URBAN ARCHAEOLOGY SURVEY

PART IV

COUNTY

LONGFORD

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Towns pose one of the most formidable problems faced by archaeology today. Lived in and occupied over long periods of time, and often covering quite large areas, they are the most complex form of human settlement that we know of. Deep archaeological deposits have accumulated in most towns as a result of the long period of occupation and, accordingly, towns are among the most important areas of our heritage. However, towns are also the homes of modern communities, and are the centres of present-day business, industry and cultural life. The requirements of modern life have brought considerable change to many towns with extensive road widening, building schemes, housing estates and industrial development. The demolition of buildings and the digging of deep foundations have brought about irrevocable change in the appearance of towns, and change, in this century, means more thorough destruction than anything that has gone before. The problem for archaeology is not one of preservation, although this may be desireable, but of recording standing buildings and archaeological levels before they are destroyed. The unfortunate truth is that what is not recorded now has little chance of ever being recorded later.

By its nature archaeology is concerned with the past of ordinary people. The fragmentary building remains, pottery sherds and scraps of worked stone or wood which the archaeologist discovers cannot be used to reconstruct political movements or great administrative changes. These parts of our past can only be glimpsed from documents, from what people who were alive at the time have observed themselves or heard related. Archaeological data, however, can tell us a great deal about the everyday life of ordinary people and the quality of that life in terms of the technological and economic resources of the particular time and place in question.

Urban archaeology may be defined as the study of the evolution and changing character of urban communities from their earliest origins until modern times; more especially it is concerned with the reconstruction of the natural and human environment within which and as part of which human actions take place. A methodical definition such as this, however, should not obscure the fact that urban archaeology is fundamentally concerned with the past of ordinary citizens, with the form of their houses and streets, with the business of their markets and workshops, with the style and arrangement of their churches, with health and disease, with the variety of cultural, religious and economic activity; in short, it is concerned with the life and death of communities ancestral to our own.

Development of Urban Archaeology

For long the study of the urban past has largely been the preserve of historians, sociologists and geographers and it is only recently that the potential of archaeology to uncover the past has been realised. Part of the reason for this is the general lack of awareness that almost all towns have archaeological deposits. This stems in part from the incomprehension of the ordinary man-in-the-street that a town which is lived-in can have archaeological deposts at all: purely because it is lived in, one tends to think that everything of past ages, unless it is visibly standing has been swept away. In part it also stems from the fact that the construction on a large scale of buildings requiring deep foundations has only occurred recently, and it is only as a consequence that archaeological deposits have come to light. It is also due to the fact that, in previous centuries, archaeological methods and techniques were not advanced enough to take advantage of opportunities even if they did arise. Until relatively modern times the buildings of one generation have been constructed upon the foundations of the last. As structure replaced structure the ground level rose slightly and over the centuries, in cities such as Dublin, considerable depths of archaeological deposits have accumulated.

It was at Novgorod in Russia that the potential of urban archaeology was first revealed. There, organic remains were found in large quantities and it became possible to reconstruct entire streetscapes and to chronicle the changes which happened in them as one generation succeeded the next (Thompson 1967). Gradually as excavation took place in England and Germany it became apparent that the rich archaeological material in towns was not just a side-light on urban life but it could contribute greatly to our understanding of the archaeology of entire periods and regions. In Ireland the first scientific excavations were commenced at Dublin Castle in 1961 and excavations were to continue in Dublin for the next twenty years. The interest aroused by the High Street and, later, the Wood Quay excavations was widespread and it created an interest in the archaeology of other towns. To date, excavations have taken place in some twenty-six Irish towns.

Urban sites are important to the archaeologist for a number of reasons. Firstly, in all towns archaeological deposits form the earliest archive. Only a handful of Irish towns are referred to prior to 1200 AD and it is only during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that references become anyway common. Yet the urban life of many towns has continued unbroken since the twelfth or early thirteenth century, while the origins of others lie in the Viking, Early Christian and Prehistoric periods. Even when references occur they rarely throw much light on daily life and tend to be more concerned with political and administrative events. Indeed, most individual properties within towns have no

documentation relating directly to them until the late-seventeenth or early-eighteenth century. To all intents and purposes, then, individual sites within towns may have remained completely prehistoric, in so far as they have no documentation, until the seventeenth century or later. Accordingly, archaeological excavation is important if one is to gain any knowledge of the initial period of a town's foundation or of how a particular area evolved and was used.

Secondly, towns usually possess a much greater depth of stratigraphy than any other type of archaeological site. Stratified deposits are important because they preserve the sequence of developments on a particular site and the wealth of finds associated with urban sites means that it is usually possible to date both structures and layers quite closely. This is particularly important because it makes it possible to establish tight chronologies for artefacts.

Thirdly, the archaeology of a region cannot be understood without knowing what happened to the towns within it. Each town is a unique expression of the history of its area and the destruction of its archaeology would leave an irreplaceable gap in knowledge of the evolution of the region.

The recovery of this information is threatened, however, by the increasing redevelopment and gradual expansion of our cities and towns. It is very difficult to foresee the effects of this redevelopment when the extent of archaeological deposits is generally not known to the Planning Authority and it has happened in the past that the archaeological significance of a site has only become apparent when building work was about to commence. It is important then that the areas containing archaeological deposits should be identified if the potential of this important part of our heritage is to be realised.

Purpose and Aim of the Present Survey

The Urban Archaeology Survey was established with monies allocated for the purpose by the Minister for Finance in 1982. Its purpose was to compile a corpus of archaeological information on Ireland's towns and to present it in such a way that it could be used effectively by the archaeologist, urban planner, property developer, or interested layman. In this regard the survey has been guided by a submission on urban archaeology prepared by the Royal Irish Academy which recommended that the report should have four aims:

1. "To evaluate critically the archaeological potential, both above and below ground of the listed towns".

2. "To emphasise areas where the archaeological deposits could be preserved by the judicious use of new building

techniques and the presentation of open spaces, etc."

3. "To assess the level of destruction of the original townscape".

4. "To measure the effects of urban expansion on originally rural archaeological sites".

The chronological cut-off point beyond which material would not be included was 1700 AD.

The identification of sites which were urban centres before 1700 AD is not without difficulties. In many cases such an identification is dependent on the survival of documentary evidence. However, it was felt that it was better to follow the existing work of Graham (1977) and Martin (1981) rather than impose new criteria. Accordingly the sites which are included here are those for which there is evidence of their status as boroughs prior to 1700 AD.

In the reports the material is presented as follows: the situation of the site is outlined and a brief account of its archaeological and historical background is provided. This is followed by an archaeological inventory which endeavours to catalogue both extant sites and those which are known from documentary sources. Although the amount of information on each town may vary the catalogue follows the same format for each entry, firstly detailing the information on streets and street pattern, and following this with an account of the domestic buildings, market places and economic features such as quays and industrial areas. The seigneurial castle and town defences are described next together with the religious buildings of the town. The evidence for suburbs and activity outside the walls is then outlined and the inventory concludes with a summary of the archaeological excavations and a list of the stray finds. The inventory is followed by an assessment of the archaeological potential of the site.

INTRODUCTION TO CO. LONGFORD

The urban network which characterises the modern county was formed during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries but many of the towns founded at that time were established on sites that were already old centres of settlement. Granard is the oldest of Longford's towns. It began as a monastic site in Early Historic times and was developed into a borough by the Anglo-Normans in the thirteenth century. The Anglo-Normans were the principal town founders in medieval Ireland but they founded no towns in Longford. They established three boroughs, however, at Granard, Lanesborough (then Athleague) and Lissardowlan. These boroughs were settlements which had the legal privileges of towns but the functions of large villages. There may have been others but the historical documentation is lacking and we simply do not know. The fourteenth century was a period of economic decline in Ireland and this was particularly apparent in Anglo-Norman Longford exposed as it was to attacks from the native Irish. Athleague, Granard and Lissardowlan declined during the late fifteenth- and early sixteenth- centuries and were abandoned by their Anglo-Norman burgesses.

The fifteenth century witnessed an important development, however, the emergence of native Irish market centres at Granard and Longford, both residences of the O'Fearghaills, taoiseachs of Anghaile. The exact function of these market centres is unknown but the presence of a castle, market and Dominican monastery at Longford would suggest that they had the elements of urban centres. The importance of Longford can further be guaged from the fact that it gave its name to the county when it was shired in 1571.

New settlers began to arrive introduced to Longford during the late sixteenth century but more particularly in the years after 1619 when the county was systematically planted. The seventeenth century, despite its wars, was a century of economic improvement for the county. New towns were established: Ballinalee (St. Johnstown) in 1618 by Oliver St. John, Lord Grandison; Granard and Longford itself by the Aungiers during the 1620's, Lanesborough, by Sir George Lane in 1664. New estate villages such as Newtown Forbes, established by Sir Arthur Forbes in 1619, were also formed. The Williamite settlement consolidated this pattern and during the eighteenth century landlord villages such as Ballymahon, Edgeworthstown and Keenagh were developed, while the construction of the Royal Canal generated industrial villages such as Cloondara (Richmond Harbour).

This report is concerned with the five sites which had urban functions prior to 1700 A.D. These are the Anglo-Norman boroughs of Athleague (Lanesborough), Granard and

Lissardowlan and the seventeenth century towns of Ballinalee
and Longford (Fig. 1). The report provides an account of the
archaeological remains at each of these sites and an
assessment of the town or borough's importance to
archaeological research. It outlines the areas within the
towns where archaeological deposits are likely to survive and
highlights the potential of these sites to increase our
Knowledge of the development of urban life in Ireland.
Finally, recommendations are made as to how this potential
can be best realised. Each town is provided with a map
outlining its zone of archaeological potential in which the
following colour code is used:

       PinK: the zone of archaeological potential.
       Red: extant archaeological monuments.
       Purple: sites of Known monuments.

     Lissardowlan is now deserted, Ballinalee has shrunk in
importance, but Granard, Lanesborough and Longford are
expanding towns ripe for urban redevelopment in the near
future. Uncontrolled redevelopment at any of these sites will
destroy the fragile archaeological heritage of Longford's
towns and it is the hope of this report that the recommended
steps will be taken in order to ensure that urban development
and archaeological research may go forward together hand in
hand.

BALLINALEE

Ballinalee is a small village on the river Camlin, a tributary of the Shannon, along the road between Longford and Granard in north-central County Longford. The name <u>Beal Atha na Lao</u> means the mouth of the ford of the calves.

According to MacNamee (1954, 230) the settlement was established in 1618 at the initiative of Oliver St. John, Lord Grandison, from whom it received the name St. Johnsown. There is no evidence for any significant settlement on the site prior to that date. In 1627-30 eighty-six acres of land were granted by Charles I to Walter Lecky and others and incorporated as the "Borough and Town of St. Johnstown", a borough which elected two members of parliament until the Act of Union in 1800 (Lewis 1837, ii, 31).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVENTORY

1. STREET PATTERN
2. ST: JOHN'S CHURCH
3. OTHER FEATURES

1. STREET PATTERN

The street pattern is linear stretching from Ballinalee bridge on the north to St. John's Church, on the south. Almost midway along this axis there is a cross-roads with the Court House at one corner and here the street expands to form a small market place.

2. ST JOHN'S CHURCH

An eighteenth century building situated on the south side of the village. There are no pre-1700 monuments and the building lacks any early features apart from a crudely constructed basal course which may denote the foundations of an earlier building.

3. OTHER FEATURES

Bully's Acre Graveyard
Very overgrown. No early monuments were noted.

Ringfort. Cavan Td.

