deposit/sediment stratigraphy noted in other stages. Artifacts included Bii pottery (198: 1–3; 247:1) and a further fragment of an iron object (246:1). A sample of alder from F196 suggested a radiocarbon range of AD 487–595 (Beta 247207) for this stage.

3.3.5 Stage 5
A re-cut of Stage 4 ditch F24, F240 (19.5m x 1.60m x 0.42m) had inclusions of animal bone, charcoal, fragments of iron and copper-alloy objects (59:1–3). A later feature F62 (7.06m x 1.60m x 0.40m) was difficult to interpret, representing either a pit or perhaps a further re-cut of F240.

3.4 The ring ditch cemeteries
The multiphase monument described above was associated with two groups of burials (Groups 3 & 4), the distinction between which is related to the excavation of F24 (Stage 4) and is characterised by a significant change in the constituent demography of the cemetery with the interments of the first infant/child burials.

3.4.1 Group 3 burials
This was the largest group of burials within the cemetery and is associated broadly with Stages 1–3 above, with approximately 26 interments (B1, B9–B11, B15, B19, B20, B22, B24–B27, B29, B33–B39, B42–B46, B54, B55; Figure 7) formally laid out in irregular rows placed centrally within the enclosing ditches. Arranging the burials in this manner caused significant disarticulation of Groups 1 and 2, though careful attention was paid to reburying the disturbed bone, either in the original grave, within charnel pits or as grave lining. Greater organisation of the cemetery was also suggested by the re-use of previously dug graves (e.g. B10 and B44 were later buried in the plots of B9 and B46, respectively). Grave type included a mix of stone-lined (nine examples) and dug graves (13 examples). Preserved wood lining was found in four burials. The demographic of the cemetery was once again exclusively adult (three male, three possibly male, three female, six possibly female, 11 unsexed), which suggested the cemetery continued to be used in this period for individuals of particular status. That these may be the remains of an elite or noble rank may be inferred from the presence of imported goods and sword hilts during Stage 2 and generally across the ring ditch phase.
It might be possible to subdivide this group into earlier and later categories if F259 (see Section 3.3.4 above; Figure 7) was effectively redundant and cut through at the end of Stage 3. If F24 (Stage 4) was an expansion of the limits of the site, the burials B1, B9–B11, B20, B42, B43, B54 and B55 are likely to be later additions to the cemetery. This may also be corroborated in the location of these burials beneath the suggested location for the bank accompanying this phase. This separation of this group into two elements blurs considerably the chronological boundary with the following group.

3.4.2 Group 4 burials
This final group comprised 12 individuals (B4–B8, B12–B14, B17, B18, B49, B50; see Figure 11), which may have originated as an extension of Group 3 towards the east, extending over both Stage 3 and Stage 4 ditches in the process (see Sections 3.3.3 & 3.3.4 above). Graves were dug (five examples), stone lined (six examples) and wood lined (one example, although B49 had faint traces for wood lining within its stone lining). Five of these burials had substantial flagstone lining, while B12 was lined with large cobbles. The burials comprised four male, one possible male, one female, two possible female and four unsexed (which included three infant burials; B8, B17, B49), the first child burials at the cemetery. In demographic terms, this contrasted significantly with the strictly adult profiles of Groups 1–3, however without a wider application of radiocarbon dating, these burials pose more questions than they potentially answer, particularly as the horizon between Group 3 and Group 4 is so uncertain. The available radiocarbon dates indicate burial was occurring during the early 7th century AD, contemporary with the excavation of an enclosing ditch (AD 567–651; Beta 247003; see Section 3.6.1 below), but also possibly as late as the 10th century AD, (B13, an adult male dated to AD 668–870; Beta 247002). Without further dating evidence, the correct association of the Group 4 burials will remain uncertain (see Figure 11). The demographic of the group might however be expected for a small family group associated with the cemetery/settlement phase (see Section 3.6 below).
3.5 Additional features

3.5.1 Postholes/ pits
A cluster of postholes and pits (F94, F96, F98, F100; F117, F120, F372) were recorded at the centre of the cemetery. It wasn’t clear which phase these features belonged to, or whether they were contemporary with each other. One post cut the fill of B47, which suggested it was inserted after the Group 2 burials. The layout of these posts did not form to any recognisable structural pattern, however, it is recognised, that subsequent occupation at the site occurred and the possibility that these features were part of a disturbed later structure cannot be ignored (see Figures 5, 7, 11). Clarke & Carlin (2009, 8–16, illus. 1.7) refer to instances of postholes within the cemetery at Ardsallagh 1, a site with no demonstrable settlement activity, and which might support the evidence for the erection of large marker posts in surrounding cemeteries in this period. Medieval texts record the erection of crosses at cemeteries (Bieler 1979, 115, 155–7), and are usually seen as small portable objects although the material of the marker/cross is not made explicit in surviving texts. Many were likely to be wooden objects, the evidence for which is unlikely to survive (see Hamlin 1987, 138–40).

