



Acadamh Ríoga na hÉireann Royal Irish Academy

1. Title: Mr

First name: Dave

Surname: Pollock

Amount awarded: €16150

3. Grant programme Archaeology Research Excavation Grant

4. Year awarded 2019

5. Title of project Gallows Hill investigation

6. Summary of report (Min. allowed 100 words)

The 2019 excavations at Gallows Hill, Dungarvan, continued the investigation (T2) on top of the mound and cut a trench (T4) at the foot of the east side. Further inhumations were found on the mound (T2), aligned in various directions. It now appears that all human remains found in 2018 and 2019 are from sporadic burials probably associated with hangings on the mound. The shallower burials have been disturbed, perhaps accidentally during landscaping. It is hoped that bone samples from 2019 will be suitable for radiocarbon dating. All material cut by the graves is now considered part of an original layered mound, which may have been truncated and remodelled in recent centuries. Little or no remains of original wooden superstructures were identified. On the east side of the mound (T4) two large ditches were found, with early bank material between. The ditches are probably postmedieval, and appear to have erased the original ditch from the footprint of the trench.

7. Date the report was submitted 22-10-2019

8. Please provide two appropriate images which can include photographs of team on site, aerial view, objects found during excavation etc and which can be used by the RIA in grant publications, website etc.



Photos above by John Foley

9. Please outline the objectives of the project

The primary aim was to establish the date and function of the motte. After the 2018 season it was thought that the top of the motte had survived in good condition, with casts of original timberwork. There was also an intention to investigate burials on the mound, to date the cemetery and carry out isotope analysis of bone and tooth enamel. The additional trench on the east side of the mound was intended to check the arrangement of ditches, and look for signs of a former bailey.

10. Please describe the methodology used in conducting the research

The trench on the mound (T2) was dug entirely by hand. The 2018 trench was reopened, widened and lengthened. Our osteoarchaeologist investigated the disturbed shallow burials in the middle of the trench, and recommended leaving the remains in situ. The ends of the trench, on the shoulder of the mound, were dug further.

At the foot of the mound a new trench (T4) was opened using a machine, to remove a deep layer of late 20th century material. Excavation proceeded by hand, investigating a shelf on the side of the mound, two late ditches and a bank of early material between.

Charcoal samples, recovered from the shelf and one of the ditches (T4), have been subsampled and sent to QUB for radiocarbon dating. Bone samples from the cemetery (T2) are currently awaiting licences from the National Museum, before being sent to QUB for dating. (Samples from the 2018 season were too low in collagen, and were returned; the present samples are considered more likely to succeed).

We are currently waiting for isotope analysis results on samples from 2018. There is currently no intention to submit further samples.

11. Please outline the findings of your research and/or milestones achieved

On the mound (T2) it became clear that the human remains were not from a war cemetery, but had been buried over a period. Ground level may have been lowered whilst the cemetery was in use, exposing the earlier remains. It now seems likely that this has been a place of execution and burial, landscaped at some point to increase the summit area or improve access.

The truncation of the hilltop appears to have removed much or all of the evidence for original timberwork.

The two ditches found to the east of the mound (T4) probably match the two later ditches found to the west, but both are closer to the mound. A wide ledge on the side of the mound appears to predate the truncation of the hilltop; its function may become clearer when we have C-14 dates.

12. a) Please provide details of the dissemination of the outcomes from this project (inc. publications, presentations, outreach, media etc.) including details of any social media/web platforms used to publicise this project

Information about the dig findings has been disseminated by the Dungarvan Adopt a Monument Group, with a secondary school visit last year, articles for local papers, and blogs and posts on facebook, through the County Museum (www.waterfordmuseum.ie). I have given talks to the Dungarvan Museum Society on the 2017 and 2018 results, and hope to talk about the 2019 results. The Adopt a Monument Group included some of the findings in an article for the latest Decies (2019). I hope to have the final report in the same journal. A short article on the first season at Gallows Hill was published in Archaeology Ireland, Spring 2018.

How will you continue to communicate the results of your project and what are your publication plans?

A final report on the 3 seasons of excavation will be completed when the specialist reports are finished, and the C-14 dates are to hand, early next year. This will be lodged with the NM Archive, and be published in summary or in full in a relevant journal (hopefully Decies). There may be a further press release when the C-14 dates arrive. There will be a further talk to the Dungarvan Museum Society, and I have been commissioned to write and illustrate an on site information panel for Gallows Hill. I am available for talks/ conferences etc.