Situated on fairly high ground about 600 m due west of St.
John's Church. Circular. Double bank and ditch. Affording an
extensive view to the north-west. There is a slope from west
to east internally and the internal bank has a max. height of
1 m. Internal diameter: 46 m E-W by 42 m N-S. Depth of ditch:
3 m. Max. width of ditch: 4 m. The external bank has traces
of a stone revetment and is c. 1.50m high and 5.50m wide on
the north. There entrance appears to have been on the east
side where the inner bank is broken down. A low stone built
wall, 4 m long and 60 cm high, juts out at right angles from
the external bank at this point. This may be the remnant of a
modern field dence. The perimeter of the fort has been
planted with trees.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROBLEMS AND POTENTIAL

Ballinalee is an example of a seventeenth century
plantation borough. There is no evidence of pre-seventeenth
century activity and its importance for archaeological
research is that the site represents a foundation on virgin
soil. Following the normal course of seventeenth century
layout it is to be expected that its plan was straightforward
with houses fronting the street and plots of ground
stretching to the town boundary behind. Accordingly the
street frontages are likely to be the most rewarding sites
archaeologically and regretably it is here, in the process of
rebuilding, that most archaeological destruction has
occurred. Excavations in other seventeenth century
settlements, such as Belfast, Coleraine and Derry, however,
has shown that the area behind the houses was frequently used
for the disposal of rubbish and it is likely that refuse
pits, wells and outhouse foundations are preserved. The
borough boundary is intact as a property line on the entire
west side and most of the east side of Ballinalee. In the
seventeenth century this may have been fortified and
excavation may show the remains of an earthen rampart and
fosse, similar to that known from cartographical evidence at
other towns of this period. Apart from the street frontages
there is little evidence for disturbance and it is likely
that archaeological deposits are intact over a large area of
the site.

Little is known about the site from documentary sources
and in the future archaeological excavation is likely to be
the principal means by which additional knowledge of
Ballinalee's history is obtained. The borough is not under
direct threat from commercial development at present but the
threat from private development should not be underestimated.

Area of Archaeological Potential

The shaded portion of the accompanying map (Fig. 2)

delimits the area of archaeological potential within   modern
Ballinalee. This shows the extent of the seventeenth century
town together with a small area on the   north side of the
bridge where settlement may also have extended. The   shaded
area has been continued outside the town boundary in order to
allow for a possible fosse. In the absence of archaeological
excavations nothing can be said depth of archaeological
deposits.
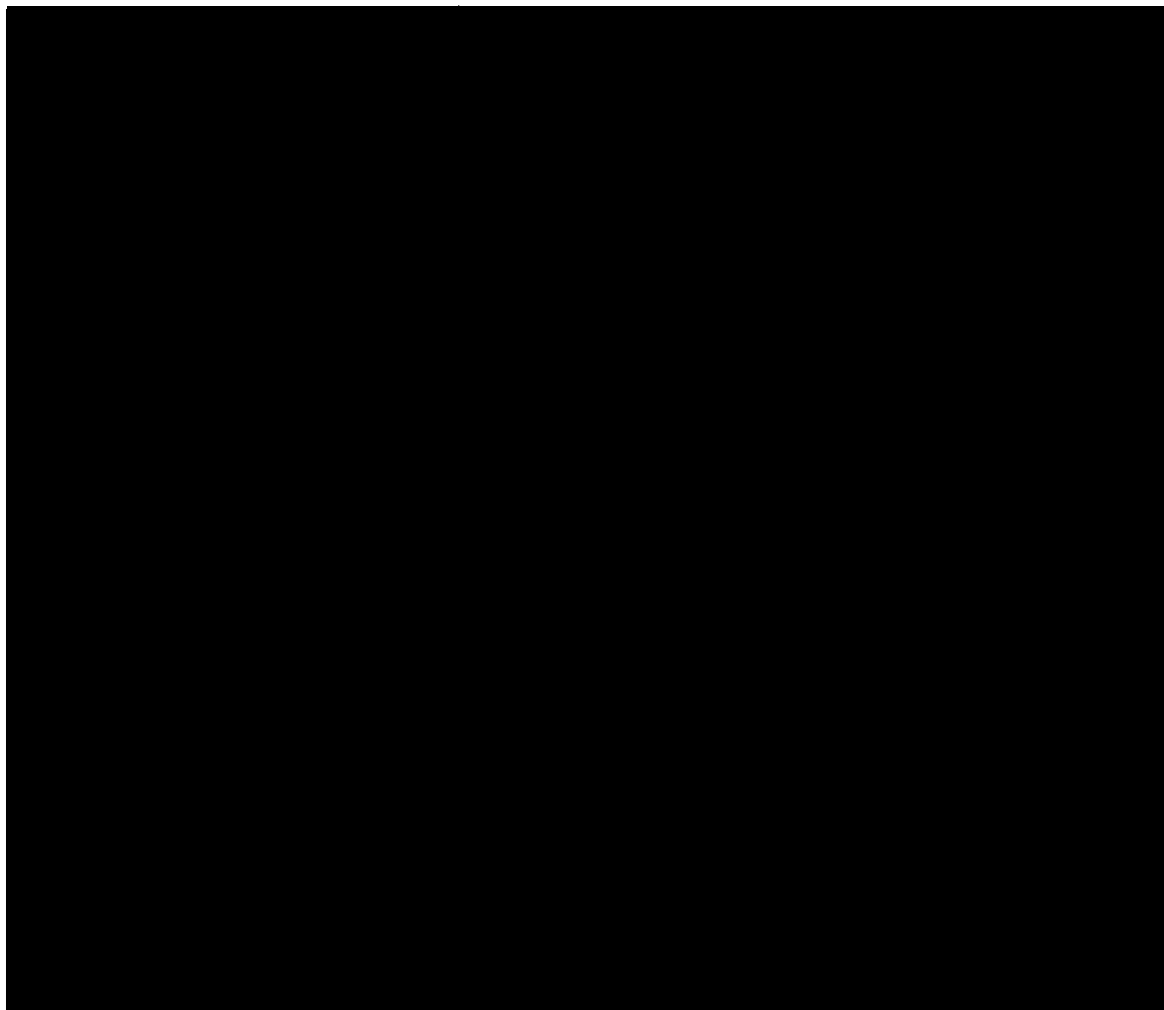
GRANARD

Granard is a small town in the north-east of the county, about 19 Klm from Longford, on the road between Edgeworthstown and Cavan. The origin and meaning of the placename is unknown. MacNamee (1954, 645-6) has dismissed the traditional explanations ("the ugly height", "height of the sun") by pointing out that the original form of the name was 'Graneret', although 'Granard' has probably been in use since the ninth century.

A number of early references to Granard are known. AFM record battles here in 236 and 476. It is associated from the seventh century with St. Patrick who is recorded by Tireachan and the author of the Tripartite Life (written c.900) as having established a church under Guasacht (MacNamee 1954, 34-41). This developed into a monastic site which appears to have continued into at least the ninth century (MacNamee 1954, 97-9; Gwynn and Hadcock 1970, 386). The death of Fiachra, probably abbot of Granard is recorded in AU sub 769 (=770). In 1069 Granard is mentioned in a list of territories and churches burned by Diarmait Mac Mael na mBo.

After the coming of the Normans the district around Granard was granted by Hugh de Lacy to Richard de Tuit (Orpen 1911-20, ii, 88). In 1199 de Tuit built a castle at Granard and King John stayed there in 1210 (Orpen 1911-20, ii, 262). The borough may have been established shortly after the foundation of the motte but the earliest direct reference to its existence is a late fourteenth century reference to the burgage lands of the vill of Granard (Otway-Ruthven 1968b, 411 n.51). In 1215 the castle was listed among those returned to Walter de Lacy after Richard de Tuit's death in 1211 (Sweetman 1875-86, i, No. 612). On the death of Walter de Lacy in 1241 Granard passed to Geoffrey de Geneville through his wife Matilda, one of Walter's heiresses (Otway-Ruthven 1968b, 410-11). In 1308 de Geneville surrendered his lands in Meath to his grandaughter Joan, wife of Roger de Mortimer. Granard was evidently included in this grant because in 1348 Joan de Mortimer, countess of March, was licensed to grant the castle and manor to Roger de Mortimer (Mills 1905, 49). Whether the Mortimers retained effective control of Granard at this date or not, however, is uncertain. The Anglo-Norman hold on county Longford weakened during the fourteenth century as a result of the upheavals following the Bruce invasion, the lack of male heirs among the de Verdons, the principal land-holding family, and the administration of the territory by absentee lords. There are conflicting traditions as to whether Granard itself was burnt by Edward Bruce in 1315 or not but it is evident that it declined during the fourteenth century (MacNamee 1954, 648; Otway-Ruthven 1968b, 414).

When Granard is next heard of it is in Irish hands. In

1405 Uilliam O Fearghail built a castle there (O hInnse 1947, 175) but this was captured by the English in 1420 and when they abandoned it Uilliam had it demolished for fear that it might be reoccupied (A.Conn). The O Fearghaills used Granard as an inauguration site and during the later fourteenth century a market developed here. In 1475 Sean O Fearghail, taoiseach of Anghaile, died at Granard shortly after his inauguration (A. Conn.). In 1479-80 the Irish parliament enacted a statute forbidding English merchants from having contact with the market recently set up by the Irish at Granard because it was damaging the English markets of Meath (Morrissey 1939, 819-21).

Evidently the district around Granard was still in Irish hands at the Dissolution in 1540 because the jurors appointed to make an extent of the Cistercian monastery at Abbeylara could not approach it "for fear of the Irish" (White 1943, 280-1). English control seems to have been established by 1586, however, when the site of the manor of Granard was leased to Roger Radford by the crown (15 Rep. Deputy Keeper Public Records Ireland, 165: No. 4904). In 1593 the manor, castle and parsonage of Granard, which had been recovered from the O Fearghaills, were leased to Francis Shane (Morrin 1862, 251). Granard was wasted during the Nine Years War but in 1608 the manor and castle were granted to Shane together with a weekly market and two annual fairs (Erck 1846-52, 499-500). In 1618 and 1620 Sir Francis Aungier recieved grants of a market and two fairs there (Irish Record Comm. 1830, 349, 452). Lewis (1837, i, 669) records that in 1678 Granard was given the right to return two members to parliament.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVENTORY

1. DESERTED BOROUGH EARTHWORKS
2. MOTTE AND BAILEY CASTLE
3. PARISH CHURCH OF ST. MARY AND ST. PATRICK
4. ST. PATRICK'S HOSPITAL
5. THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY TOWN
6. MONUMENTS IN THE VICINITY
7. LIST OF STRAY FINDS

1. DESERTED BOROUGH EARTHWORKS

The medieval borough of Granard was situated about 1 Klm south-west of the modern town in GranardKill Td. It is represented today by a series of earthworks in a sub-triangular field north of the graveyard. The field is flat on the south but it slopes sharply away to the north. The principal feature is a sunken way running through the earthworks from east to west.

About halfway along the roadway are three small rectangular platforms. These are delimited by low banks 30-50 cm high and 80 cm wide. The enclosed area averages 3.5 by 2.5 m in each case.

South of the roadway are three concentrations of earthworks. The easternmost is a sub-rectangular enclosed area having some low internal ridges; the enclosing bank is 2 m wide and 50-80 cm high. The middle concentration consists of a series of banks which do not form any coherent pattern. The westernmost concentration is composed of two overlapping sub-rectangular enclosures which are not contemporary.

North of the sunken way are four concentrations of earthworks, three of which flank the roadway, and the fourth is located further to the north. The westernmost consists of a triangular area with two rectangular enclosures forming its east side. The southern of these rectangular enclosures is the larger of the two. The bank delimiting the triangular enclosure is up to 1 m high in places. The banks on the west side of the rectangular enclosures are 20-40 cm high and 1.5 m wide on average. The central concentration consists of a squat D-shaped earthwork enclosing two rectangular features whose walls consist of collapsed stone. These are the most prominent earthworks in the field. The easternmost concentration is located on the brow of the hill. It consists of three sides of a sub-rectanglar enclosure with low banks 50cm high and 1.5 m wide. There is a large boulder in the centre of this earthwork. Adjoining it to the south is a curving bank, which may represent another enclosure. The fourth concentration is located north of previous three concentrations, on the crest of the ridge where it begins to slope to the north. It is separated from the previously described enclosures by an open linear space, perhaps a lane or street. The remains consist of a small triangular enclosure in the north-west corner of the field. This is delimited by banks, 50-100 cm high and 1 m wide, which have a stone core. East of this are traces of three large sub-rectangular enclosures. The westernmost example is the most complete having an entrance in its west wall. Adjoining these, on the south, are three smaller rectangular enclosures. South of the triangular earthwork is a bank, running north-south, which may delimit a line of approach to the complete rectangular earthwork.