3.5.2 Squared enclosure
An arrangement of two L-shaped shallow ditches/gullies were located immediately north of the cemetery. F132 (14m x 1.00m x 0.35m) and F165 (10m x 0.60m x 0.35m) formed a squared enclosure with internal dimensions of 6m x 6m (see Figure 5). There was no surviving evidence for any form of structure within them and the artefacts recovered from them (an iron knife fragment (131:1), Bii ware (131:2) and a twisted copper-alloy fragment, (219:1)), did not contribute to further understanding its function. The identification of this feature within the cemetery is unusual, but may have a literary precedent within an obscure 7th century reference by Tírechán (Swift 1993, 32-37). While hagiographically (ibid.) and archaeologically (at Illaunloughan; Walsh, 1993; Marshall & Walsh 1998) there is evidence for the construction of earthen churches and/or shrines during the 7th century AD, the form and scale of these structures is uncertain. The features at Collierstown defined a small area and their arrangement suggested it was entered from the south, the arrangement of the features relative to F63 (ring ditch phase; stage 1) suggest it may have been in use when the burial areas was expanded and delimited by F24 (ring ditch phase, stage 4; see Figures 5, 7). Such an enclosed space within a cemetery is currently unique in an Irish context as far as
determinable, but are more common on the continent among early Christians however, where special edifices were erected within cemeteries so meals could be held during memorial services. Such buildings are termed *cella memoriae* by Lee (2007, 87–104), and are frequently identified in Anglo-Saxon Christian cemeteries as postholes and gullies, some with obvious patterns, such as a lozenge-shaped structure at Melbourn, Cambridgeshire (ibid, 94, plate 8). O’Brien (1992, 1999) has consistently argued for significant Anglo-Saxon influence in Leinster and Brega in this period, particular in north Brega where the name *Conaing*, from the Anglo-Saxon for king (*cyning*), was adopted by the branch of Síl nAedo Sláine who became as the Uí Conaing and who resided at Knowth (O’Brien 1999, 48; see Swift, in Byrne *et al* 2008, 10-15). Anglo-Saxon bishops were regular visitors to Irish monasteries and such contacts, extending to Gaul/Merovingian Francia, helped engender the cross-fertilization of artistic, iconographic and decorative ideas which combined Celtic, Germanic and Romanic elements in Irish manuscript art during the 7th–8th centuries AD (O’Brien 1993, 96), a fusion that may have introduced novel elements of mortuary rituals like the idea of *cella memoriae* into existing native rituals.

3.6 The cemetery/settlement phase

This phase marked a significant alteration in morphology at the site, and was accompanied by a change in function. It is divided into separate stages, the first enveloping the entire site within a large circular ditch, followed by a re-cut and accompanying extension. The nature of activities at the site in this stage is problematic. There is possible evidence for continued interment of burials from Group 4 (see Section 3.4.2 above), however it is likely that this was a period of primarily non-funerary activity, and the site may now be classified as a cemetery/settlement (see Section 2.6 above).

3.6.1 Stage 1

The first enclosing event probably occurred around the beginning of the 7th century AD (*AD 579–662* (Beta 241296); *AD 575–657* (Beta 247011)), when the preceding arrangement of earthworks and burials were enclosed within an approximately circular enclosure (F370: 40m NS x 35m EW; Figure 9). The character of this ditch, its dimensions and diameter, recall those of enclosed settlements of this period, adjacent examples of which can be found in Collierstown Td (ME038:003; see Section 2.2 above; Figure 3), and which might include the crop mark site at Ross (ME038:001; Wiggans
This Stage 1 ditch contained a moderate quantity of discarded animal bone, approximately 42% of total number of identified specimens (NISP), representing a minimum of 22 individual animals (NMI; see Tables 5 & 6 below). Artefacts from this stage were few but included (probably residual) Bii amphorae sherds (376:3; 379:2) and fragments of iron objects (377:1–2; 378:1) from poorly contexted horizons and may also be residual debris from preceding phases.

The enclosure of such a site is at variance to the amount of burials that occurred after its excavation and while there is a marked reduction in both the rate and quantity of interments taking place, the nature of the later activity is not immediately obvious. There is no conclusive structural evidence for domestic activity, no kilns or furnaces etc; yet there is occupation material in the form of discarded animal bone, and various pits and internal partition features, all of which point to non-specific economic functions rather than exclusively ritual or funerary activities. Radiocarbon dates suggested this stage spanned the late 6th or early 7th century AD (AD 579–662; Beta 241296 and AD 575–657; Beta 247011). This phase (stage uncertain) included the partitioning of the internal area into two unequal parts by a series of shallow, curving gullies (the largest being F242: 12.30m x 0.71m x 0.55m), which extended northwest beyond the limit of excavation. Shallow partition gullies such as there were identified at adjacent enclosed settlements in the same period (e.g. Roestown 2, see O’Hara 2007, 2009c-d).

