

APPENDIX E

OUTFALL ROUTE – UNDERWATER ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

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Riverine Archaeological Survey

ILEN RIVER

CORONEA / ABBETSTROWRY

SKIBBEREEN

CO. CORK

License No.

04D023

04R057

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For

**T.J. O CONNOR & ASSOCIATES
CONSULTING ENGINEERS**

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Abstract

This report details the results of a programme of underwater archaeological survey undertaken at the site of the construction of a proposed outfall pipe associated with a nearby treatment works at Abbeystowry, County Cork. The underwater assessment was undertaken of an area of riverbed 50 metres either side of the centreline of the proposed outfall. It was conducted in June 2004, under Dive Survey License 04D023 and Metal Detection Survey License 04R057 and lasted one day. The survey was a component of a larger predevelopment assessment of the route way for the proposed sewerage scheme collection system.

The pre-inspection desktop surveys recorded a number of archaeological monuments in the vicinity of the development. Consequently the likelihood of the development impacting archaeology was considered to be high. The diver/Visual survey of the intertidal and submarine zones to be impacted noted the remains of a submerged landscape on the northern banks of the river. No trace of this was noted on the southern banks and the landscape was not to be impacted by the development. The metal detector survey recorded a large number of contacts many of these were seen to be modern debris such as pipes and vehicle components, many others remained unidentified. Considering the rich archaeological landscape surrounding the area some of the unidentifiable contacts may be considered as potentially archaeological. It is to this respect that archaeological monitoring of the removal of riverine overburden is recommended.

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1 Introduction

This report details the results of a programme of underwater archaeological survey undertaken at the site of the construction of a proposed outfall pipe associated with a nearby treatment works at Coronea, County Cork. The underwater assessment was undertaken of an area of riverbed 50 metres either side of the centreline of the proposed outfall (110,651 E, 33872N). It was conducted in June 2004, under Dive Survey License 04D023 and Metal Detection Survey License 04R057 and lasted one day. The survey was a component of a larger predevelopment assessment of the routeway for the proposed sewerage scheme collection system.

This assessment has a number of component parts. These include introduction, impact of the development and mitigation. Probably the two most important of these components are the desktop survey and field/diver survey. The desktop survey involves inspection of all documentary and cartographic sources relating to the development area and its vicinity. It establishes the archaeological and historical background of the area and provides an indication as to the likelihood of impacting archaeological material. This survey always precedes any field survey.

The field survey has two parts; first the diver visual survey and then the diver metal detection survey. For the purpose of this assessment, the diver visual survey is a non-intrusive inspection of the riverbed, contained within the proposed development area and 50 metres either side of the centreline of the pipeline. It is designed to identify potential archaeological remains that may be retained on the riverbed. It also records topography, riverbed composition and topographical variations that may indicate areas of archaeological significance.

The metal detection survey records the location of all ferrous and non-ferrous materials on and beneath the riverbed. Each metal detector contact in the survey area is plotted, facilitating the development of a metal detector contact distribution pattern. This information is then used to help determine the need to undertake further archaeological investigations.

1.1 Site location

Coronea is a small townland on the outskirts of Skibbereen town. Skibbereen or the 'little boat harbour' is a thriving market town, regarded as the capital of the area known as The Carberies. Standing on the River Ilen, at a point where the river widens into a creek, with the Caol River to the south-east, it was founded after Algerian pirates sacked the neighbouring port of Baltimore in 1631. The growth of Skibbereen therefore seemed to stem from an influx

of inhabitants who moved up river to safer homesteads. The towns' streetscape is a complex of nineteenth century buildings, including a variety of residential, commercial and religious premises.

The proposed sewerage scheme of which this development is a component, is centered on Skibbereen town and extends out a maximum radius of c.2km in all directions. The townlands of Abbeystowry, Poundlick, Carrigfadda, Coronea, Gortnaclohy, Lurriga, Derreendangan, Marsh and Russagh are all incorporated into the development and are within the Barony of West Carbery. This report does not deal with the entire development but more specifically the construction of an outfall pipe into the Ilen river at Coronea.

1.2 Development Proposal

The development proposal involves the construction of a large treatment plant on the southern bank of the Ilen River at Coronea townland. From this location it is proposed to lay a 400 mm diameter outfall pipe through an adjacent field and into the Ilen River, where the outfall terminus point will be 110561 E, 33872N.

