



## **Monitoring Report No. 46**

**Monea Castle  
Castletown Monea  
Co. Fermanagh**

**AE/06/09**

Kara Ward

## **Site Specific Information**

*Site Name:* Monea Castle

*Townland:* Castletown Monea

*SMR No:* FER:191:061

*State Care*  *Scheduled*  *Other*

*Grid Ref:* H16474937

*County:* Fermanagh

*Excavation License No:* AE/06/09

*Scheduled Monument Consent:* Ref. B4/95

*Date of Monitoring:* 24<sup>th</sup> January 2006

*Archaeologist Present:* Kara Ward

### *Brief Summary:*

Excavation by hand of a 0.60m square hole, 0.45m deep, to receive a post for a pedestal interpretative panel.

*Size of area opened:* 0.60m square and 0.45m deep

## Account of the excavation

Excavation of a 0.6m square trench, 0.45m deep, was requested by Maybelline Gormley, PHM division, EHS: Built Heritage, to receive a post for a pedestal interpretative panel. The posthole was located just outside the bawn of Monea Castle (FER:191:061) in Castletown Monea townland (Fig. 2 and 3) and was offset at least 1m from a pathway which is contemporary with the castle. An archaeologist was required to carry out the excavation as the location for the interpretative panel was within the scheduled area of a State Care site. This was to allow the investigation and recording of any archaeological features or deposits impacted upon by the insertion of the posthole. As the works were to be carried out within the scheduled area of the site, a Scheduled Monument Consent was obtained (B4/95).

Monea Castle is a Plantation period castle. It was constructed in 1618 for Malcolm Hamilton and the bawn was added four years later. It was captured by the native Irish during the rebellion of 1641 but was subsequently recaptured and by 1688 it served as the residence of the Governor of Enniskillen. A formal avenue and gardens are associated with the site, to the north of the castle. The avenue is still used as the formal approach to the site and the garden features are partially visible on aerial photographs. The interior of the bawn is known to be cobbled.

The excavation was carried out by hand by Kara Ward on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2006. The dimensions of the area excavated were 0.6m square and 0.45m deep. The trench was located 1.55m to the north of the bawn and 1.1m east of the pathway (Fig. 4 and 5, Plate 1). The topsoil (C101) had a depth of up to 0.14m and was a dark brown sandy loam with inclusions of decayed sandstone. Directly underneath the topsoil was a rough stone surface (C102) (Plates 2 and 3). The stones were sub-rounded to angular, mostly sandstone and of various sizes. The largest stone visible measured 0.15m by 0.14m by 0.10m. Some of the stones were thin and flat but none of the stones resembled cobbles. It appears that this layer of stones had been roughly compacted by trampling. This layer was present between 0.14m and 0.18m below normal ground level. Underlying C102 was a build up of brown silty sand with sandstone inclusions (C103). It was between 0.18m and 0.25m below present ground level. C103 overlay another rough stone surface (C104) (Plate 4). Like C102 it appeared to be a compacted layer of stone but no deliberately set stones were evident. This layer was between 0.25m and 0.38m below present ground level. Underlying C104 was a deposit of dark brown sand with flecks of decayed stone (C105); this material was present up to the maximum excavated depth of 0.45m (Plate 5). The subsoil was not encountered at this point. When the excavation was completed to the required depth of 0.45m, the pedestal interpretative panel was inserted and the ground reinstated (Plate 6).

Summary of stratigraphy:

Depth below present ground level	Context	Description
0.00 – 0.14m	C101	topsoil
0.14 – 0.18m	C102	stone surface
0.18 – 0.25m	C103	brown silty sand
0.25 – 0.38m	C104	stone surface
0.38 – 0.45m	C105	dark brown sand