3.6.2 Stage 2
The final stage of this phase involved a re-cut of the existing ditch, with the addition of a substantial triangular extension to the south (F25/F360; see Figure 9). F25 (58.5m x 4.50m x 1.30m) and F360 (54m x 2.35m x 1.10m) replaced the eastern and western sides of F370 respectively. Both contained quantities of animal bone, with burnt bone and seashell also present. Preserved wood survived where conditions permitted. Artefacts included a copper-alloy spiral-headed ring-pin (51:1), a wooden stave fragment (375:1) and further Bii ware (456:1) as well as clearly unrelated flint objects such as an end scraper (53:2). Charcoal radiocarbon dated basal deposits within this feature to AD 575–657 (Beta 247011), which may be not reflect the true age of the deposit. The final deposits sealing this ditch contained C13th-14th Dublin-type ware (56:2, 5–8), an iron (?medieval) spur fragment (56:4), and post-medieval pottery (56:1), the latter
highlighting the extended period of time over which the enclosing ditch remained open, and the relative recent date at which it was finally reclaimed. Several shallow, ephemeral drains were recorded cutting into these deposits, however their impact and significance was limited. Three pits cut into a backfilled features of previous phases are also assigned to this phase (see Figure 11). Each pit contained animal bone and molluscs and would appear to have served as middens within the site in this stage. One of the pits may have originally functioned as a well, as it collected and retained groundwater under normal conditions, and only dried out during excavation after weeks of sustained drought in early summer 2007. It was cut by a later gully/pit that contained a Class B comb side plate fragment (317:1), which broadly underscored 6th to 7th century AD activity.

This expansion of the site at the start of this stage is a strong indication that Collierstown was functioning as an active site in this period. However, as the stage progressed, the stratigraphy and archaeological evidence suggested an overall trend towards abandonment. Burial may still have taken place sporadically, as suggested by the late date for B13, however further dating of the Group 3 and 4 burials would be required to fully understand the point at which burial ceased. In terms of its size however and surviving associated remains, Collierstown was materially indistinguishable from its neighbouring ratha in the 8th century AD.

These progressive modifications to the form and function of Collierstown are a reminder of the difficulty in modelling settlement patterns and behaviour in strict, compartmental terms.
CHAPTER 4
DISCUSSION

4.1 Form
The cultural biography of Collierstown in many ways presents a microcosm of the wider societal transformations that characterised the early medieval period. The initial form of the cemetery was rooted in an ancient and insular pre-Christian burial rite that may be traced to the Late Neolithic (see Corlett 2005, 67–69; Russell et al. 2002, 23–31), but was to find its greatest expression in subsequent millennia, evolving over the course of the Bronze Age (see Grogan 2004, 61–71) to its developed Iron Age form comprising a low, enclosed mound covering token deposits of cremated human remains (see O’Brien 1999, 130–133; Raftery 1994, 178–199 for general overviews; see Hickey 1996 for a local example from Skreen Td.). The rite of inhumation was introduced in the early centuries AD, most likely through contact with Britain (O’Brien in press, 189–214). The practise of building mounds continued into the 6th century AD, as suggested archaeologically by mounds at Ninch and Rosnaree, Co. Meath and Pollacorrague, Co. Galway (Sweetman 1983; 59–68; Stout 2000; O’Brien in press), and hagiographically, in the 7th century AD account of the death and burial of King Loiguire’s daughters (Bieler 1979). The primary burial occurs around the traditional date for beginning of the early medieval period and as such represents a tangible continuity with Late Iron Age practices (see O’Brien 1992), and its continued use over subsequent centuries highlights unwillingness of ‘early’ Christians to wholly abandon ‘pagan’ sites and places (though traditional is probably a more appropriate term).

Mounds and enclosures were important reference features, woven into myths and folklore (see Newman 2005, 362) and given a supernatural significance through association with gods or heroes. These traditional places remained in the consciousness of local communities for centuries, and those on the Hill of Tara were famously described in the 12th century compilation Dínnseanchas Érenn, in particular Dindginai Temrach (Bhreatnach 1995, 68–76; see also Swift 1996). Many of these mounds and enclosure were to survive in folk memory as having special connections to the underworld, inhabited by fairies (see Ní Ceallaigh 2007), with many reused as cilíní,
burial grounds for ‘strangers’ and unbaptised children in later times reinforcing supernatural liminal associations (Finlay 2000, 407–422). Discussing nineteenth century attitudes to ringforts, Ní Ceallaigh (ibid, 108) described communities visiting such ancient places to remove effects of misfortune and to access the perceived supernatural power of these sites. However, where later communities maintained a prohibition on interfering with such places, archaeological evidence suggests there was no compunction towards incorporating burial sites or existing monuments into new structures, and may have attempted to exploit the supernatural associations. At a wider level, the identification of ring-ditches within, adjacent to, or cut by, early medieval enclosures (e.g. Castlefarm, and perhaps Ross 1; see O’Connell 2009b; Wiggins 2009) might reflect purposeful integration of earlier monuments, similar to including an existing barrow cemetery into the Rath of the Synods (Grogan 2008, 52–53, fig. 3.1) or siting of a settlement on the summit of a megalithic tomb at Knowth (Eogan 1991). This didn’t just occur at a settlement level; the process can be recognized at more discrete, personal places, such as incorporation of stones bearing megalithic art into souterrains (e.g. Lismullin (O’Connell 2009, 38; Illus. 2.11) or grave lining (e.g. Site M, Knowth (Stout & Stout 2008, 41, 61; fig 28), and may also have occurred among individual belongings, with O’Sullivan (2006, 1–30) suggesting certain prehistoric objects may have been collected and revered as tokens and talisman. This incorporation of the old into the new, the enshrining of the dead within the space of the living is the common feature that links these settlement/cemeteries and may perhaps have been a method of stabilizing the ‘state of severe flux’ (Warner 1988, 55) of the period, providing a sense of identity and attachment (see Devlin 2007, 1–15; Thomas 1993, 32) to significant ancestral places within a rapidly changing landscape and society. As archaeologists, all we can strive to do is document and record each of these instances.
4.2 Surrounding landscape