2 Historical and Archaeological Background

The proposed sewerage scheme is centered on the town of Skibbereen in the Barony of West Carbery. The proposed development incorporates the constraint circle around four known archaeological sites; two graveyards (RMP¹ CO141-092 and 093), a ringfort (RMP CO141-122) and a site of non-antiquity (RMP CO141-032). There are also at least nineteen other known archaeological sites in the vicinity of the development (Fig. 2; Appendix 1).

The town of Skibbereen itself is a historically and culturally important area. The name Skibbereen is open to interpretation as an article by historian James M. Burke in the Southern Star in January 1914 demonstrated:

The name Skibbereen has been the despair of etymologists. Conor Lyons suggests it may be formed from *Sgiobreidhe* (many skiffs). Dr Joyce says *Scibrin* means a place frequented by skiffs. Some say it is *Sciobadh ar drion* (the sweeping away of thatch). There is also a story about a person snatching '*sciobadh*' – a cake – (*bairin*) from another.

It is also suggested that the name may derive from '*Uisce Brean*' meaning fowl water, after the stagnant pools in the lowland areas on the southern perimeter of the town, however at present the name Skibbereen is widely acknowledged as meaning 'little boat harbour'.

¹ Record of Monuments and Places

The earliest historical record of the town is 1615 when Sir Walter Coppinger was granted a Royal Patent to hold fairs in the townland of Gortnaclohy, the eastern side of the town. Prior to 1600 most of the surrounding land belonged to the native MacCarthy tribe, however they were dispossessed during the Cromwellian Wars of 1649-1652. The land was divided into two manors, New Stapleton and Bridgetown and these were granted to William Prigg and Samuel Hall who attempted to rename the town, New Stapleton, but failed and subsequently the titles fell to the Beechers. In the early 1800s there was extensive trade in the manufacture of woolen and linen cloth as well as basic agricultural products. In the 1815 records of Rev. H. Townshend, he mentions that the town had 'bolting mills, porter and beer breweries and an extensive distillery of whiskey'. However, after the Napoleonic Wars (1792-1815) industries across Ireland, particularly textile industries, fell into decline, although Skibbereen still boasted a large brewery and a steam corn mill. The Temperance Hall (now the Fire Station on Townshend Street) was the site of the foundation of the first Temperance Society in Europe and was constructed in 1833.

There are also a number of other ecclesiastical sites in the vicinity of the proposed development. The sewerage scheme route actually incorporates the *zones of constraint* around two graveyards (RMP CO141-092 and 093). Both graveyards have evidence of originally being enclosed by stone walls and they contain numerous unscribed headstones. The graveyard (RMP CO141-092) near the junction of High Street and Chapel Street was called 'Chapel Grave Yard' on the 1842 OS map and simply 'Grave Yd.' on the 1902 edition; it is a Church of Ireland graveyard according to Burke (1918, 29). A possible overgrown stone structure was noted on visiting the site. The second graveyard (RMP CO141-093) is located on Chapel Street and is still in use. A church and graveyard (RMP CO141-084/01 and 02) are located to the west of Skibbereen town on the northern bank of the Ilen River and are named 'Abbeystrowry (in ruins) and Grave Y.D'. on the OS maps. This church probably dates to the fifteen or sixteenth century and it was recorded as being in 'repair' by 1695 and in 'bad repair' by 1806. It was reportedly on the site of a 'Cell', which was affiliated, with the Cistercian monastery of Abbeymahon. The graveyard contains many nineteenth- and twentieth-century headstones but also a famine plot in the south-western quadrant adjacent to a derelict keeper's house. To the north-east of this church and graveyard is a holy well (RMP CO141-085), however no surface trace is visible today but the site is marked 'Tobernasool' on the 1842 OS map. These sites are frequently found close to early ecclesiastical sites and their origins probably date to pre-Christian times.

The Great Famine of the 1840s devastated Skibbereen town as the communal grave in the Abbeystrowry Cemetery west of the town demonstrates. In the very bad autumn of 1846 a soup kitchen was established in the town, despite the claim that there was Government food

stored in the town that would only be handed out at high fixed prices. The workhouse in Skibbereen was built to hold only 800 people but was extensively over-crowded and eventually had 1449 inmates, with the death rate reaching sixty-five in one week in early 1847. The victims were buried in the Workhouse grounds, in the Old Chapel Yard, and even in the cabins and gardens where they died. Law Commissioners directed local guardians to obtain additional workhouse accommodation in December 1846 and as a result of this directive, three small timber sheds were also utilized in Skibbereen. Many of the buildings occupied at the time of the famine are still in existence today, albeit in various states of repair.