West of the main concentration of earthworks and beside the road, immediately north of the site of the R.C. chapel, is a raised rectangular platform.

2. MOTTE AND BAILEY CASTLE

Situated on top of a hill at the south-west end of the town, this is to be identified as the castle built by Richard de Tuit in 1199 (ALC, AI). It was the centre of a manor which

passed to the de Lacys and subsequently to the Mortimers before reverting to the crown. It is not certain if this is the site of the castle built in 1405 by Uilliam O Fearghail (O hlnnse 1947, 175) but it is likely that it was the inauguration site of chiefs of Anghaile, mentioned in 1475 (A. Conn.). The fact that the name 'Granard Castle' is applied to a group of farm buildings near the site of the old town suggests that O Fearghail may have built a new castle for himself, perhaps to be identified with the ringfort, listed below as GranardKill 1. O Fearghail's castle was captured by the English in 1420 and after they withdrew O Fearghail destroyed it lest it might be reoccupied (A. Conn.). In 1593 the castle is mentioned in the grant to Francis Shane (Morrin 1862, 251). The remains of a stone structure survived into the nineteenth century and were described by O'Donovan (AFM, iii, 388-9 note o) as "the arched vaults of a castle...built of beautiful squared stones...well cemented with lime and mortar".

Description

Aerial photographs suggest that the motte and bailey occupies part of a much larger enclosure, perhaps a hillfort or monastic boundary (Pl. 1). The line of a bank is visible about 100 m south-west of the bailey's outer bank in Moatfield and it appears on the ground as a wide low bank traceable for about 210 m. No trace of it is apparent on the north or east sides, however.

The Norman earthwork consists of a motte and bailey enclosed by a ditch and bank with traces of an external ditch on the south side. The siting affords excellent views in all directions. The MOTTE lies at the north end of the complex. It consists of a conical mound, 20 m high, 45 m in diameter at the base rising to a flat top measuring 19.2 by 17.6 m. On the north, west and east, the motte slopes steeply into the inner ditch. The south side, fronting the bailey is more gradual and is revetted at the base by a low wall. At the base of the motte, on the south-east, is a short stretch of masonry 2-3 courses high, perhaps the remains of that seen by O'Donovan.

The BAILEY is sub-rectangular and measures 60 m east-west by 35 m north-south. It is scarped on the east into the partly levelled inner ditch. The bailey was protected by a bank which survives on the west but appears to have been interfered with on the south where it is represented by a low grass covered wall. There is a large piece of masonry at the south-west angle.

The INNER DITCH is 10.5 m in max. width with an outer bank 5 m across and 4 m high on average. The bank and ditch have been largely removed on the south as a result of quarrying. The bank is broken on the north-west where there may have been an entrance. A wall footing 80 cm wide runs

along the top of the bank. The bank encloses the entire motte and bailey and had a shallow external ditch on the south side. South of this again are a series of irregular low mounds which may represent spoil from the quarrying activity.

3. PARISH CHURCH OF ST. MARY AND ST. PATRICK

The contrasting dedications of the present R.C. (St. Mary) and C. of I. (St. Patrick) parish churches in Granard pose a problem in determining the location of the medieval parish church. The earliest indication of the parish associated with the Anglo-Norman borough is the mention of the "vicar of Granard" in the ecclesiastical taxation of 1302-6 (Sweetman 1875-86, v, 214). In 1389 and 1401 its dedication to St. Patrick is specifically mentioned (Tresham 1828, 140; Bliss and Twemlow 1904, 350). But in 1438 when it was confirmed to St. Mary's Abbey, Dublin, the dedication is given as "St. Mary's alias St. Patrick's of Granard" (Twemlow 1912, 29). In 1458 it was noted that the parish church of St. Mary at Granard had five churches or chapels subject to it (Twemlow 1933, 1-2). These references suggest that the original dedication was to St. Patrick but that this changed in the course of the fifteenth century when it was replaced by St. Mary. A clue to the whereabouts of the church comes from a lease of 1612 which mentions the "ruinous church...parcel of the lands of the hospital of St. Patrick, called Granard-Kille" (Irish Record Comm 1830, 213). This reference supports MacNamee's (1954, 650-1) conclusion that the church of Cnoc ratha, "the medieval representative of St. Patrick's original foundation" was at GranardKill, the deserted borough site, about 1 Klm west of the present town. Further support for this identification comes from John O'Donovan who noted in 1837 that the original church was situated near the centre of the ruins of the old town of Granard, and was allegedly abandoned after the battle of Aughrim in 1691. He added "it would appear from several curious stones dug up that there was a Round Tower attached to it" (O.S. Letters, 24).

No trace of this church survives at GranardKill, although a graveyard is present and a chapel is marked on the 1913 edition of the O.S. map. The location of this chapel, however, does not conform with O'Donovan's description of it as near the centre of the old town and one must assume that it was a nineteenth century building. It may be noted that the curving boundary on the south side of the graveyard may preserve the outline of an enclosure whose line is continued by the road which bends to the north-east and returns on the north along the field boundary delimiting the earthworks of the deserted borough.

St. Patrick's church (C of I) is situated on high ground directly north of the motte and is probably coeval with the seventeenth century refoundation of the town. The date of the present building is unclear and parts of it may be of

seventeenth century date. In 1980, during restoration work, a number of blocked-up doors and windows were noted (Stafford 1983).

4. ST. PATRICK'S HOSPITAL

Nothing is known of this hospital apart from its name but it was probably associated with the medieval borough. The dedication, however, would suggest that it was at an early site and the two known references to it, in 1595 and 1612, suggest that it was at GranardKill (Gwynn and Hadcock 1970, 351; Ir. Rec. Comm. 1830, 213).

5. THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY TOWN

The seventeenth century town has a linear street plan, consisting of Main Street and Barrack Street. Main Street broadens about halfway along its length and it is evident that it was also intended to function as the market place. Some of the houses along Main Street may retain seventeenth century features but without removing the surface plaster it is impossible to know.

6. MONUMENTS IN THE IMMEDIATE VICINITY

Granard Castle. Cartron Td.
The name given to a group of farm buildings south of the deserted borough. The name, however, may indicate that the nearby ringfort (GranardKill 1) was the castle built by O Fearghail in 1420 (O hInnse 1947, 175).

Diarmaid and Grainne's cave. Grassyard Td.
Situated in rock outcrop on a hill due north of the modern town. It consists of an opening in the ground with large slabs, probably natural, surrounding the entrance. There appears to be a passage or an open space below but it is not accessible at present. Its function is unclear.

St. Patrick's well. Cartron Td.
In marshy ground south-west of the deserted borough. A pennanular setting of large stones 70cm high surrounds the well.

Ringfort. "Baker's Fort", Granard.
On the south side of Main St atop a natural hillock. 50 by 44 m. The sides of the hill were scarped to provide the bank whose internal height varies from 50-150 cm. There is no external ditch but the ground tends to slope away sharply giving the bank an average external height of 3 m. The centre of the platform has a natural domed shape. The north-east

quadrant has been ploughed out.

Ringfort. Granardkill 1.
South-east of the deserted borough. The top of a small hill, about 65 m across, is enclosed by an annular bank and ditch. The ditch was formed by scarping the hill. There is no evidence for a bank on the north side. The ditch is 5 m wide on the south where the bank is 3.5 m wide and 1.5-2 m high.

Ringfort. Granardkill 2.
Single bank and ditch with counterscarp bank. Situated on top of a natural hillock, it encloses an area 41 by 38 m. The entrance is on the north-west. There are traces of a circular structure in the centre. The ditch is 3 m wide and there is an external bank 1.5 m wide and 50cm high. The enclosing banks and ditch are best preserved on the south, west and north-west sides.

Ringfort. Granardkill 3.
Platform ringfort, built on high ground and commanding extensive views in all directions. Internal diam. 32 m. The entrance appears to have been on the west. It is surrounded by a bank 1 m high and 2 m wide. There is no evidence for a ditch but there are traces of an outer bank on the east side.

Ringfort. Grassyard Td.
Large sub-rectangular platform 60 by 53 m. North-east of the modern town. The platform is about 1 m high and was surrounded by a shallow ditch only visible now on the south where there is also a low counterscarp bank. The northern edge is partly worn away.

Ringfort?. Higginstown.
South-east of the modern town. Now part of the Granard Sports Complex where it functions as a children's playground. Circular platform 28 m across and raised about 2 m above surrounding ground level. No trace of a ditch or bank.

Ringfort. Rathcronan.
South-east of Granard motte. Single bank and ditch. Now ploughed out. Its outline showed clearly in snow.

Ringfort. Teemore 1.
South-east of Granard motte. Now ploughed out. Single bank and ditch with probable counterscarp bank. The enclosed area was 28.5 m across with an external ditch 3.7 m wide, and an external bank 2.3 m wide.

Ringfort. Teemore 2.
The north-east quadrant of this earthwork is indicated on the O.S. maps almost immediately south of Teemore 1. Now ploughed out. Probably single bank and ditch with counterscarp bank. The outline of the ditch is still faintly visible. The enclosed area had a diameter of 30 m with an external ditch of 3.5 m wide.

7. LIST OF STRAY FINDS

1-2. Two petit tranchet flint arrowheads. From Rincoola Bog, Granard, Co. Longford, 1917. St Mel's College Diocesan Museum Longford. <u>Jrl. Ardagh & Clonmacnoise Antiq. Soc.</u> 1, 3 (1932), 79.

3. Unfinished rotary quern. From Granard motte and bailey. Private possession.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROBLEMS AND POTENTIAL

The Problems

Granard is important to archaeological research for two reasons. Firstly because of the survival of the extensive series of earthworks that denoted the medival borough. Secondly because of the seventeenth century town.

The site of the pre-Norman monastery appears to have been at Granardkill. The process by which it was transformed from a monastic settlement to a borough is unknown but excavation could elucidate this problem. The documentary sources suggest that the borough was deserted in the fourteenth century and the surviving earthworks show that little interference has occurred since that time. Excavation then should be able to determine the layout and topography of the medieval borough in a manner which is impossible on built-up sites which have not been abandoned. The importance of the site to fifteenth century settlement studies should not be underestimated. It was the site of a native Irish market and of a castle (perhaps to be identified with Granardkill 1) constructed by the O Fearghaills. Nothing is known about the nature of these native trading settlements and Granard offers an important challenge for archaeology in this respect. The motte and bailey castle is a substantial fortification but nothing is known of the form of the buildings that were constructed within it or of its duration of use. Did it survive into the fifteenth century? Was it abandoned in the fourteenth? Was it refortified in the sixteenth century? What is the nature and date of the surrounding earthwork? Did the motte have outer defences or was it sited within a pre-existing enclosure?

The present town appears to date entirely to the seventeenth century and is important because it avoided the old deserted settlement and was founded on new ground. Following the normal course of seventeenth century layout its plan shows houses fronting the street with plots of ground stretching to the town boundary behind. Accordingly the street frontages are likely to be the most rewarding sites archaeologically and unfortunately it is also here that, in the process of rebuilding, most archaeological destruction

has occurred. Excavations in other seventeenth century settlements, such as Belfast, Coleraine and Derry, however, has shown that the area behind the houses was frequently used for the disposal of rubbish and it is likely that refuse pits, wells and outhouse foundations are preserved. There are no indications of seventeenth century town defences but the north-west/ south-east boundary at the rear of the plots fronting Main Street may preserve the line of defensive earthworks and this line shoud be examined if the opportunity to excavate occurs. Apart from the street frontages there is little evidence for disturbance and it is likely that archaeological deposits are intact over a large area of the town.

Little is known about medieval or seventeenth century Granard from documentary sources and in the future archaeological excavation is likely to be the principal means by which additional knowledge of its history is obtained. Granard's archaeology is likely to come under threat from commercial development occasionally and accordingly steps should be taken to ensure that its heritage will be properly safeguarded.