There was potentially a considerable population in the area during the Late Iron Age, and a wealthy, industrious population at that (see Gavin & Newman 2008, 1–10). There are early century AD horizons on Tara at Raith na Rí (Roche 1999, 18–30; 2002, 19–82) and Rath of the Synods (Grogan 2008, 81–93), the latter having artefact associations with Roman Britain and Gaul during the Late Iron Age (ibid, 96). Newman (2005, 378) suggests a number of sites surrounding the valley, including Rath Lugh, Ringlestown Rath, Rath Miles, Raith Lóegaire, Riverstown linear earthwork were part of a system of defensive forts protecting Tara, and perhaps included more distant forts at Drumanagh, Platin, Carrikdexter, Carrickspringan and Knowth. The identification of 2nd–4th century AD Roman material at Drumanangh, Co. Dublin (Bateson 1973, 1976) could indicate a wider network of groups with political or kinship ties to parts of Roman Britain. While these sites may have been a focus for settlement in this period, and future excavations at some of these locations may go some way to resolving that question, the general impression of settlement for the Iron Age period is for [relatively] low population density and activity. In comparison, the early medieval was a period in which people became visible again (cf. Raftery 1994; chapter 6) and contrast couldn’t be more obvious, with in excess of 45,000 surviving ringforts known (Stout 1997), 1200 recorded crannógs (O’Sullivan & Harney 2007, 99) and unknown numbers of unenclosed settlements known from the period AD 600–900 (see Stout 1997, Kerr 2007). The identification of five large early medieval enclosure complexes along the M3 route at Castlefarm, Roestown, Baronstown, Dowdstown and Boyerstown, as well as further ringforts at Ross and Garretstown helps to balance the Record of Monuments and Places for the area (see Section 2.2 above) and underscores the potential for unknown numbers of early medieval sites to exist in the wider area.

The sudden increase in identifiable settlements from the 6th century AD testifies to significant and unprecedented transformation of the landscape. Pollen cores from waterlogged medieval deposits at Roestown 2 and Baronstown permitted localised environmental reconstructions suggesting a widely deforested landscape, largely cultivated or in pasture (see relevant environmental appendices in O’Hara 2009d & Linnane 2009). Woodland pollen was still identified, generally alder and oak, with birch, elm, hazel and elder present in lesser quantities. In an area where availability of agricultural land appeared to have been at a premium, one may expect to find small
woodland copses, perhaps in marginal areas, such as marshes and possibly the flanks of the valley towards Skreen and Tara. There is considerable evidence for land clearance and cereal cultivation in the period c. AD 500–730 at Emlagh Bog, Co. Meath, with further intensification of farming, including a strong arable component, in the mid 8th century (Newman et al., 2007, see also Kerr et al. 2009), clearances which have parallels elsewhere (Edwards 1990, 52; Raftery 1994, 122; Weir 1995; Waddell 1998, 377; Laing 2006, 65). Palaeoenvironmental data from 5th–6th century deposits from Collierstown, supported by evidence from surrounding sites, suggested a decrease in the number of woodland taxa available during the ring-ditch and subsequent settlement/cemetery phases, perhaps reflecting a reduction of available species; a consequence perhaps of wider clearance and increased exploitation of the local woodland resource. Improved management of woodland cannot be ruled out, and it is unlikely that the woodland resource was ever significantly depleted, yet there must have been ongoing pressure on existing woodlands and the increased usage of less desirable species such as elder for firewood during the cemetery/settlement phase may reflect this, a phenomenon noted elsewhere at Skreen (O’Neill & O’Hara 2009) and Boyerstown (Clarke 2009a). Such pressure may provide a reason for the change in site function between the ring-ditch and settlement/cemetery phases.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Townland</th>
<th>Lab</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Conventional date (BP)</th>
<th>Radiocarbon date (2-sigma)†</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ardsallagh</td>
<td>BETA</td>
<td>227863</td>
<td>1700 +/- 40 AD</td>
<td>246–420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blundelstown</td>
<td>BETA</td>
<td>247037</td>
<td>1820 +/- 40 AD</td>
<td>86–334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baronstown</td>
<td>BETA</td>
<td>247028</td>
<td>1640 +/- 40 AD</td>
<td>263–537</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castletown Tara</td>
<td>BETA</td>
<td>247054</td>
<td>1790 +/- 40 AD</td>
<td>127–345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lismullin</td>
<td>SUERC</td>
<td>23734</td>
<td>1705 +/- 33 AD</td>
<td>250–420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SUERC</td>
<td>23474</td>
<td>1710 +/- 30 AD</td>
<td>250–410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SUERC</td>
<td>23473</td>
<td>1735 +/- 30 AD</td>
<td>230–390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SUERC</td>
<td>23471</td>
<td>1790 +/- 30 AD</td>
<td>130–340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SUERC</td>
<td>23472</td>
<td>1780 +/- 30 AD</td>
<td>130–340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SUERC</td>
<td>23479</td>
<td>1810 +/- 30 AD</td>
<td>120–330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ross</td>
<td>BETA</td>
<td>247073</td>
<td>1690 +/- 40 AD</td>
<td>249–426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BETA</td>
<td>247205</td>
<td>1590 +/- 40 AD</td>
<td>392–562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garretstown</td>
<td>BETA</td>
<td>246976</td>
<td>1810 +/- 40 AD</td>
<td>86–334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skreen</td>
<td>BETA</td>
<td>247035</td>
<td>1890 +/- 40 AD</td>
<td>28–230</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

