



## Archaeology C14 Radiocarbon Dates Scheme Report

Name of Grantee:	Dr Marion Dowd
Title of Project:	Radiocarbon dating human remains from Glencurran Cave, Co. Clare

### Summary of report:

Glencurran Cave, Co. Clare was excavated over four years between 2004-2009. Investigations revealed that the deepest part of the cave had been used for votive deposition and burial during the Bronze Age. This grant awarded in 2020 related to the final phase of radiocarbon dating of human bones from the site, yielding several important new developments in our understanding of how the cave was used:

1. Three of the dates (one from a new born infant, two from adult bones) returned Middle Bronze Age dates (circa 1550-1450 cal BC) and have revealed that this phase of usage may have been as extensive as the LBA phase. Until now, it had appeared that MBA activities were not as pronounced.
2. The MBA dates came from bones found on or near the cave floor and were specifically targeted as previous dates from the site had focussed on bones from in situ contexts.
3. A fourth date on an adult tooth returned a LBA date, consistent with artefacts and other radiocarbon dates which reveal deposition of disarticulated unburnt human bones in the cave.
4. The fifth date sought to clarify the date of a disturbed burial of a 2-4 year old child - the only burial from the cave. This burial has now been securely dated to the LBA.

### Please outline the objectives of the Project:

The objectives were:

1. To date the only burial from the site, that of a 2-4 year old child
2. To get a clearer picture of the range of dates for the deposition of disarticulated human bone at the site.
3. To date an infant (all previous dates were on children and adults)
4. To date bones found on the cave floor and some distance from the main focus of Bronze Age activities to ascertain if they related to a different period of usage.

### Please describe the methodology used in conducting the research:

The human bone assemblage from Glencurran Cave had been identified and analysed by Dr Linda Fibiger several years ago. The project director (M. Dowd) selected the current five bone from the broader assemblage with the aim of addressing the above questions.

Licence applications were submitted to the NMI.

When permission to export and alter was obtained, the five bones were sent to QUB.

### Please outline the findings of your research and/or milestones achieved:



## Archaeology C14 Radiocarbon Dates Scheme Report

As described above, we have now clarified that the cave was a significant focus of activity in the MBA and not only in the LBA.

We have securely dated the only formal burial in the cave to the LBA.

We have dated bones from various parts of the cave, not only those from the main area where Bronze Age activities were focussed.

We have dated the first human infant from the site.

### **Please provide details of the dissemination of the outcomes from this project:**

These dates will be published in a forthcoming monograph on the Glencurran Cave excavations, to be published late 2021/early 2022 by Archaeopress, Oxford.

### **How did the award enhance your professional development?**

It has provided me with further information about a site, but as such has not enhanced my professional development.

### **What plans (if any) do you have to further this project?**

To publish a monograph on the Glencurran Cave excavations, in late 2021/early 2022 by Archaeopress, Oxford.