Area of Archaeological Potential

The shaded portion of the accompanying map (Fig. 3) delimits the area of archaeological potential within modern Granard. This shows the extent of the seventeenth century town together with its continuation into Barrack Street, which may have been a suburb. The shaded area has been continued outside the town boundary in order to allow for possible town defences and a fosse. In the absence of archaeological excavations nothing can be said about the depth of archaeological deposits.

Outside the modern town the area around the deserted borough in GranardKill, including the ringfort listed above as GranardKill 1, has been shaded, as have the ringforts at GranardKill 2 and 3, Teemore 1 and 2, Rathcronan, Higginstown and Baker's Fort at Granard itself. An area around each of these monuments (or monument sites) has been included in order to afford protection to possible monuments immediately outside the ringforts.
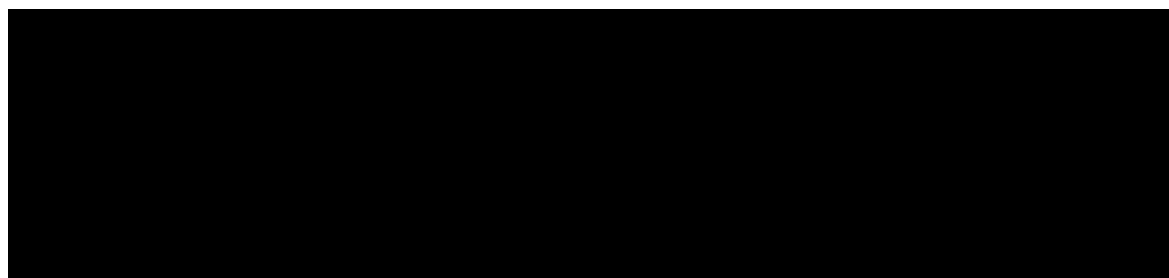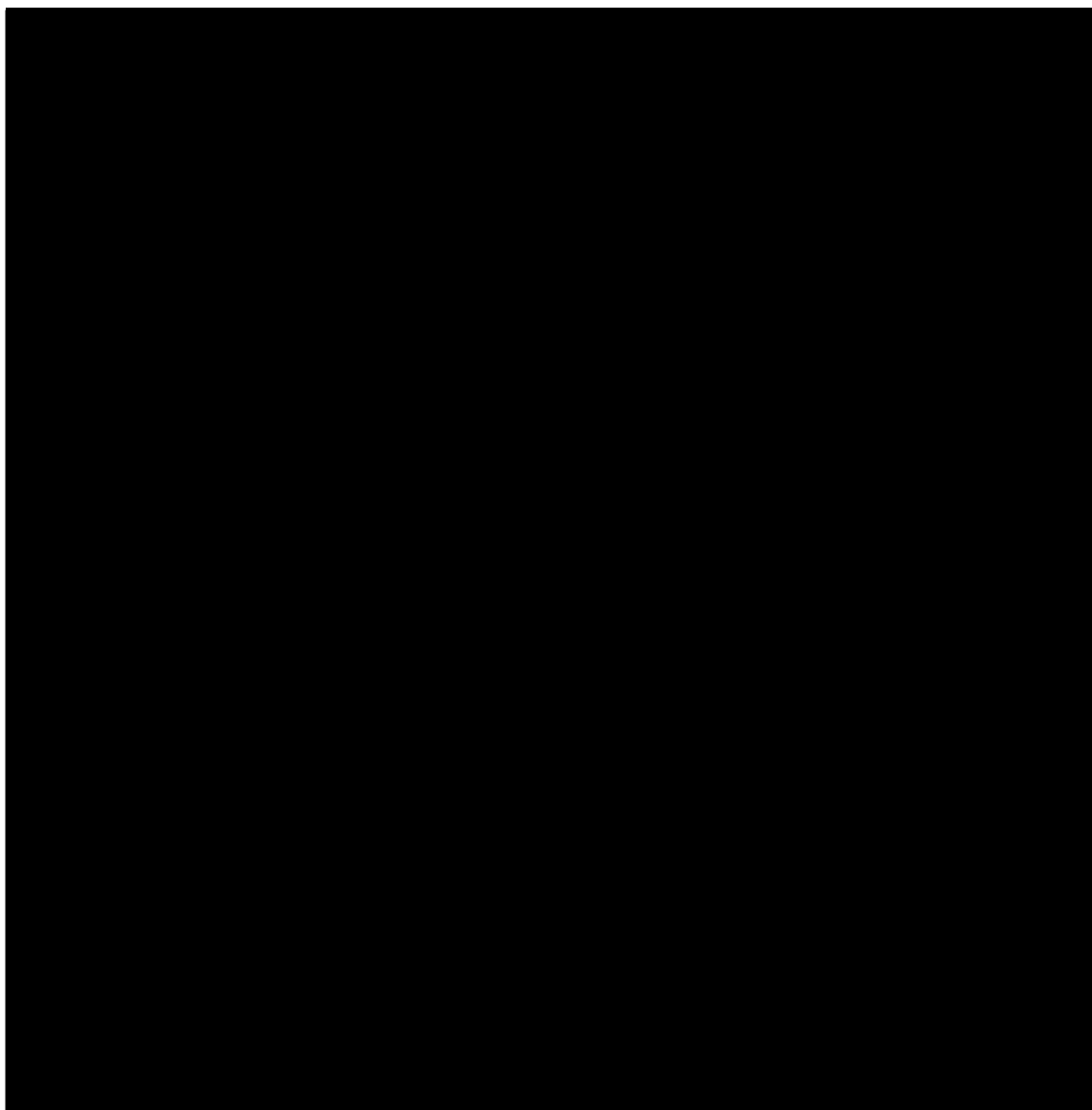
LANESBOROUGH

Situated on the river Shannon at an important bridging point at the northern end of Lough Ree. The name is derived from the incorporation of the manor of Lanesborough, owned by Sir George Lane, in 1676. The original name is Ath Liag, "ford of the stones".

ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The earliest documentary references to Ath Liag occur towards the end of the Early Historic period when the site acquired a strategic importance as the gateway between Connacht and Midhe. In 1000 a causeway was built across the Shannon at Ath Liag by Mael Sechnaill, King of Midhe, and apparently by Cathal Ua Conchobhair (AFM; A. Clon. sub 994). During the twelfth century the site appears to have been important in the expansionist plans of Toirrdelbach Ua Conchobhair, King of Connacht, and he built bridges (cliathdroichet, ?wicker-bridge?) here in 1140 (AFM, A. Clon. sub 1132) and 1154 (AFM). In contrast to Athlone, which was the main bridging point into Midhe and which developed into a substantial settlement at this time, there is no evidence to suggest that there was any significant permanent settlement at Ath Liag in the Early Historic period.

In the early thirteenth century Ath Liag, as part of the lordship of Meath, was held by Walter de Lacy. The strategic importance of the site prompted him to construct a castle in 1221 but it was not completed because Cathal Crobderg O Conchobair, King of Connacht, crossed the Shannon and compelled de Lacy to abandon it (ALC; AFM; A. Clon. su 1120). In 1227, however, during the campaign against Aedh O Conchobair, Cathal's successor as King of Connacht, a castle was built at Ath Liag by the justiciar, Geoffrey de Marisco (A. Conn.; AFM). Whether the initial Anglo-Norman settlement at Ath Liag is to be dated to 1221 or 1227 is not clear. By about 1235, however, the settlement had become a borough (MacNiocaill 1977, 55). On the death of de Lacy the manor passed in 1241 to his granddaughter's husband John de Verdon (Otway-Ruthven 1968b, 411, 413). In 1284 Theobald de Verdon was granted a weekly market and annual fair at his manor of 'Adleck' (Sweetman 1875-86, ii, Nos. 2303-4). In the same year the archbishop of Armagh was called to answer charges that he had received his relatives who were present at the levelling of the castle of Adlet "which belonged to Theobald de Verdon, and was one of the fortresses of Ireland towards Connacht" (Sweetman 1875-86, ii, No. 2274). This may refer to the destruction of the castle of Ath Liac in 1271 by Aedh O Conchobair, King of Connacht (A. Conn.; AFM; AU).

Nothing is known of <u>Ath Liag</u> during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and it is likely that the settlement collapsed in the early fourteenth century as a result of the combined effects of the Bruce invasion and the demise of Theobald de Verdon who died leaving four infant heiresses in 1316 (Otway-Ruthven 1968b, 414). In 1572 Athleague was burned by the sons of the earl of Clanrickard, who were in rebellion against the Dublin government. There is no evidence for the nature of the settlement on the site at this date, although the context would suggest that it was under English control. In 1618 the castle and fort of 'Ballyleigg' or 'Bealaleig' were granted to Sir Thomas Rotherham (Irish Rec. Comm. 1830, 360) but the origin and date of this fort are unknown. In the Confederation wars Ballyleague was captured by the O'Farrells before 1643 but was retaken by parliamentary forces in 1652 (MacNamee 1954, 298, 215 n. 5). In 1664 the lands of Ballyleague, then held by Sir George Lane, were erected into the manor of Lanesborough and the town was constituted a free borough.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVENTORY

1. STREET PATTERN
2. FORT
3. ST. JOHN'S CHURCH
4. OTHER FEATURES
5. LIST OF STRAY FINDS

1. STREET PATTERN

The street pattern of the seventeenth century town is linear consisting of a single straight street leading to the bridge across the Shannon. The houses appear to have fronted the street and the burgage plots extended to the town boundary behind. There are no traces of pre-1700 buildings within the borough.

2. FORT

The earliest reference to the "King's fort of Ballileig" is in 1611 when it was decided to grant it "to some good servitor who shall be bound to inhabit there, and to maintain the fort at his own charge" (Cal. State Papers Ireland 1611-14, 51). Nothing is known of the earlier history of the fort. In 1618 the "castle and fort of Ballyleigg", which had been held by Sir Richard Greame, were granted to Sir Thomas Rotherham (Irish Record Comm. 1830, 360). Kerrigan (1980-1, 142) notes that the Down Survey map of the barony of Rathlin (i.e. Rathcline) shows the fort on the Longford side and 'Ballyleag castle' on the Roscommon side of the Shannon. A

garrison of thirty men was recommended in 1659 (Cal. State
Papers Ireland 1647-60, 687-8). Kerrigan (1980-1, 142) also
notes an attack by the Williamites in 1691 on an earthwork
fort near the bridge of Lanesborough, which is to be
identified with this fort.

The site of the seventeenth century fort is shown by the
O.S. to the south side of the street on the east bank of the
Shannon, where it is marked "castle (site of)". The site has
been levelled and is now used as a car-park.

3. ST JOHN'S CHURCH

Farrell (1891, 333) records that "the parochial church is
formed from the nave of an ancient structure, traditionally
termed an abbey, having some remains of a square tower at the
west end". MacNamee (1954, 755) records a tradition of an
Augustinian church on the site of the present Protestant
church which he regarded as a church served by the
Augustinian priory on All Saints Island in Lough Ree. In
1577, however, it was stated that the parish church of
'Bealalege' was a church on the site of the priory of
'Clontouskirt Nasina', the Augustinian priory of Clontuskert,
Co. Roscommon, about 3 klm north-west of Lanesborough (13 Rep
Deputy Keeper Public Records Ireland, 57: No. 3160). Grose
(1781, 74) describes and illustrates the so-called 'abbey' at
Lanesborough which stood south-east of the town, about 400
yards from the Shannon. The illustration shows a three-storey
tower with twin-light window in the uppermost floor and
turret level above, and a nave subsequently re-roofed.

Architectural Fragments

The present nineteenth century church replaces an earlier
building of 1878. All that remains of this earlier building
is an arch built into the west wall of the graveyard. It
consists of two piers built of fairly evenly coursed
limestone with later jambs and quoins on the W face. It is
now filled with a later memorial.

Two window jambs with glazing bars, a stone water gutter
and two fragments of dressed stone are set into the ground as
gravemarkers.