† BETA dates have determined by calibrating conventional date with OxCal program

Table 5 Radiocarbon dates for pre-6th century AD cereal drying kilns
The explosion of settlement witnessed from the 6th century AD in the area was given a firm foundation through widespread arable farming, as suggested by a number of cereal drying kilns dating from around the 3rd century AD in Lismullin, Blundelstown, Ardsallagh and Castletown Tara townlands; see O’Connell 2009a, Danagher 2009, Clarke 2009b, Rathbone 2009a). The toponym of neighbouring Lismullin townland recalls a myth that it was the location of a 2nd century AD watermill (Lios Muillean; ‘the fort of the mill’) built by Cormac, the first mill of its kind to be constructed in Ireland (Connon 2008, 110) and available radiocarbon dates (see Tables 5 & 6) suggest a thriving arable economy from this period and into the early medieval period, where further examples of kilns were identified at Roestown, Baronstown, Dowdstown, Ross; Skreen, Lismullin and Garretstown townlands (see O’Hara 2009c-d; Linnane & Kinsella 2009; O’Hara et al 2009; Cagney & O’Hara 2009; O’Hara 2009e; O’Neill & O’Hara 2009; Wiggans 2009; O’Connell 2009a; Rathbone 2009b). Crop production was part of a mixed farming economy that was practised in the early medieval period, and large numbers of livestock were being maintained for meat and produce (see McCormick 1995, 33–37).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Townland</th>
<th>Lab</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Conventional date (BP)</th>
<th>Radiocarbon date (2-sigma)†</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blundelstown</td>
<td>BETA</td>
<td>247042</td>
<td>1560 +/- 40</td>
<td>AD 415–585</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BETA</td>
<td>247043</td>
<td>1500 +/- 40</td>
<td>AD 434–644</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baronstown</td>
<td>BETA</td>
<td>247014</td>
<td>1280 +/- 40</td>
<td>AD 657–862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BETA</td>
<td>247016</td>
<td>1450 +/- 40</td>
<td>AD 546–656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BETA</td>
<td>247017</td>
<td>1580 +/- 40</td>
<td>AD 401–569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BETA</td>
<td>247018</td>
<td>1580 +/- 40</td>
<td>AD 401–569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BETA</td>
<td>247020</td>
<td>1500 +/- 40</td>
<td>AD 434–644</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BETA</td>
<td>247024</td>
<td>1580 +/- 40</td>
<td>AD 401–569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BETA</td>
<td>247026</td>
<td>1560 +/- 40</td>
<td>AD 415–585</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castletown Tara</td>
<td>BETA</td>
<td>247049</td>
<td>1380 +/- 40</td>
<td>AD 580–765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BETA</td>
<td>247050</td>
<td>1420 +/- 40</td>
<td>AD 565–666</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BETA</td>
<td>247059</td>
<td>1240 +/- 40</td>
<td>AD 680–882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lismullin</td>
<td>SUERC</td>
<td>23458</td>
<td>1534 +/- 30</td>
<td>AD 420–590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dowdstown</td>
<td>BETA</td>
<td>247069</td>
<td>1180 +/- 40</td>
<td>AD 716–971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BETA</td>
<td>247070</td>
<td>1320 +/- 40</td>
<td>AD 647–775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BETA</td>
<td>247071</td>
<td>1340 +/- 40</td>
<td>AD 635–774</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garretstown</td>
<td>BETA</td>
<td>246973</td>
<td>1530 +/- 40</td>
<td>AD 427–609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BETA</td>
<td>246978</td>
<td>1190 +/- 40</td>
<td>AD 695–967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roestown</td>
<td>BETA</td>
<td>246966</td>
<td>1210 +/- 40</td>
<td>AD 687–937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BETA</td>
<td>246697</td>
<td>1450 +/- 40</td>
<td>AD 546–656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BETA</td>
<td>246968</td>
<td>1390 +/- 40</td>
<td>AD 573–688</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skreen</td>
<td>BETA</td>
<td>241314</td>
<td>1570 +/- 40</td>
<td>AD 409–575</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