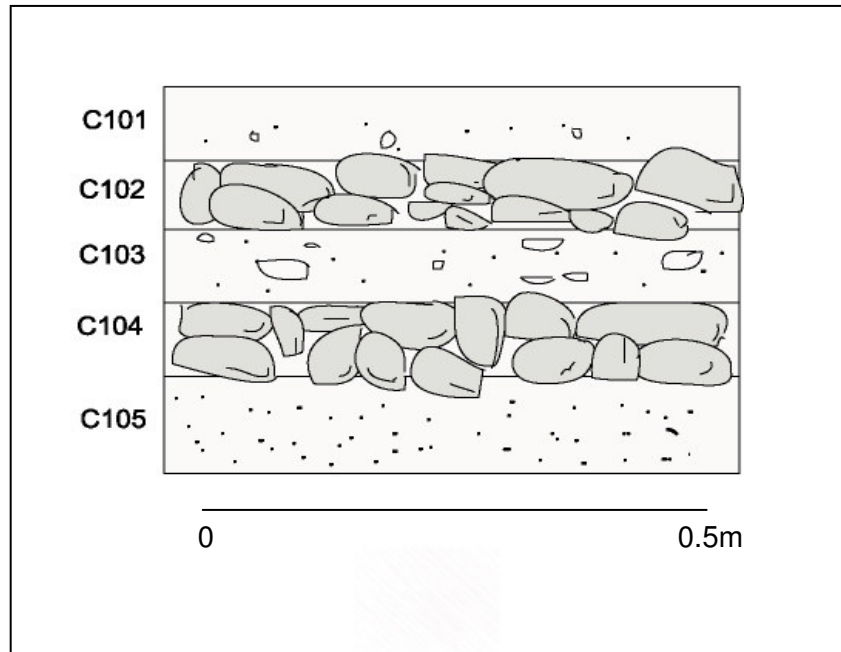


Fig. 1: Stratigraphic sequence in posthole

Discussion:

The sequence of stratigraphy (Fig. 1) uncovered during excavation of the posthole appears to represent a sequence of activity related to the castle. The earliest context (C105) represents a build up of material prior to the creation of the earliest stone surface (C104). It is not clear if there was any earlier activity before C105 since the excavation was not sufficiently deep to allow investigation of earlier contexts or to encounter the subsoil. Stone surface C104 is likely to be a pathway related to the castle and the associated gardens which are known to have been in this location north of the bawn. Some garden features are still extant and visible on aerial photographs of the site. It appears that after a phase of usage, a context consisting of brown silty sand (C103) was allowed to build up on the stone surface (C104). Following this, another stone surface was created (C102), presumably as a replacement for the original stone surface (C104). The only deposit overlying the later stone surface (C102) was the topsoil (C101), so it seems that C102 was the last phase of activity associated with the castle in this location.