Monuments

Edmond Banan. 1690.
Rectangular pink sandstone shaft south of the church. Three
of the faces are rough with tooled edges. The smooth side
carries an inscription in very low relief and conjoined Roman
capitals:

IHS/ PRAY FO/ R THE SO/ VLE OF/ EDMON/ D BANA/ N WHO/
DYED IN/ Ye 19 OF A/ PRILL/ 1690/ W B.

Dims: H. 85 (min) W. 18 T. 16 cm.

Cross: ?17th cent.
Small Latin sandstone cross. Set deeply in the ground at the
head of a grave on the south side of the church. Splayed
lower shaft bears an inscription in a mixture of script and
Roman capitals:

    IHS HERE LY/ ETH THE/ BODY OF ....

Dims: H.44 W.34 T.14 cm

4. OTHER MONUMENTS

Ballyleague Castle
On the west bank of the Shannon and unconnected with the
town, this three storied tower house is to be identified with
the castle held at 'Boalalege' by the abbot of Clontuskert in
1569 (O.S. Letters Co. Roscommon, i, 113-4). In 1577 it was
leased to Hugh Boye m'Ichalloe O'Donnell when it was
described as being beside Lough Ree, on the Roscommon side
(13 Rep. Deputy Keeper Public Records Ireland, 57: No. 3160).
In 1588 it was leased to Fryall O'Farrell (O.S. Letters Co.
Roscommon, i, 113-4) and it was rebuilt or replaced about
1611 by Sir Patrick Barnewall (Cal. State Papers Ireland
1611-14, 51).

5. LIST OF STRAY FINDS

1. Smooth (?polished) stone axe. Found "on an old road beside
the Shannon at Lanesboro'", 1934. St. Mel's College Diocesan
Museum, Longford. Jrl. Ardagh & Clonmacnoise Soc. 1, 4
(1935), 102.

2. Bronze flanged axe. From Lanesborough, Co. Longford.
British Museum London: W.G. 1549. Evans (1881), 101; Fig. 97.

3. Decorated bronze spearhead. From river Shannon at
Lanesborough. NMI 1935: 538.

4-5. Two dugout canoes. Said to have been found at
Lanesborough. NMI files.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROBLEMS AND POTENTIAL

Despite the many references to Ath Liag before 1600 no
trace of pre-seventeenth century features survives and
Lanesborough today is a good example of a plantation borough.
It would appear to have been quite a small borough, bounded
on the west by the Shannon, on the east by the lane beside
St. John's Church, and on the north and south by the long
boundary marked c.w. on the O.S. map (Fig. 4). It presumably
functioned as little more than a garrison town, controlling
the bridge. The site is important to archaeology, however,
for more than just its seventeenth century evidence. The form
of the pre-Norman ford is unknown. Was there a stone causeway
which subsequently gave its name to the settlement? Does the
reference to a cliathdroichet signify that there was a wooden
bridge? What was the form of the medieval and seventeenth
century bridges? The extent of the thirteenth century
Anglo-Norman borough and its precise whereabouts are unknown.
Was it situated on the site of the seventeenth century
borough or did it lie on the west bank of the Shannon where
Ballyleague castle was subsequently established. Did the
Anglo-Norman borough fade out in the early fourteenth
century, as the documents suggest or did some form of
settlement continue into the sixteenth century?

In the seventeenth century borough, the street frontages
are likely to be the most rewarding sites archaeologically
but regretably it is here, in the process of rebuilding, that
most archaeological destruction has occurred. Excavations in
other seventeenth century settlements, such as Belfast,
Coleraine and Derry, however, have shown that the area behind
the houses was frequently used for the disposal of rubbish
and it is likely that refuse pits, wells and outhouse
foundations are preserved. The fort has been demolished but
its foundations are likely to survive below ground in the
area which has been cleared to accomodate a car park. The
borough boundary is intact as a property line on the north
and south sides and this may have been fortified. It will
require excavation, however, to determine this. Apart from
the street frontages there is little evidence for disturbance
and it is likely that archaeological deposits are intact over
most of the borough.

Little is known about the site from documentary sources
and in the future archaeological excavation is likely to be
the principal means by which additional knowledge of
Lanesborough's history is obtained. The borough is not under
direct threat from commercial development at present but the
threat from private development should not be underestimated.

Area of Archaeological Potential

The shaded portion of the accompanying map (Fig. 4)
delimits the area of archaeological potential within present
day Lanesborough. This shows the extent of the seventeenth
century town together with a small area on the east, which
may have been a suburb. The shaded area has been continued

outside the town boundary in order to allow for a possible
fosse. In the absence of archaeological excavations nothing
can be said about the depth of archaeological deposits.
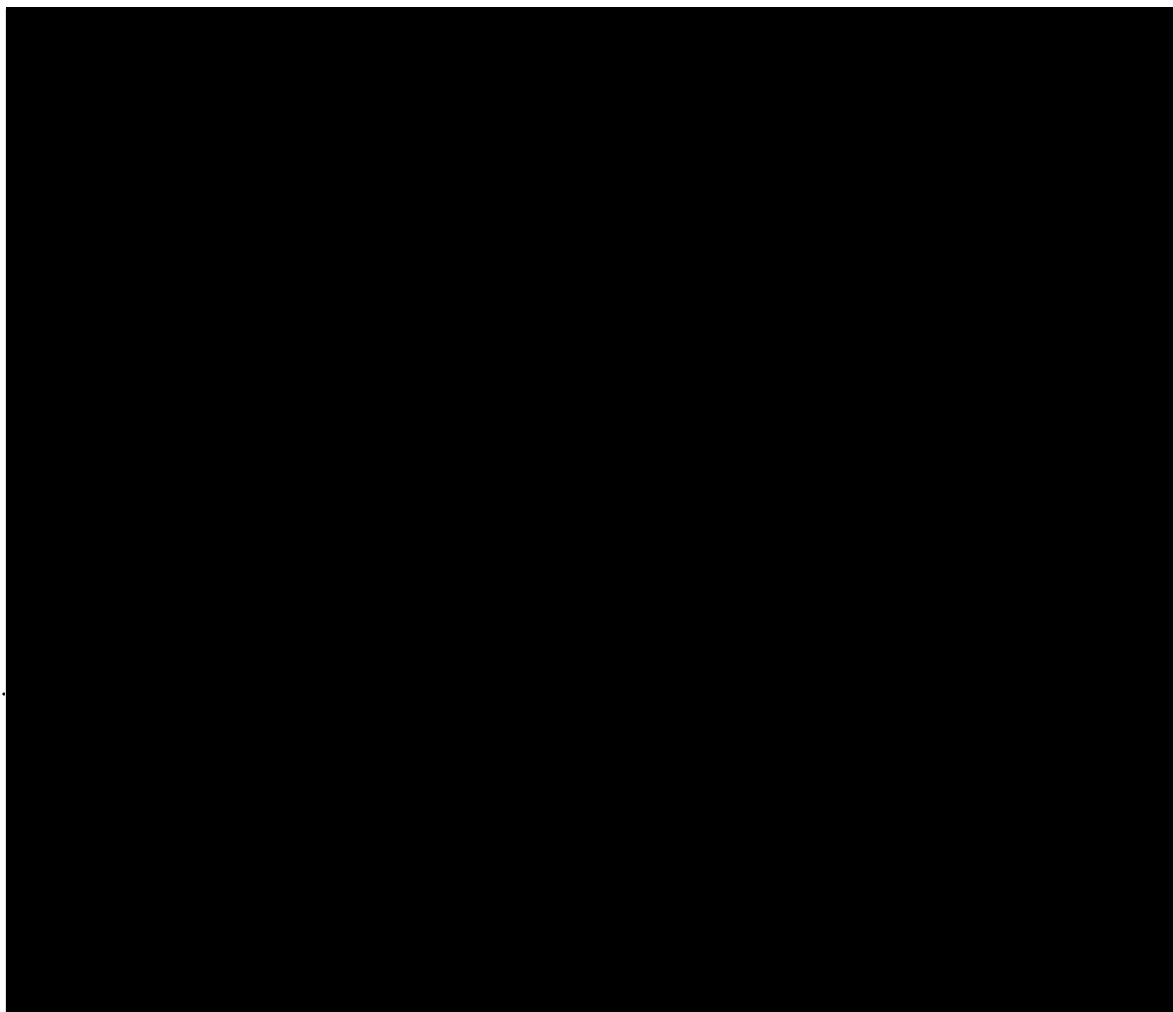
LISSARDOWLAN

Lissardowlan ("the fort of the hill of the apple trees") is a townland situated midway along the Longford -Edgesworthstown road on relatively lowlying ground on the fringes of the Shannon basin. The only visible traces of medieval settlement are a large motte-and-bailey and a place nearby known as sraid which, as Orpen (1910, 224) suggests may reflect the existence of an urban settlement. Both Otway-Ruthven (1968b, 414) and MacNiocaill (1977, 54-6), however, have identified Lissardowlan as the site of the borough of Incheleffer.

Incheleffer seems to have been a demense manor of Walter de Lacy in the early thirteenth century. There is no evidence for the date of its establishment but this may well have taken place prior to 1215 when the castle of 'Hincheleder' is first mentioned. The settlement had attained borough status by c.1235 when a burgage at 'Yncheleser' is mentioned in a charter of Walter de Lacy (MacNiocaill 1977, 55) and in 1241, on the death of de Lacy, it passed to John de Verdon (Otway-Ruthven 1968b, 411, 413). In 1284 Theobald de Verdon was granted a weekly market and annual fair at his manor of Incheleffer (Sweetman 1875-86, ii, Nos. 2303-4). In the 1332 partition of the de Verdon properties, lands in the manor of 'Lyssardaule' were assigned to Thomas de Furnival and Henry de Ferrers (Otway-Ruthven 1968b, 422, 435) but it is probable that the settlement had largely collapsed as a result of the combined effects of the Bruce invasion and the death of Theobald de Verdon without male heirs in 1316 (Otway-Ruthven 1968b, 414).

During the fourteenth century Lissardowlan fell into Irish hands. In 1377 Sean O Fearghail, taoiseach of Anghaile, built a castle there in which he died in 1383 (AFM). In 1460 Enri mac Caba, apparently a guest of O Fearghail, died at 'Lios ard abhla' (AFM). These references suggest that Lissardowlan was one of the principal residences of the O Fearghails in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In 1587 William O Fearghail Ban 'chief and captain of his nation' surrendered the manor and land of 'Liserdowly' to the crown and was regranted it (16 Rep Deputy Keeper Public Records Ireland, 43: No. 5062, No. 5107). In 1610, however, "the castle, bawne, town and lands of Liserdawle, otherwise Lisserdowle" were granted to Mary, dowager Lady Delvin, and Sir Richard Nugent, Lord Delvin, her son (Ir. Rec. Comm. 1830, 145). In 1612 the manor was granted to Captain Roger Atkinson (Ir. Rec. Comm. 1830, 214) but nothing is known of it after that date when it appears to have declined into obscurity.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVENTORY

1. MOTTE AND BAILEY CASTLE
2. OTHER FEATURES

1. MOTTE AND BAILEY CASTLE

The precise date of the construction of this motte is unknown but since the castle of "Hincheleder" was returned to Walter de Lacy in 1215, having being confiscated five years earlier, it was evidently built before 1210 (Sweetman 1875-86, i, No. 612). In 1224 the castle of "Ard Abhla" was burned by Aedh O Conchobair and the garrison, both Anglo-Norman and Irish were slaughtered (ALC; A. Conn.)

In 1377 Sean O Fearghail, taoiseach of Anghaile, erected a castle probably on the motte (A. Conn.; AFM). In 1417 the castle "outside the bawn" was burned, i.e the settlement around the castle bawn. The castle and bawn are again mentioned in the grant of Lissardowlan to Lord Delvin in 1610. Farrell (1891, 303) states that a castle survived in "a tolerable state of preservation" until the late nineteenth century.

Description

Lying on the north side of the Edgeworthstown-Longford road the monument consists of a motte with an inner and outer bailey on the south-east. The MOTTE consists of a steep-sided conical mound, 50 m in diameter at the base and 15m high, rising to a flat top measuring 12.5 by 11 m. The motte is separated from the bailey on the south by a ditch 6 m wide and 2.5 m deep. There is a piece of collapsed masonry in the ditch.