†BETA dates have determined by calibrating conventional date with OxCal program

Table 6 Radiocarbon dates for post-6th century AD cereal drying kilns
The calculated minimum number of individuals (MNI) at Collierstown and adjacent settlements at Dowdstown and Baronstown (generally 6th century AD and after), or those more distant settlements at Roestown Lagore, Castlefarm and Boyerstown, as well as the cemetery at Ardsallagh (see Table 7 below) point to large numbers of cattle, sheep/goat and pig being grazed in the region, requiring significant tracts of land for meadow and presumably a requirement for suitable fencing put further demand further demand for timber and increased pressure on local woodland.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Phases</th>
<th>Date (AD)</th>
<th>Cattle</th>
<th>Sheep/Goat</th>
<th>Pig</th>
<th>Horse</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baronstown</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>5th–10th</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roestown 2</td>
<td>1+2</td>
<td>6th–8th</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castlefarm</td>
<td>2–5</td>
<td>5th–10th</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dowdstown 2</td>
<td>2 + 3</td>
<td>6th–10th</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boyerstown 3</td>
<td>1–6</td>
<td>5th–10th</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collierstown</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>5th–9th</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ardsallagh 1</td>
<td>2–6</td>
<td>5th–10th</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(based on information contained in Linnane 2009; O’Hara et al 2009; O’Hara 2009; O’Connell 2009; Clarke 2009)

Table 7 NMI data from contemporary sites adjacent to Collierstown

4.3 Evidence for ritualized activity

Ritualised activity following death was probably common to all ranks of the medieval population, although status may have determined the duration and character of such ritual. Tírechán mentions ‘days of mourning’ following the death of Loiguire’s daughters (Bieler 1979, 145), and a 10th century poem tells of Achall’s nine day lament for her brother Erc (Bhreathnach 1996, 37–41). Literary evidence is not restricted to pre-Christian personage, Adomnán recorded St Columba’s funeral ceremonies in AD 597 were carried out over three days and nights (Leigh Fry 1999, 84–88). It is difficult to provide detailed analysis of rites and rituals in this period for Christian or non-Christian, as the final act of disposing of the body was largely homogenous across the island, that is within simple, unlined graves without accompanying material. There are literary and legal references to mourning, fasting, keening, but the asceticism of the final act of burial rite does not lend itself to the type of research that has been applied to the burial archaeology of other jurisdictions in the same period (e.g. Anglo-Saxon burials in England, or Merovingian burials in France; Halsall 1995, 9–14) but it is largely consistent with the behavioural attitude to corporeal deposition for much of the later prehistoric period in Ireland as we understand it, where the eventual act of token committal was the
final element of a prolonged mortuary ritual involving different rites and processes. The adoption of inhumation burial during the 2nd century AD quickly led to the prevalence of the supine form, being effectively ubiquitous by the 5th century AD, with only occasional examples of crouched, flexed or prone burials, and very rare evidence for the continuation of the cremation rite (see Grogan 1984, 298–316). What was unlikely to change so significantly was the ritualised behaviour associated with death, periods of mourning, lamenting cries (keening; see Lysaght 1997), feasting etc; the complex rituals that do not leave obvious archaeological markers. Looking beyond the obvious contrasts of burial rite, the observable practices at the time of interment in late prehistoric cremation burials and early medieval inhumed burials are quite similar in their general ascetic approach towards accompanying goods.

The sparse burial rites, when coupled with unpredictable levels of preservation, and disparate quality of information recovered from cemetery excavations, does not generally provide sufficient data required to discuss in detail aspects of status, ritual and symbolism. The Collierstown excavation provided a rare opportunity to investigate a range of evidence for feasting and other ritualised behaviour, beginning with structured deposition of charcoal (hazel, cherry, oak) and burnt animal bone (unidentified except for a pig rib fragment) that accompanied the primary burial B48, which incidentally was the source of the strong magnetic anomaly recorded in the geophysical survey (see Section 1.4 above). Its composition suggested a token offering of burnt material not dissimilar to the token deposits of charcoal and burnt clay that accompanied Late Bronze Age and Iron Age cremations. The practice may reflect the continuation of ancient insular traditions, as implied by the form of monument (a low mound) erected over the burial (see below). Similar deposits have been recorded recently at Ballygarraun West, Co. Galway, where an adult female was buried (c. AD 432–661) on a deposit of charcoal (alder, hazel) and charred seeds/grains (black bindweed, barley, wheat; Quinney 2007, 30–31). In the case of burnt grain, O’Brien (1999; 55) has stressed the custom of burning grain, denounced in The Penitential of Theodore (xv, 3) and later the Confessional of Egbert, might be related to the Anglo-Saxon or perhaps Romano-British custom of burning grain for purification purposes at the house of the deceased. In certain Anglo-Saxon burials, the occurrence of charred grain, either within vessels or scattered over the upper body, may have served a similar purifying purpose. Quinney (ibid) compares the deposit to charcoal burials of Merovingian date, but they may share a
common ancestry to ill-defined practices in England and Northern France, misleadingly described by Meaney (1964, 16–17) and Halsall (1995, 7, 12) as ‘half cremations’, where graves may contain significant deposits of charcoal and ash placed prior to or after deposition of the body, and in many cases representing sweepings rather than in-situ burning.