**Archive:**

*Finds:* N/A

*Photographs:* 14 digital images, held by CAF

*Plans / Drawings:* N/A

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

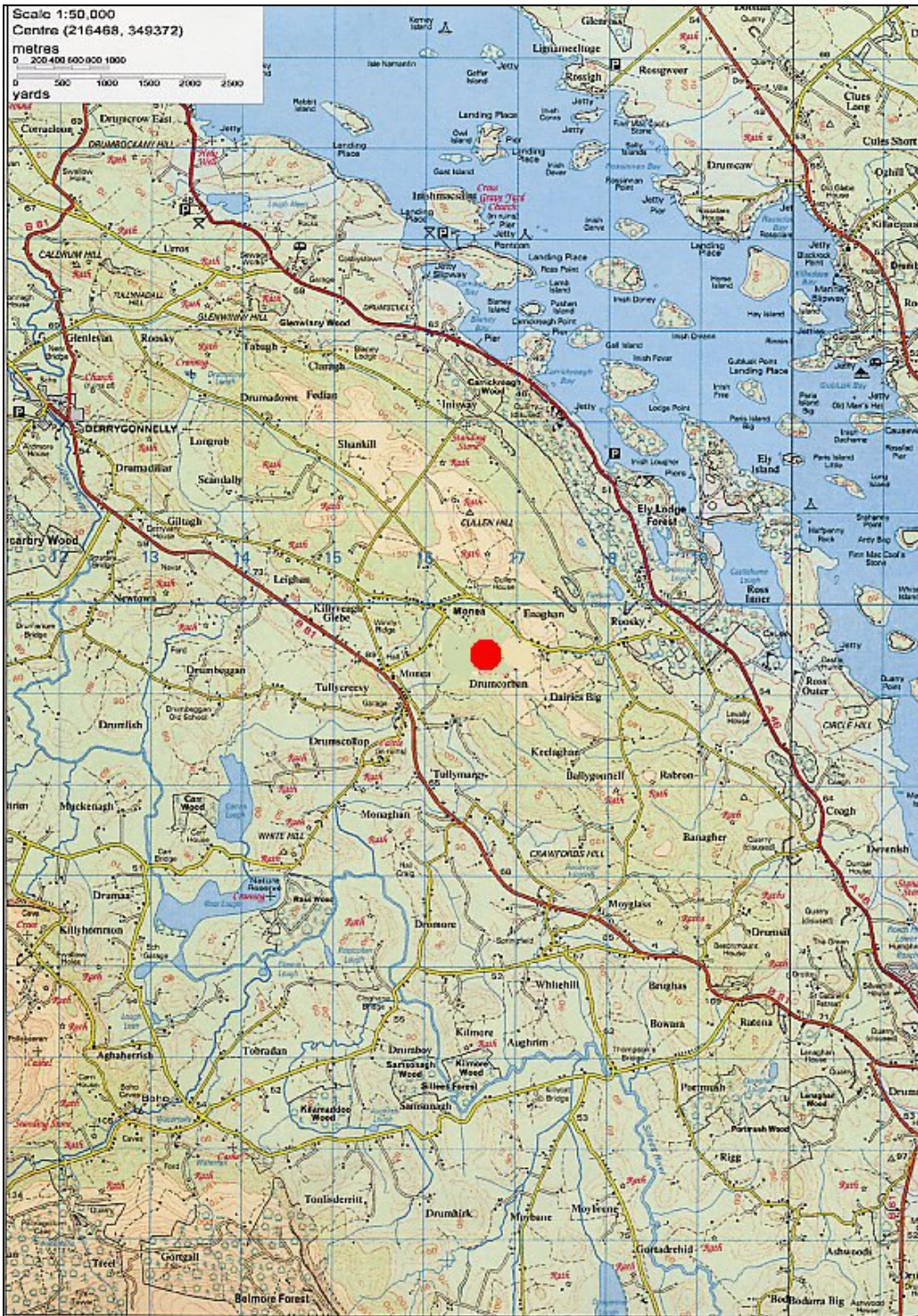


Fig. 2: Map showing location of site (red)

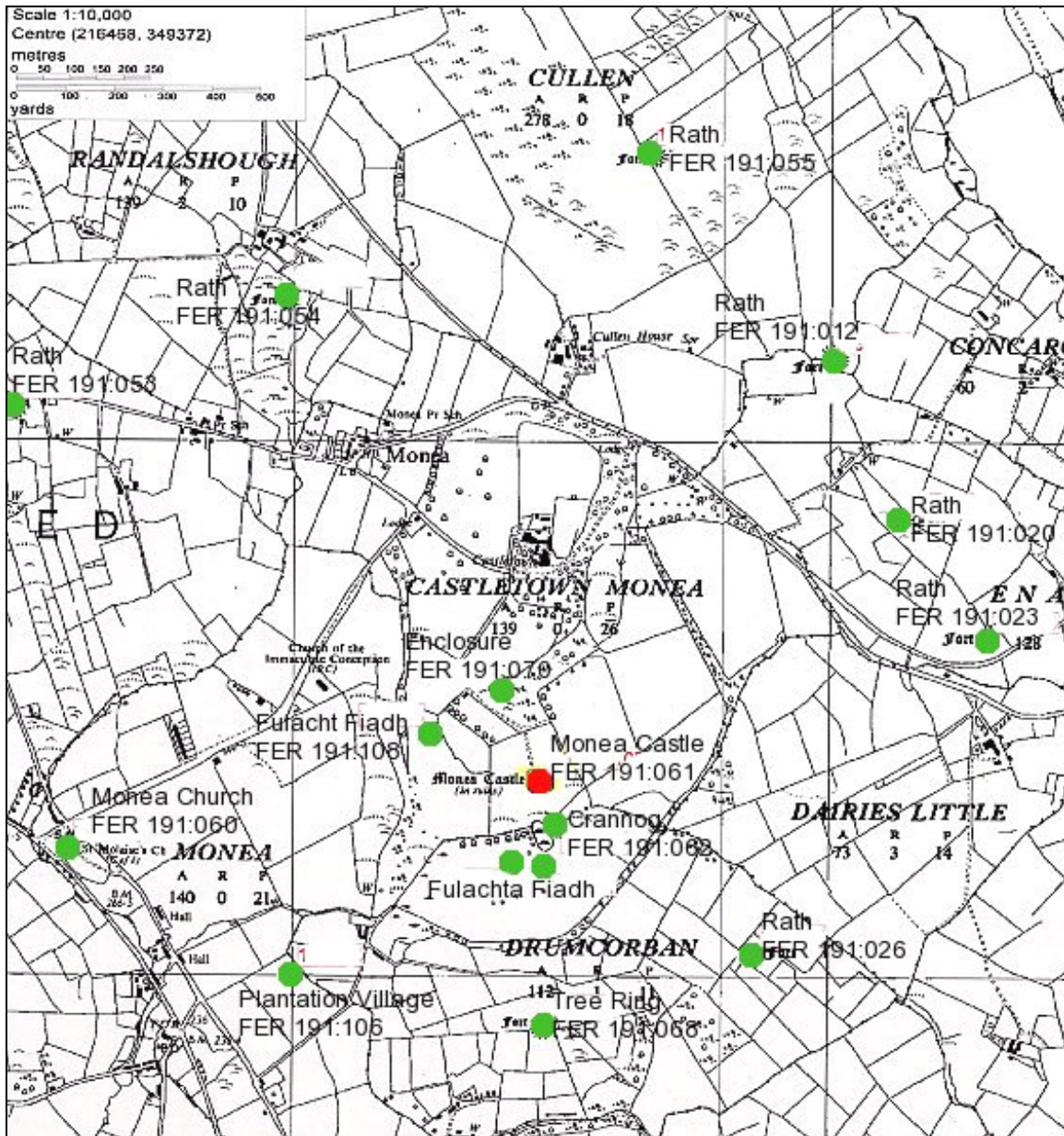


Fig. 3: 1:10,000 Map showing location of site (red) and other local archaeological monuments (green)



