

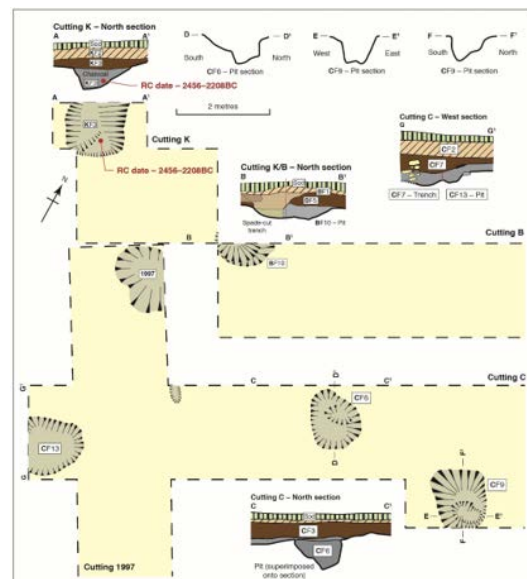
# Archaeology Radiocarbon Dates Scheme 2020 Final Report

1. Title: Dr
- First name: Matthew
- Surname: Stout
- 2.
3. Grant programme: Archaeology C14 Radiocarbon Dates Scheme
4. Year awarded: 2020
5. Title of project: Excavations at Beaubec, Bey More, Co. Meath
6. Summary of report (Minimum allowed 100 words):  
The Beaubec Excavations team was awarded a Radio Carbon date from the RIA/QUB (see 4 December 2020). The reason for this award was to acquire a date for what was believed to be a Late Neolithic pit circle. The results confirmed that the pit circle dates to 2456–2208BC. This, along with a good collection of prehistoric tools found on the excavation establishes that there was a Late Neolithic horizon at Beaubec uniting this part of the Boyne Valley with those monuments found in the summer of discoveries in 2018 and similar Neolithic circles found in Laytown/Bettystown during the Celtic Tiger years.

7. Please provide two appropriate images



Dr Penny Johnston samples charcoal from pit circle



Plans and sections from pit circle

Please outline the objectives of the project

Beaubec is the site of a medieval monastic farm associated with the French Cistercian foundation of De Bello Becco (Beaubec) Normandy. Beaubec, founded before 1201, is ideally located to throw light on the involvement of the Cistercians in international maritime trade in the Boyne valley during the medieval period. It lies 3km south of the medieval walled town and port of Drogheda. The main aims of the Beaubec Excavations is to firstly, uncover the structural remains and layout of the thirteenth century Cistercian foundation of de Bello Becco (Beaubec); secondly, retrieve material evidence for external contacts in the form of imported ceramics, and thirdly, identify the variety of agricultural goods produced on this monastic grange, which were then exported to Normandy. Inevitably, as this excavation took place in the Boyne Valley, a prehistoric horizon was discovered. Along with the pit circle (with its mean date of 2333BC), there might also be evidence for the existence of a passage tomb on the site.

9. Please describe the methodology used in conducting the research

The excavation was carried out under the licensing conditions established by the National Monuments Service and the National Museum of Ireland (license number 19E0405). Sampling of the organic material used to date the pit circle was carried out by Dr Penny Johnston. Dr Johnston was the full -time archaeologist employed on the site for the duration of the excavation.

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

The results confirmed that the pit circle at Beaubec dated to 2456–2208BC. This, along with a good collection of prehistoric tools found on the excavation establishes that there was a Late Neolithic horizon at Beaubec uniting this part of the Boyne Valley with those monuments found in 2018 (including the RIA funded excavations at Newgrange Farm) and similar Neolithic circles found in Laytown/Bettystown during the early 2000s.

11. 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

The news of the award was posted on the excavation blog <https://beaubec.home.blog/page/4/> (4 December 2020). News of the results was posted at <https://beaubec.home.blog/page/3/> (26 March 2021). An article on the discoveries appeared in the Irish Independent for 30 March 2021: <https://www.independent.ie/irish-news/news/bru-na-boinne-links-to-site-where-medieval-monks-made-bread-40254629.html> Visitors to the site were made aware of this RIA funded discovery. Most recent visitors to Beaubec included students from Castleknock College, the Louth Archaeological and historical Society and the Meath Archaeological Society. The pit circle was discussed in an Abarta Podcast for National Heritage Week (at 15 min 39 secs): <https://www.abartaheritage.ie/excavations-at-beaubec-amplify-archaeology-podcast-episode-25/>

b) No. of Academic Papers/articles published:

2

c) No. of Lectures given/outreach events involved in:

6

d) Media Coverage (article in local newspaper, feature on University website etc.):

2

e) How will you continue to communicate the results of

The excavation has now been completed and the process of writing up the results has begun. A comprehensive excavation report

your project and what are your publication plans?

featuring the pit circle and the RIA funded date should appear early in 2023.

15. How did the award enhance your professional development (e.g. in terms of specific opportunities, opportunities for enhancing skills, collaborations with others etc.)?

The involvement of the Royal Irish Academy in the Beaubec project enhances the project's reputation and the reputation of the researchers involved. Collaboration with archaeologists and scientists in Queen's University Belfast is another aspect of this grant that, by association, enhances the reputation of the project.

16. What plans (if any) do you have to further your proposal/project?

The results have placed Beaubec into the wider context of Late Neolithic activity in the Boyne Valley. This will figure in a paper to be published in *Riocht na Midhe* in 2022.