Instances of oversized graves in Group 2 (B47) and 4 (B13, B17) were recorded, where the cut of the grave was considerably larger than required to receive the corpse. In two cases (B17 & B47) evidence for wood lining survived, while the positioning of stones around B13 suggested wood lining was formerly present. O’Brien (2007) noted similar phenomena at Westreave, Co. Dublin and interpreted it as a possible indication for organic material (flowers, foodstuff or clothing etc), which may have been buried along with corpse, perhaps something similar to the fern and bracken described by Sweetman (1983, 59-68) as lining a 4th–6th century grave at Ninch, Co. Meath. In one burial (B39; Group 3), an otherwise unworked antler tine (278:1) was carefully placed beside the left hand of an adult male, a rite identified in at least two other early medieval burials at Lehinch, Co. Offaly (4th–6th century AD; Ó’Floinn 1988, 65-79; O’Brien in press), where antler and horse bones were found associated with an adult female inhumation, and also at Ballygarraun West, within the previously discussed burial, where naturally shed red deer antler was placed over the pelvic region (Quinney ibid). The identification of antlers among burial deposits may have been intended to symbolise regeneration and immortality and were an important iconographic symbol of the early Christian period (Meaney 1981, 142).

4.4 Feasting & Status
Animal remains were deposited across the site and occur in contexts spanning the barrow to settlement/cemetery phase, occurring mostly as fragmented inclusions within ditches, but occasionally within grave fills also. Faunal remains are often recorded in prehistoric burials (see McCormick 1986, 37–48), but their presence is often regarded as accidental, though occasionally it may represent deliberate deposition. The absence of unequivocal settlement remains during this period of burial lends some credibility to the potential for the recovered remains to be evidence for food preparation and consumption within the cemetery, and representing either mortuary or commemorative feasting, recorded in 7th century AD Saints’ Lives and law tracts (O’Brien 1999, 55). Lee (2007)
has demonstrated the significance of feasting to Germanic and Anglo-Saxon burial customs, but examples of Irish mortuary feasts are less understood. Leigh Fry (1999, 93–94) outlined the practice in later medieval contexts to some extent, but refers to 8th century hagiographical accounts also. Earlier law texts, in particular *Di Dligiud Raith* 7 *Somaine La Flaith*; refer to clients being required under the terms of their fief to attend the commemorative feast of their lord, as well as contributing a funeral levy (food and drink) and helping to construct a burial mound (Kelly 2001, 30). After the 6th century AD, references to the digging of mounds might be anachronistic, although the periodic re-excavation of ditch segments during the ring-ditch phase at Collierstown may be its symbolic equivalent. Analysis of the faunal remains could not determine conclusively whether feasting had occurred, suggesting that the calculated meat values for cattle, sheep/goat, and pig were relatively low (see Foster, in O’Hara 2009b). This may place too much emphasis on the meat as foodstuff rather than as an offering, one intended as much for the mourners as for the deceased and despite the conclusions of the animal bone analysis, it certainly seem most probable that the animal bone deposited during the barrow, but especially the ring-ditch phases were the leftovers of feasting celebrations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Cattle</th>
<th>Sheep/Goat</th>
<th>Pig</th>
<th>Horse</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barrow</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ring ditch</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cemetery/ Settlement</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(based on Foster, in O’Hara 2009b)*

Table 8: MNI data for principal phases at Collierstown

The feasting interpretation is supported by the recovery of fine ceramic tableware (PRSWS); amphorae (B-ware) and kitchenware (E-ware) recovered primarily from mid 6th century AD deposits. The presence of these sherds in Ireland is usually interpreted as a demand for wine or oil by a secular elite (see Kelly, in O’Hara 2008b), perhaps traded from the continent for metal objects, animals and farm products (cereals, beer, implements, salt and clothing; Doherty 1980, 72). Significant quantities of E-ware were imported into Ireland, with relatively large quantities (compared to PRSW/B-ware) in the wider region coterminous with the early medieval kingdom of Brega. A single sherd (69:2) of Phocaean Red Slipped Ware (PRSW–Phocaean Form 3; otherwise known as
Late Roman C or Ai Ware) was recovered from a ditch deposit dating to ring ditch phase stage 2 (Kelly 2008, 16–18). The sherd, part of a large class of fine red-slip dishes and bowls produced at Phocaea in western Turkey is dated to the early 6th century AD (see Kelly, in O’Hara 2009b; Kelly 2008, 16–18; Kelly 2010, 35–88; Doyle 1999, 69-76). The fabric is incredibly rare in Ireland; Warner (1988, 63) considers them indicative of high status, only occurring (for certain) at Garranes Co. Cork (O’Riordáin 1942, 131-2, fig. 23, no. 249) and Cabinteely Co. Dublin (Conway 1999, 41). It was identified in a deposit also containing a sherd of E-ware (69:1), possibly an E5 lid or E3 bowl sherd (see I. Doyle, in O’Hara 2009b). The conventional dating for E ware is generally between the late sixth–late seventh centuries AD (Doyle 1998, 89-103; Campbell 2007, 46), however the deposition of both PRSW and E5 in the same context suggests a deposition date c. 550 AD (Ian Doyle, pers. comm. in O’Hara 2008b). Nine sherds of roughly contemporary Bii ware (also LR1 and Class 44; Laing 2006, 343) were recovered, five of which were part of the same vessel (see Kelly, in O’Hara 2009b). These were examples of ribbed amphorae manufactured in the Eastern Mediterranean and predominantly used for transporting wine or oil (Decker 2001, 69-86).