Although the town of Skibbereen is synonymous with the Famine period, much earlier settlement activity in the area is also evident. There are two recorded standing stones (RMP CO141-080 and 087) in the environs of the development on the northern side of the Ilen River while a third was detected during field-walking on the southern side of the river. The newly discovered standing stone is c. 0.60m high and located to the north-east of the ringfort RMP CO141-122 and north of the proposed sewerage pipeline route. Single, upright stones are a frequent element of the Irish countryside. They are known by a variety of names such as *gallán*, *dallán*, long stone etc (Power *et al* 1992, 45). They may have had a variety of functions and span a wide dating range, although many may be Bronze Age. Some excavated examples have marked prehistoric burials while others may have had a commemorative or ritual function, or served as boundary markers or positions along ancient route ways. The site RMP CO141-126 is recorded as a miscellaneous feature and is only marked on the 1944 OS map as 'Dun Aoibhinn' although no features of obvious antiquity are associated with the name place. Though this site does not fit easily into any standard archaeological category, this does not mean that the site has no archaeological significance. The site marked as a non-antiquity (RMP CO141-032) is included because it is marked on the OS map as something that resembles an archaeological feature in the field, in this case a possible enclosure or mound.

There are eleven ringforts in the environs of the proposed development (RMP CO141-030, 031/01, 046, 081/01, 086, 088, 090, 091, 122, 127 and 128). Ringforts are the most widespread archaeological field monument in Ireland. They are usually known by the names *rath* or *lios* and are circular or sub-circular areas enclosed by a single or multiple earthen bank(s) formed of material thrown up from a concentric fosse (ditch) on its outside. Variations on the enclosing element include stone facing or stone banks (*caher*). Archaeological investigation has shown that the majority of ringforts were enclosed farmsteads, built in Early Medieval times. Although comparatively few ringforts have been excavated, it is accepted that they have a long period of use, from about 600-900 AD. Sites

may also have been re-occupied in the medieval and post-medieval period (Power *et al* 1992, 131). The proposed sewerage scheme includes the *zone of constraint* around one of these ringforts (RMP CO141-122; Fig. 2), however the route of the sewerage pipe is to the north of the ringfort and enters a proposed waste water treatment plant in the north-western corner of the same field.

There are also at least three souterrains (RMP CO141-031/02, 081/02 and 089) in the environs of the development, two of these are recorded as 'possible souterrains' which implies that although no visible remains was detected the recording field archaeologist felt the tradition was sufficiently sound to represent a genuine discovery. In the case of that associated with Corrymella House an old photograph survives, however the souterrain (RMP CO141-081/02) reportedly associated with a ringfort (RMP CO141-081/01) is not recorded in the *Archaeological Inventory* although it is included in the Records of Monuments and Places (RMP) list. Souterrains are underground man-made structures composed of a chamber or series of chambers linked by creepways and entered from ground level by a narrow opening. They are often located within ringforts or *cashels* and like them were built in Early Medieval times. Their exact function is still under debate with suggestions varying from places for domestic storage to temporary habitations to refuges for both people and valuables. Souterrains were constructed by either tunneling into the underlying clay and rock (earth-cut, rock-cut) from a shaft that was later backfilled, or it was built of dry stone in an excavated trench (stone-built), which was then backfilled (*ibid*, 229). A fourth possible souterrain in the area is not marked on either the SMR or RMP maps but was reported on by D. Donovan in 1876 (Somerville 1930, 16). This site 'on the lands of Lurriga in a large field adjoining Clover Hill House', was discovered in 1869 and appeared to be 'an underground chamber about 4 feet beneath the surface with human bones, evidently very ancient, discovered near the entrance'. It reportedly had three chambers, one blocked with large stones suggesting an entrance. Unfortunately there is no reference to a Clover Hill House on any of the OS maps (1842 and 1902) although it was reportedly the residence of J. MacCarthy Downing Esq. as early as 1847 (Mahony 1847). Donovan (Somerville 1930, 16) also describes the surrounding land as an artificial raised oblong mound and located about a quarter of a mile to the east is a small rath or fort with Lurriga House at its western limit. Lurriga House is recorded in the RMP lists as a farm building (RMP CO141-045/01) and an associated potential site (RMP CO141-045/02) recorded from documentation research. Neither of these sites are included in the *Archaeological Inventory* but the house most likely represents a post-medieval dwelling and the potential site may be that mentioned by Donovan as a rath or ringfort.