The INNER BAILEY is crescentic with maximum measurements of 56 m east-west by 23 m north-south. It is protected by a low internal bank which has a gap in the east side indicating an entrance. The bailey is protected by a ditch, 6 m wide and 4 m deep, with an outer enclosing bank, 5 m wide, ranging in height from 80 to 150 cm. This bank continues around the motte to the north-east but it is missing on the north-west and west, where it appears to have been ploughed out. The outer bank runs beside the inner bailey on the east before swinging southwards in a wide curve to enclose the OUTER BAILEY, an open area with maximum dimensions of 87 by 23.5 m. On the south side the bank is 3 m wide and 1 m high on average. Outside the bank is a shallow ditch 4.5 m wide.

South of the motte is a narrow raised area running towards the modern road which may be part of an old roadway.

2. OTHER FEATURES

Ringfort. Cloonahard 1.
In marshy ground south-east of the motte. Double bank and
ditch. Internal diameter 34 m. There is a shallow linear
depression in the centre of the fort which may represent a
souterrain.

Ringfort. Cloonahard 2.
Located south-east of the motte beside the Longford to
Edgeworthtown road. Single banked. Built on a low sloping
ridge it lacks evidence for an external ditch and the natural
slope may have sufficed. Internal diameter 32 by 39 m.

Ringfort. Cooleeny.
Situated south of Rosemount House. Very overgrown. Single
bank and ditch with counterscarp bank. Internal diameter 34
m. There are raised areas in the interior but none can be
identified as a definite structure.


ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROBLEMS AND POTENTTIAL

Lissardowlan is an example of a deserted medieval
borough. The period of its desertion is not known but from
the historical evidence it is likely that the thirteenth and
fourteenth centuries are the ones best represented in the
archaeological record.

Knowledge of the nature of the settlement in medieval
times is negligible. Was it merely a rural borough or did it
have genuine urban functions? Nothing is known about domestic
dwellings, street pattern, defences, or of the settlement's
extent. The documentary and archaeological data indicate that
the borough was the scene of human activity between the late
twelfth and seventeenth centuries but because of the scarcity
of documentary sources it is likely that archaeological
excavation will be the principal means in the future by which
further knowledge is obtained.

Area of Archaeological Potential

The shaded portion of the accompanying map (Fig. 5)
delimits the area of archaeological potential within modern
Lissardowlan. In the absence of clear delimiting features
that area within 300 m of the motte had been shaded. In the
absence of archaeological excavations nothing can be said
about the depth of archaeological deposits. There is little
evidence, however, of disturbance and it is likely that
archaeological deposits are intact over a large area of the
site. The borough is not under direct threat from development

at present.
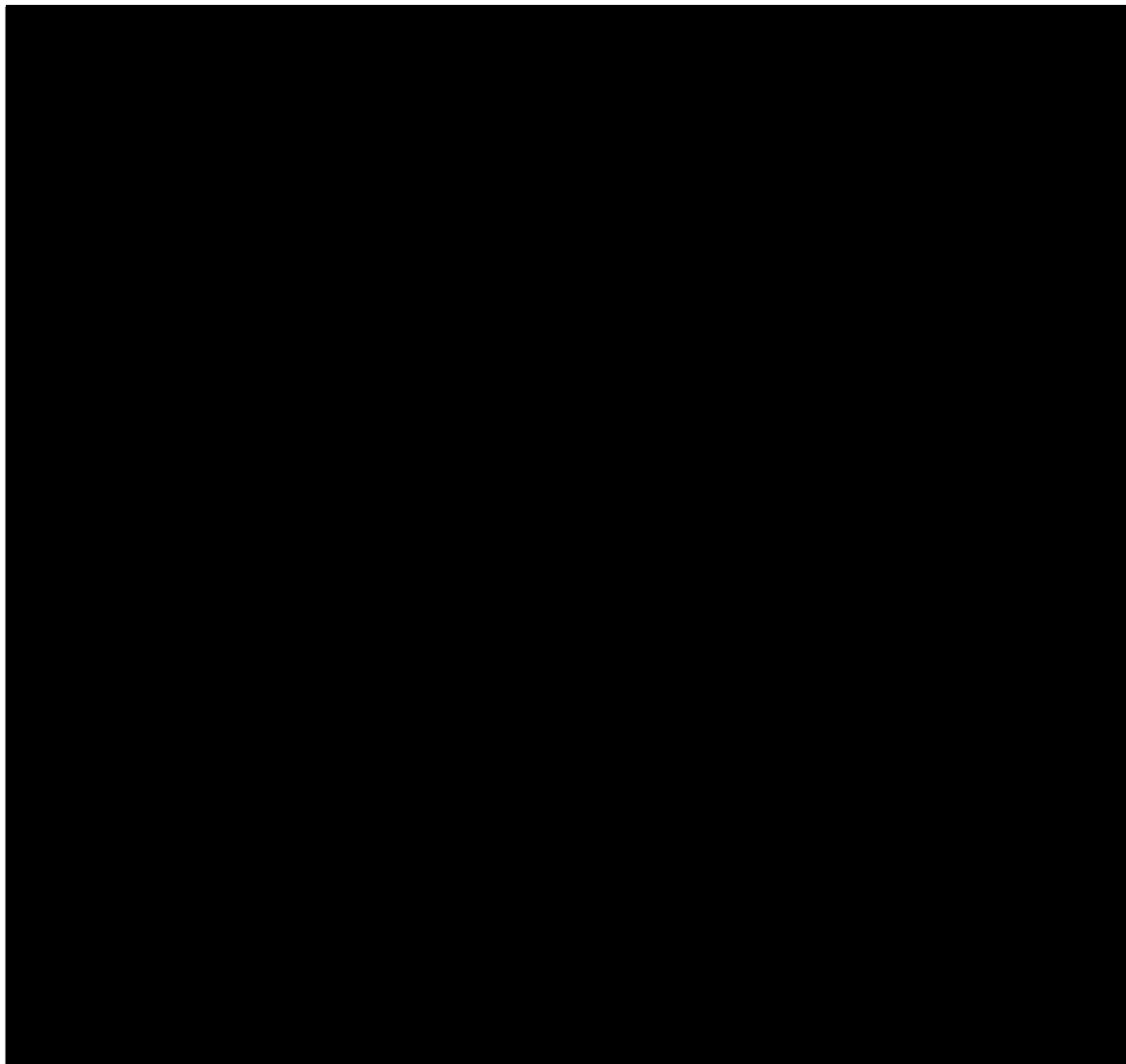
LONGFORD

The county town of Longford is situated on the Mullingar -Carrick-on-Shannon road, roughly centrally placed within the county, on lowlying ground where the river Camlin enters the Shannon basin. MacNamee (1954, 93-5) has dismissed the suggestion that the name is an anglicisation of Ath Fada and it is clear that the name derives from the Irish longphort, "ship-fortress". In the medieval period, however, it seems that this term was used more loosely to denote a fortification.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The origins of Longford as a settlement lie in the Later Middle Ages and there is no evidence of Anglo-Norman settlement on the site. The first significant recorded episode is the foundation of the Dominican Priory, probably by the O Fearghails in the early fifteenth century. It may be guessed that there was a fortress, the longphort from which the town takes its name, of the O Fearghails on the site before the foundation of the priory. There is no evidence as to the date of this fortress but it is referred to as Sen Longphort in 1430 (AFM) indicating that it was already old. Another important episode in the development of the settlement was the creation of a market here sometime before 1479-80, when the Irish parliament forbade English merchants to have any contact with this or the Irish markets at Granard and Cavan which were harming the English markets of Meath (Morrissey 1939, 819-21). Farrell (1891, 23) has suggested that Longford became the seat of the O Fearghail of lower Anghaile when Anghaile was divided in 1445.

Longford remained in O Fearghail hands until the reign of Elizabeth. The importance of the settlement is indicated by the fact that when Anghaile was shired in 1571 the new county was called Longford. In that year Richard Steynes is referred to as constable of the castle or gaol of Longford (12 Rep Deputy Keeper Public Records Ireland, 51: No. 1853). In 1595 Longford was captured and burned by Hugh Roe O'Donnell during his raid into Connacht (AFM). In 1606 Richard Nugent, baron of Delvin, was granted a market and a fair at Longford (Erck 1846-52, 257). By 1619 the town had passed to Francis, Lord Aungier, who was granted another market and two fairs there (Irish Rec. Comm. 1830, 452). In 1657 the town was incorporated and Aungier's lands were erected into a manor (Lewis 1837, ii, 310).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVENTORY

1. STREETS AND STREET PATTERN
2. CASTLE ;
3. ST JOHN'S CHURCH
4. DOMINICAN PRIORY OF ST. BRIGID
5. OTHER FEATURES
6. LIST OF STRAY FINDS

1. STREETS AND STREET PATTERN

The town is concentrated on the south side of the river Camlin but the original parish church and castle were on the north side. The street plan is linear, based on Main Street and Bridge Street, its continuation to the north. This street ran from the castle to the southern entrance, a point where the road divides into three, east to Edgesworthstown and Dublin, south to Ardagh, and west to Lanesborough. The houses fronting onto Main Street have long burgage plots and would appear to represent the seventeenth century borough. The area around Bridge Street and Church Street is probably the oldest part of the town. Here too is the site of the castle and the old parish church and this may represent the site of the late sixteenth century settlement.

2. CASTLE

O'Donovan (O.S. Letters, 68) records a tradition that the original longphort lay on the site now occupied by the Barracks. Nothing is known of the nature of this fortification. From 1571 there are references to the constable of the "castle or gaol of Longford" (12 Rep. Deputy Keeper Public Records Ireland, 51: No. 1853; 78: No. 2143; 13 Rep., 24: No. 2994). This was presumably the strong castle, commanded by Sir Christopher Browne, captured and destroyed by Hugh Roe O'Donnell in 1595 (AFM; MacNamee 1954, 791). It was probably replaced by the castle built by Lord Aungier about 1627 (Farrell 1891, 304) and which was captured by Preston in 1641 (Farrell 1891, 132).

The site of the castle, at the north end of Bridge Street, is now a car park. Traces of the castle survived until the early 1970's when the circular tower and its attached house were demolished (Pl. 4). There is a local tradition that the castle was protected by outworks but these are no longer obvious.

3. ST JOHN'S PARISH CHURCH

This was the parish church of the seventeenth century borough. It stands at the east end of Church Street on the

site of the medieval Dominican Priory (MacNamee 1954, 213).
The present building appears to be modern but the caretaker
informed us that parts of two walls, re-used from the abbey,
are incorporated into the building. He also added that wall
foundations were discovered on the north side of the church
during grave digging. There are no pre-1700 monuments.

4. DOMINICAN PRIORY OF ST. BRIGID

This monastery seems to have been established c.1400
(Gwynn and Hadcock 1970, 227). It was clearly in existence by
1429 when an indulgence was granted to aid the restoration
and completion of the church which had been destroyed by fire
(Twemlow 1909, 94). Further indulgences were granted in 1433
and 1438 (MacNamee 1954, 212). In 1448 the death from plague
of three of its friars is recorded (Gwynn and Hadcock 1970,
227). No receipts were returned for the priory at the
Dissolution, probably because the jurors were unable to
approach it (White 1943, 320). In 1556-7 the monastery was
granted to Richard Nugent, baron of Delvin (Gwynn and Hadcock
1970, 227). In 1566 the priory was leased to Richard Stayne
(11 Rep. Deputy Keeper Public Records Ireland, 125: No. 868),
and in 1578 to Sir Nicholas Malbie (Morrin 1862, 17, 26).
MacNamee (1954, 213) records that the Dominican community
survived at Longford until the mid-eighteenth century. It
appears to have stood on the site of the protestant parish
church of St. John (MacNamee 1954, 213).

5. OTHER FEATURES

Barracks
Now in ruins. This building is probably on the site of the
original Iongphort and may have replaced the Late Medieval
castle of the O'Fearghails. The present remains are mostly
eighteenth century.