The identification of Mediterranean pottery is an important link to the 55 identified imported Roman objects at the Rath of the Synods from the early centuries AD (Grogan 2008, 85–86). The Roman material at Tara, although relatively poor in comparison to contemporary (i.e. later 3rd century AD; ibid, 91) high status sites in Britain, they may in an Irish context have conferred considerable prestige on its owners. Regionally, this area of Ireland was particularly open to cultural influences from Britain and the continent (see Mytum 1992 for an overview; Newman 2005, 378–382; Gavin & Newman 2008, 1–10), so it doesn’t come as a huge surprise to find evidence of the end products of the extensive trade networks that existed between the British Isles and the continent (see Wooding 1996). Nonetheless, PRSW and Bii ware are still found in such small quantities to be considered prestigious objects, and more importantly, they provide a tangible link to the imported objects of the 4th century occupation at Rath of the Synods. The presence of PRSW tableware and Bii amphorae perhaps attest to feasting, however it was not clear whether this material was deposited during a single event around mid-6th century (i.e. ring-ditch phase/ stage 2), or whether they accumulated over a longer period, through random breakage etc. If it is presumed that those interred at the site were drawn from a wider community with access to exotic pottery, then it may be
concluded that interment in this period was perhaps restricted to persons of status (recall the restricted demography of Groups 1–3 outlined above). Further evidence of the status of individuals attending this site in this period may be inferred in the whalebone sword hilt (69:3; see Rynne 1980, 95 and fig 1), which was recovered from the same deposit as the PRSW and E-ware (i.e. mid-6th century AD). A 3rd century AD Latin verse noted Irish men ‘who cultivate elegance adorn the hilts of their swords with the tusks of great sea-animals’ (Mallory 1980, 104); tusks probably extended to whalebone, which was rare and valued as a raw material (Kelly 2000, 283–285).
CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSIONS

The excavation of Collierstown 1 recorded the physical transformation of a typical Late Iron Age barrow into a typical early medieval enclosed settlement over a period of perhaps two or three centuries. Archaeologically, the major actions undertaken to enact this transformation can be identified without difficulty, the reasons behind these actions are less well understood.

How can we begin to define sites that might equally be called a barrow, a cemetery or a settlement? Can we make a distinction? Did its occupants? The evidence indicates a short period of burial followed the construction of the barrow before the site was considered an appropriate location to receive high status individuals during the mid-6th century. There is no reason to seek external influence or intrusion in these burials; the use of imported pottery vessels finds parallels among the 4th century AD assemblage at the Rath of the Synods, and the rites and practices have parallels elsewhere in Ireland. The burials occur in a period of expanding settlement locally, and the homes and farmsteads of those buried here surround the cemetery. The progressive modifications to the form and function of Collierstown are a reminder of the dangers in modelling settlement patterns and behaviour in strict, compartmental terms.

Why an established cemetery should grow to become a settlement is a matter for continuing study and debate, but the enshrining of the dead within the space of the living links many newly identified settlement/cemetery sites and future research may yet provide some answers. Early medieval society was in a state of severe political, religious and economic flux; and the changes to the character and function of Collierstown may well reflect this uncertainty. If in placing a settlement at a cemetery, its occupiers had hoped for long-lived success, they were to be disappointed. Despite an initial expansion of the settlement, there was no conclusive evidence for continuation of settlement activity after the 7th century AD. Gradually, Collierstown was abandoned, forgotten and lost even to local memory – until its rediscovery over a thousand years later.
Bകിപ്റ്ററിയം


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FIGURES

Figure 1 Site location
Figure 2 Detailed site location
Figure 3 Surrounding RMP & excavated archaeological sites
Figure 4 Geophysical survey
Figure 5 Post-excavation plan
Figure 6 Barrow phase
Figure 7 Ring ditch phase
Figure 8 Barrow/ Ring ditch phase sections
Figure 9 Settlement/ cemetery phase
Figure 10 Settlement/ cemetery phase sections
Figure 11 Interpretations for phase association of Group 4 cemetery and postholes
Figure 5: Post-extraction plan (Burial F# omitted)
Figure 1a: Settlement complex phase sections

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**Scale:** 1:50

**Date:** July 2010

**Legend:**
- Section drawings
- Contour lines
- Features

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Figure 11: Interpretations for Group 4 burials & positions within mound & settlement cemetery phases.

1) An expanse of Group 3 earth mound phase.  
2) A family cemetery of the settlement cemetery phase.

Possible interpretations of Group 4 burials as:

- Positioning to this phase
- Possible position as potential structure

Legend:

- Stone lining
- Wood lining
- Surviving features
- Group 4 burials
- Group 3 burials

25 m