The site of a castle (RMP CO141-094) is located to the south-east of Skibbereen town in the townland of Gortnaclohy, on the eastern bank of a stream. It is shown on the 1842 OS map as a dotted circular area however no standing remains survive today. Donovan (1876, 13) referred to it as the site of a bawn with traces of the foundations still visible, if this is true the site may represent a late medieval (fifteenth- or sixteenth-century) tower house and bawn. The dominant family group who built these castles in West Cork was MacCarthy Riabhach and Coleman (1922, 66) refers to this site as a MacCarthy Reagh castle (Power *et al* 1992, 317 and 321). However, Carroll (2001, 126) believes that although associated with the MacCarthy Reaghs it was probably built by a sept of the O'Donovans called *Sloicht Tiobairt*. The earliest reference to the castle's ownership is to Eleanor Fitzgerald, widow of the MacCarthy Reagh, however she remarried a Manus O'Donnell and went to Donegal, only to return to Gortnaclohy in 1540 when he capitulated to the English (*ibid*). Around 1546 as a protective measure she handed the majority of the territory to Sir William Coppinger, who in turn leased it back to Florence MacCarthy, however in the 1646 war Coppingers son lost the lands and they went to William Prigg and Samuel Hall. These two English settlers named the growing town New Stapleton, although it soon reverted through to *Sciobairín* or Skibbereen (*ibid*). A second castle in the townland of Curragh to the north-west of Skibbereen town is recorded in historical references but nothing now remains and it is not included in the *Archaeological Inventory*. According to Carroll (*ibid*, 86), the site of Curra MacTeige castle, close to the ruins of the Cistercian Abbey (RMP CO141-084/01), has now been built over by a housing development. It is believed that the castle was built by Dermot MacCormac MacCarthy, father of the King of Cork, Donal Mór, who lived and died (1206) in the castle. This MacCarthy sept was known as *Gan Tadhg Ilan* (Cois Eihleann), after the River Ilan (*ibid*, 86-87).

Many archaeological sites are low visibility monuments and these include ancient (prehistoric) settlements, souterrains, ceremonial and burial sites. Remains of these types of sites may lie buried under the surface. Sites have also been leveled in the past and the sub-surface evidence for these may still remain below the modern surface. Stray finds, dropped or lost in the past can also be recovered when the ground is disturbed. The present inventories of sites and monuments (SMR and RMP) indicates only sites that are now visible above the ground and there remains the possibility that other buried sites exist below the surface.

3 Underwater Strategy

A combined system of GPS coordinates and measurements taken from the site plans allowed location of the centreline and terminus of the proposed outfall. Once located, two arbitrary points along this route, one on both banks were used to define the centre of the survey zone.

A primary EDM topographical survey of the riverbanks and surrounding area was the first objective to be achieved. Upon completion of this, the diver survey commenced. It was divided into two component parts; the first being the visual survey and the second the metal detection survey. The visual survey was used to inspect the riverbed for upstanding and slightly submerged archaeological material and features. Any found were recorded. Each survey tract commenced alternatively on opposing banks and continued to the other side. Overlapping of passages ensured 100% coverage of the survey area.

The second component, the metal detection survey was designed to record the location of any ferrous and non-ferrous material on and beneath the riverbed. All metal detector contacts were recorded with the EDM. Thus allowing for the generation of a contact distribution maps. A surface assistant also recorded a written description of all the contacts (full descriptions are contained in Appendix 2). Similarly, overlapping passages ensured 100% coverage.

3.1 Diver / Visual Survey

The area of the Ilen River under inspection during this survey was situated downstream of Abbeystrowry cemetery. At this point the river was wide and shallow with large foreshore areas exposed on both sides at low water spring tides. The 50 metre survey area either side of the centreline of the outfall encompassed both banks of the river, consequently the two sides were investigated.

The southern banks were composed of bare bedrock overlain by gravel and riverine mud. Steep bedrock cliffs bound the upper foreshore area throughout the survey zone (see plate 2.). These are in turn bounded by a single line of trees and then rich pastureland. The southern intertidal zone was gradually sloping and consisted of well sorted riverine gravel interspersed with riverine mud. It had a moderate amount of green algal covering but no archaeological features or material.