Temple Michael
Small church in Templemichael Glebe east of the town. Now
very ruined. The graveyard is completely overgrown. Internal
dims. 12.2 by 5.8 m. The west gable is approximately 4 m high
but the remaining walls no more than 1 m high. There is no
clear evidence for a doorway.

6. LIST OF STRAY FINDS

1. Stone axehead. Found in College Field, 1939. St. Mel's
College Diocesan Museum, Longford.

2. Stone axehead. Found 1935 in College Ground. St. Mel's
College Diocesan Museum. Jrl. Ardagh & Clonmacnoise Antiq.

<u>Soc</u>. 1, 4 (1935), 100.

3. Stone axehead. Probably from Longford. St. Mels College Diocesan Museum.

4. Bronze axehead. Probably found in the Longford area, c.1880-90. St. Mel's College Diocesan Museum, Longford. <u>Jrl.</u> <u>Ardagh & Clonmacnoise Antiq. Soc</u>. 1, 4 (1935), 100.

5. Bronze palstave. Found near Longford. Blackmore Museum, Salisbury, 1881. Evans (1881), 81.

6. Bronze sword. From Longford. British Museum, London: W.G. 1631.

7. Bronze zoomorphic brooch. From Templemichael parish, Longford, 1867. NMI 1945:21.

8. 17th century chalice and paten dated 1668. Inscribed 'HENRICUS COMERFORD, SACERDOS ME FIERI FECIT'. St. Mel's College Diocesan Museum.

9. Chalice dated 1627. Inscribed with the name John Gaffney. St. Mel's College Diocesan Museum.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROBLEMS AND POTENTIAL


The Problems

     Longford is important to archaeological research for two reasons. Firstly as an example of a late medieval Irish market and secondly because of the seventeenth century town. The site is particularly important for fifteenth century settlement studies because it was the site of a native Irish market, a Dominican Priory, and a castle constructed by the O Fearghaills. Nothing is known about the nature of these native trading settlements and Longford offers an important challenge for archaeology in this respect. The present town appears to date entirely to the seventeenth century. Following the normal course of seventeenth century layout its plan shows houses fronting the street with plots of ground stretching to the town boundary behind. Accordingly the street frontages are likely to be the most rewarding sites archaeologically and unfortunately it is also here that, in the process of rebuilding, most archaeological destruction has occurred. Excavations in other seventeenth century settlements, such as Belfast, Coleraine and Derry, however, has shown that the area behind the houses was frequently used for the disposal of rubbish and it is likely that refuse pits, wells and outhouse foundations are preserved. There are no indications of seventeenth century town defences but the east and west boundaries at the rear of the plots fronting Main Street may preserve the line of defensive earthworks.

This line shoud be examined if the opportunity to excavate occurs. Apart from the street frontages there is little evidence for disturbance and it is likely that archaeological deposits are intact over a large area of the town.

Little is known about medieval or seventeenth century Longford from documentary sources and in the future archaeological excavation is likely to be the principal means by which additional knowledge of its history is obtained. Longford's archaeology is likely to come under threat from commercial development occasionally and accordingly steps should be taken to ensure that its heritage will be properly safeguarded.

Area of Archaeological Potential

The shaded portion of the accompanying map (Fig. 6) delimits the area of archaeological potential within modern Granard. This shows the extent of the seventeenth century town south of the Camlin together with an area north of the river which encises the Barracks and St. John's church, the initial focus of settlement in the town. The shaded area has been continued outside the town boundary in order to allow for possible town defences and a fosse. In the absence of archaeological excavations nothing can be said about the depth of archaeological deposits.
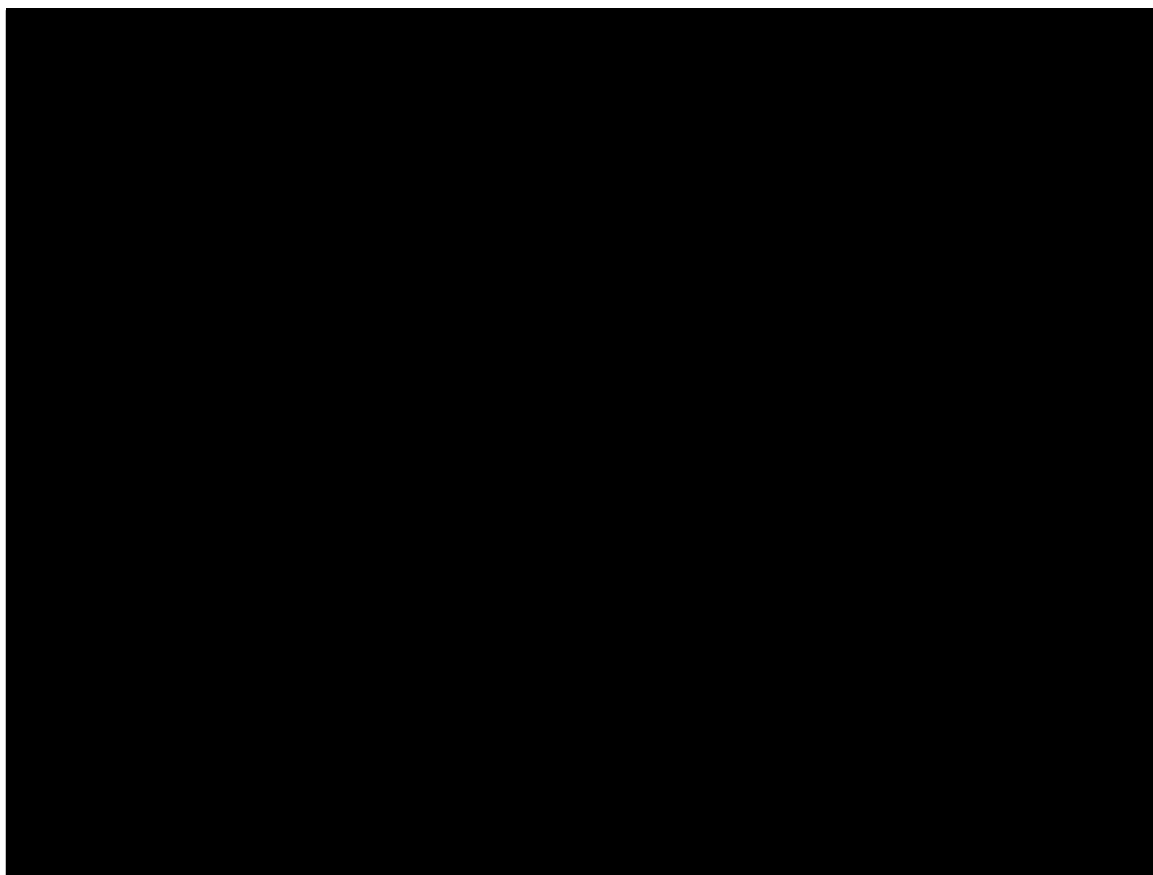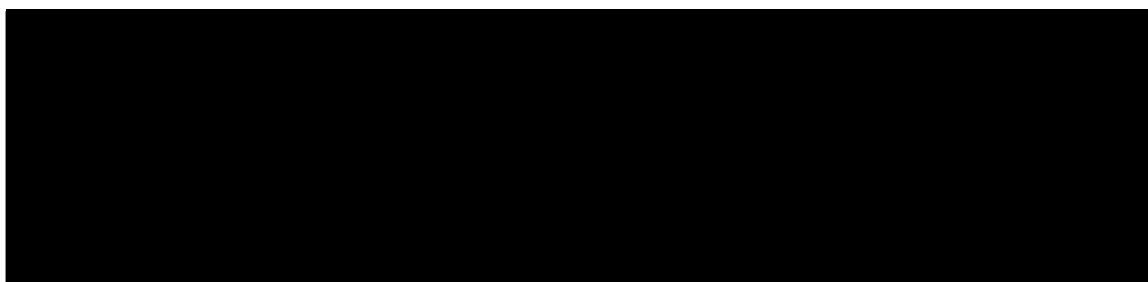
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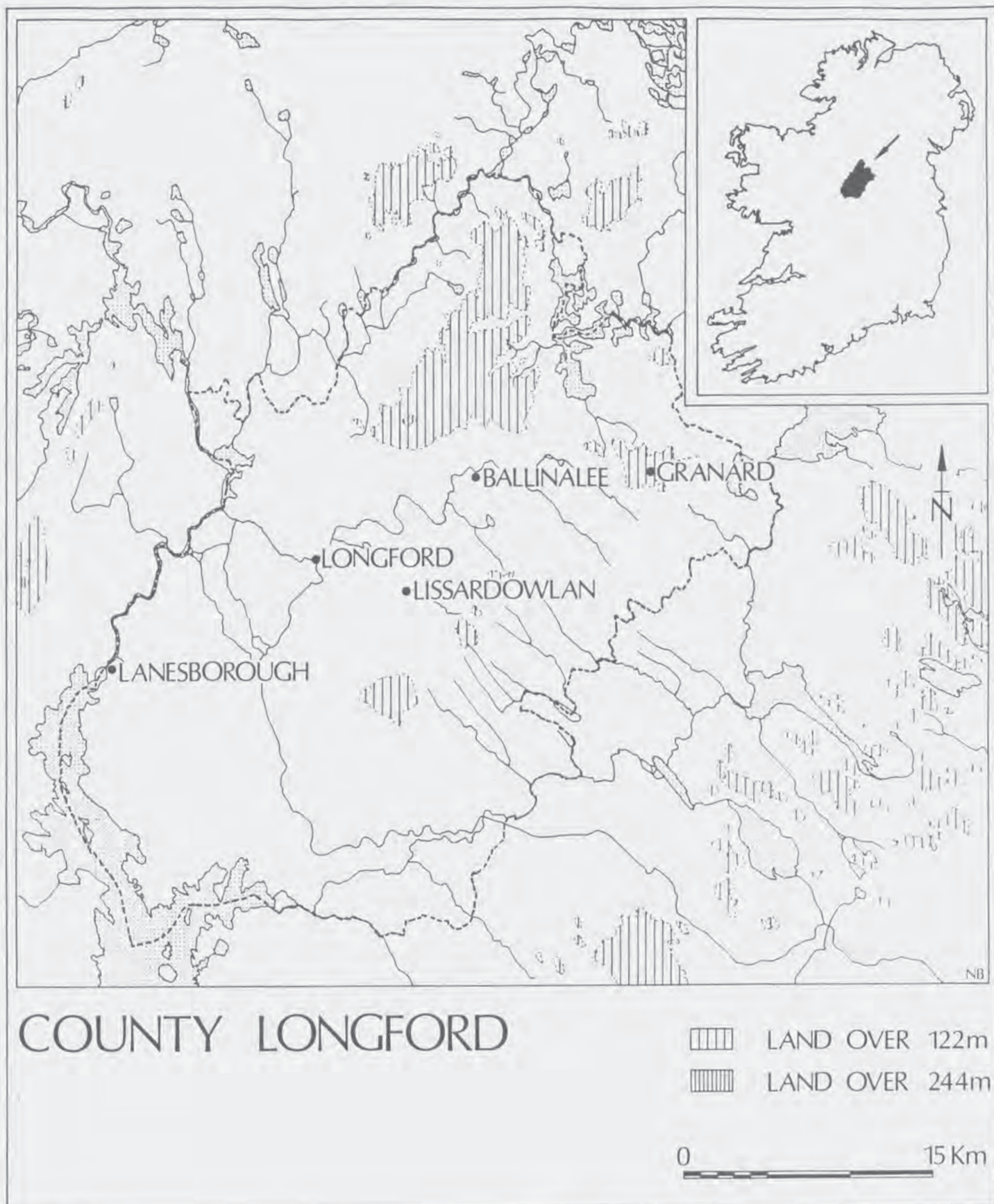Extents of Irish Monastic Possessions 1540-41. Dublin.