Fig. 4: Aerial Photograph of Monea Castle showing location of posthole



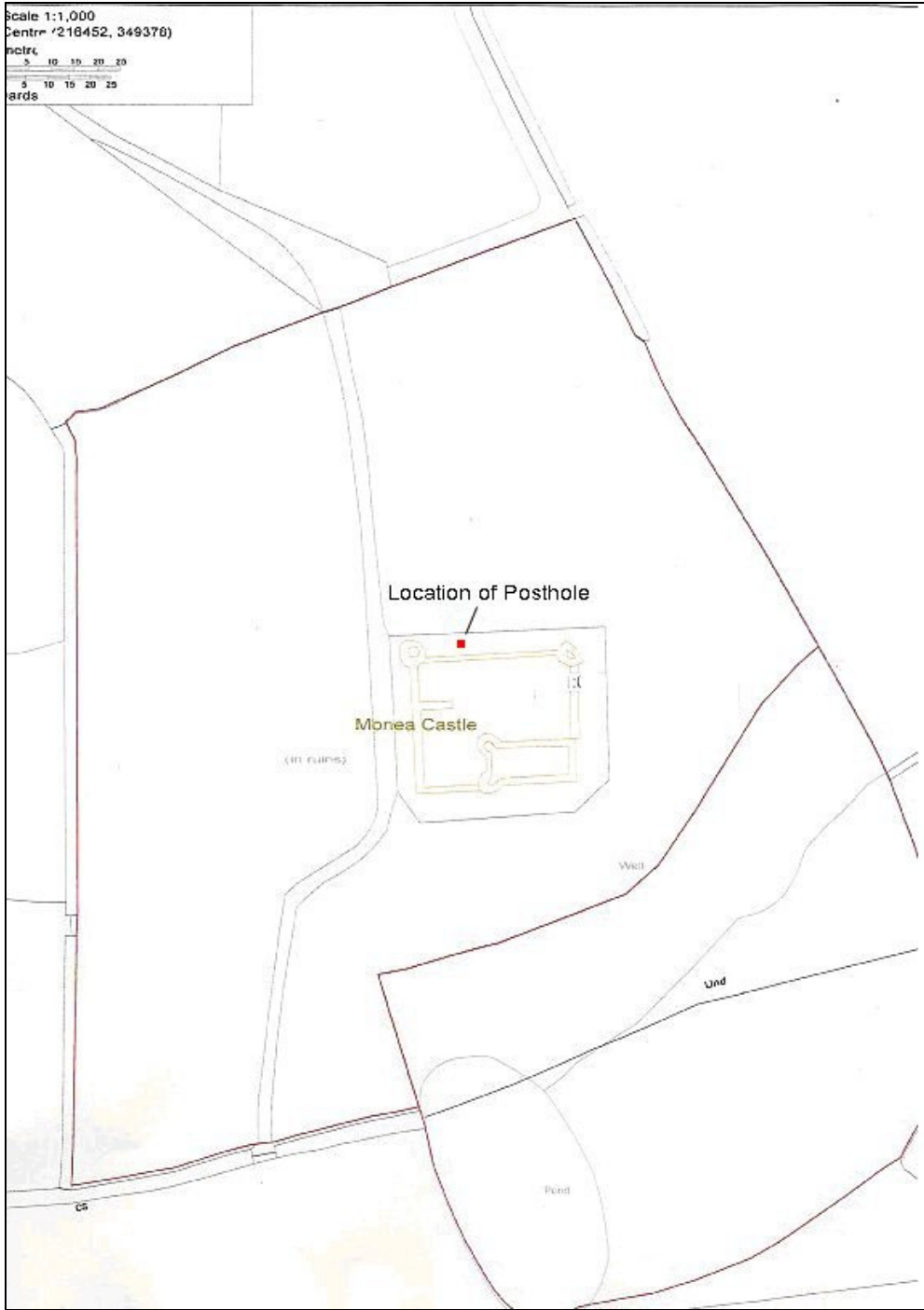


Fig. 5: 1:1,000 Map of Monea Castle showing location of posthole



Plate 1: View of trench with castle in the background, from north



Plate 2: View of stone surface (C102) after removal of topsoil (C101), from south



Plate 3: View of trench,  
from north



Plate 4: View of stone surface (C104) after removal of brown silty sand (C103), from west



Plate 5: View of fully excavated trench, from north, showing maximum depth excavated (0.45m) and the dark brown sand (C105) that was the final context to be excavated



Plate 6: View of interpretative sign *in-situ*, from north-west