The northern shore was fronted by low, eroding, grass and reed covered clay cliffs. Contained within these cliffs were significant faunal remains. These remains mainly took the form of fallen branches and tree trunks (see plate 1). Throughout the survey zone, various concentrations of these remains were noted. A number of them were visually inspected but none appeared to contain any traces of human activity or exploitation.

From this eroding river bank the foreshore sloped gradually towards the centre of the river. It consisted of well-sorted riverine gravel interspersed with hard riverine clay. The upper foreshore on the northern side had a considerable amount of material of an indistinguishable

date. These materials were noted in various concentrations, and included Cattle bone, lengths of metal, leather straps, glass bottles and even an abandoned car (see plates 5 & 6). As they lay on the riverine mud provenance was not possible. Similarly dating, contextualisation and understanding of stratigraphic sequences for these materials was not possible. The preponderance of modern material in these areas appeared to indicate that many were not archaeological. However this does not dismiss the possibility that some material could have eroded from the clay cliffs and may be archaeological.

During the time of the survey the foreshore was seen to taper gradually from both sides towards a deeper riverbed section (<0.5m) in the centre. The riverbed throughout was moderately undulating, composed of well-sorted riverine gravel with occasional large stones. Interestingly there was no indication of either the exposed bedrock noted on the southern bank or the submerged faunal remains of the northern bank. No archaeological materials or remains were noted in the riverbed.

Metal Detector Survey

The metal detector survey recorded the presence of both ferrous and non-ferrous material throughout the survey zone. All identified contacts were visible sitting on the riverbed or foreshore whilst a greater number were buried and unidentifiable. Consequently determination of their archaeological significance was not possible. Notwithstanding this the location of the outfall, in the centre of the river, the submerged faunal remains on the northern bank and the obvious use of the river as a route way since the medieval period would appear to indicate that the area was one of archaeological importance. In light of this there is an ever-present possibility that many of the unidentified contacts are archaeological.

A full written description of all metal detector contacts is contained in Appendix 2, additionally all contacts are plotted in Figure 3.

Results

Archaeologically, the landscape surrounding the survey area was quite rich. It was adjacent to two recorded monuments and had been used as a route way to the town of Skibbereen since at least the 17th century. The diver/visual survey did not record the presence of any definitive archaeological remains in the survey zone. It did record the presence of submerged faunal remains in the form of tree trunks and branches on the northern riverbank as well as a variety of unprovenanced materials. The presence of these remains does not confirm the presence of archaeology but they are indicative of landscape evolution and human activity in the area. Previously investigated riverine submerged landscapes have yielded evidence of successive periods of occupation and exploitation from the Neolithic to Medieval times. It is in this light that this area should be considered as of high archaeological importance. Additionally, the

metal detector survey recorded a number of unidentifiable contacts some of which may be considered as potentially archaeological.

General Overview of Archaeology

The location of two recorded monuments in the vicinity of the development would appear to indicate that archaeologically the area is rich. No archaeological remains or materials were noted on the southern banks of the river as it was composed of exposed bedrock overlain by riverine gravel.

The riverbed in the development zone was moderately undulating and composed of well-sorted riverine gravel with occasional large stones. It had no visible archaeological remains. The northern banks of the river contained deposits, which could possibly be determined as archaeological. These took the form of submerged faunal remains trees and branches. In addition to the presence of these remains a large amount of apparent modern debris was noted on the foreshore. Whilst much of this material appeared to be modern it was not possible to confirm that all were not archaeological.

Impact of development on Archaeology

By way of its form and function, the excavation of a pipeline trench through these areas would have a destructive and deleterious impact on any archaeological remains which may be present

Recommendations

- Archaeological monitoring of the removal of all riverine overburden down to bedrock should be considered particularly in light of the presence of such faunal remains on the northern banks.

These recommendations are subject to the approval of the Heritage Service and the National Museum of Ireland.

Site Name: Abbeystrowry/Coronea		License Number: 04D023 / 04R057
Contact Number	Description	
1	Unknown	
2	Unknown	
3	Unknown	
4	Unknown	
5	Unknown	
6	Unknown	
7	Unknown	
8	Unknown	
9	Unknown	
10	Unknown	
11	Unknown	
12	Part of Car Engine	
13	Cluster of metal pieces	
14	Unknown	
15	Unknown	
16	Unknown	
17	Unknown	
18	Metal pipe	
19	Handle of plastic bucket	



Figure1. Area Location Map



Figure 2. Survey Area