COUNTY LONGFORD

| | LAND OVER 122m |
| | LAND OVER 244m |

0   15 Km

Fig. 1. County Longford: Location map of boroughs and towns.
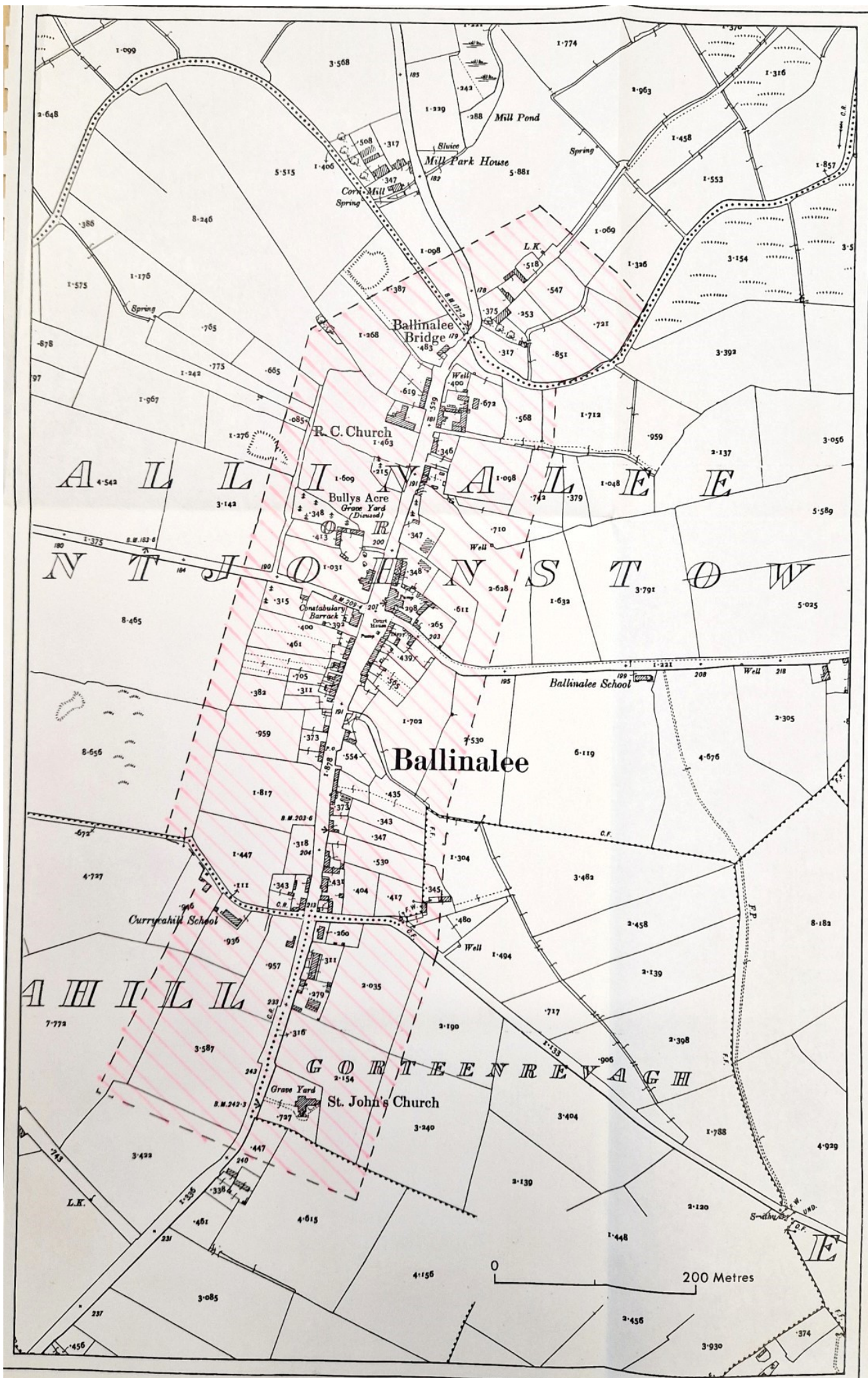
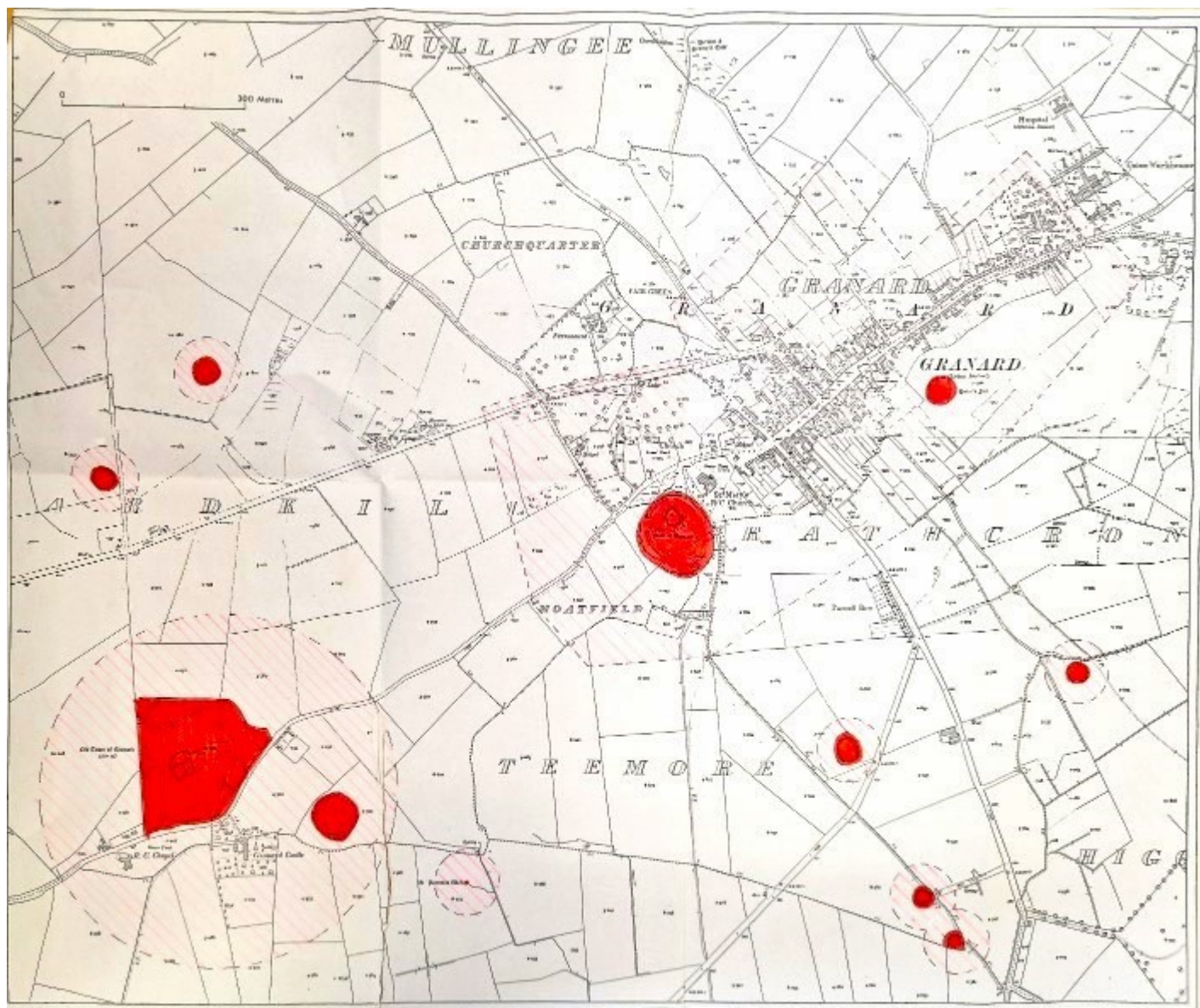Fig. 2. Ballinallee: Zone of archaeological potential
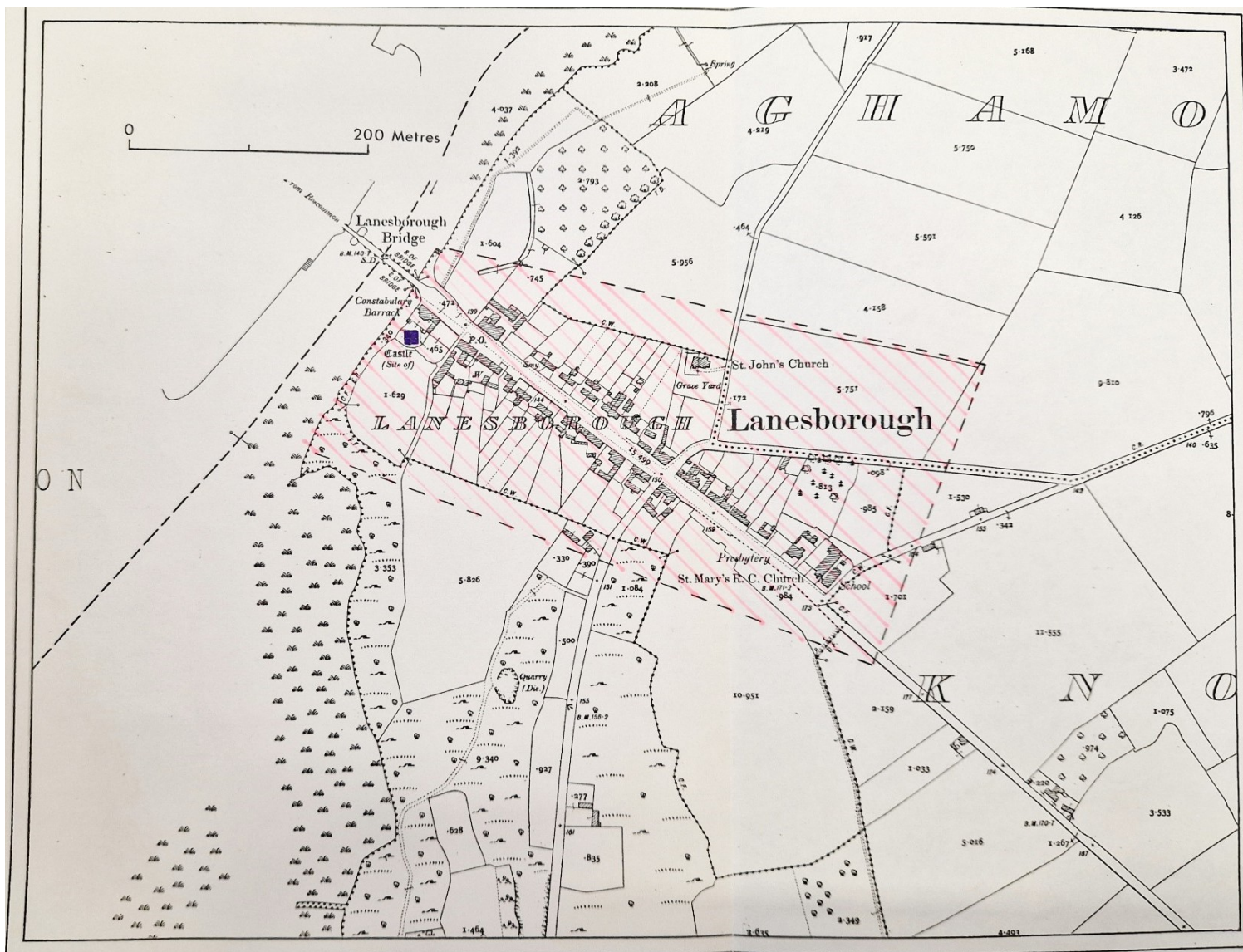
Fig. 3. Granard: Zone of archaeological potential

Fig. 4. Lanesborough: Zone of archaeological potential

Fig. 5. Lissardowlan: Zone of archaeological potential

Fig. 6. Longford: Zone of archaeological potential

Pl. 1. Granard: aerial view of the motte and bailey from north-east.

Pl. 2. Granard: general view of deserted borough earthworks
in Granardkill from south-east. Granardkill 1
ringfort is in the foreground.

Pl. 3. Granard: aerial view of the deserted borough earthworks in GranardKill.

Pl. 4.   Longford: photograph of the castle prior to
         demolition taken from the east. The circular
         structure on the right is a tower.