THE BLACK PIG’S DYKE REGIONAL PROJECT REPORT ON POTENTIAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION SITES SCOPING

PHASE 2 2015

13th October 2015
1.0 INTRODUCTION

A key aim of Phase 2 of the Black Pig's Dyke Regional Project is the provision of a new chronology for the linear earthworks of the Black Pig's Dyke. In pursuit of this the project is redating charcoal using AMS radiocarbon dating from the seminal 1982 excavations by Aidan Walsh at Aghareagh West, Co. Monaghan and Aghnaske, Co. Monaghan. A shortlist of charcoal samples has been drawn up and a final set of samples will be submitted for dating shortly. The project is also proposing to undertake limited archaeological excavations to recover samples for Optically Stimulated Luminescence/radiometric dating. This document reports on the outcome of an assessment of eight potential excavation sites that were identified by desk study and fieldwalking along the Leitrim (BPD-002), Longford (Dunclá) (BPD-005) and Cavan (Ardkil More) (BPD-006) sections of the Black Pig's Dyke. The Monaghan (Scothouse) (BPD-007) section will be assessed separately 19th-21st October 2016. Previous cuttings through the earthworks such as laneways and tracks were targetted for assessment as they could provide ready-made exposed sections.

2.0 POTENTIAL EXCAVATION LOCATION I - BPD-006 ARDKILL MORE, CO. CAVAN

Coordinates
243706, 296655

Accessibility
Located c.310m east of a local public road. There is a farm track c.210m to the west that may provide more convenient access. The field containing the potential site is poorly drained but relatively clear of brambles and gorse. The surrounding fields however are densely covered and access was somewhat difficult.

Description
Shown as large banked and ditched section of the Black Pig's Dyke on the historic maps. Bank and ditch, which is to the northeast, are still clearly evident. Relatively recent path for livestock has been cut through both. The exposed section of bank is approximately 3.8m long and 1.2 m high and covered in a moderate amount of gorse and ferns. Dimensions may be greater when this is cleared back.
Plates

Figure 1: Bank and Ditch from the northeast

Figure 2: Path through the bank from the southwest
Figure 3: Path through the bank from the northeast, potential excavation site at left
3.0 POTENTIAL EXCAVATION LOCATION D  
- BPD-005 CARRICKDUFF, CO. LONGFORD

Coordinates
231548, 284115

Accessibility
Located c.135m west of a local public road. The field containing the potential site is poorly drained and relatively clear of brambles and gorse. Access is convenient.

Description
Shown as large banked and ditched section of the Black Pig's Dyke on the historic maps. The earthworks are still clearly evident. A cutting has been dug through the bank and ditch as part of a field boundary. This field boundary ditch was waterlogged and filled with plantlife during the visit.
Plates

Figure 4: Bank and Ditch from the northeast

Figure 5: Path through the bank at Carrickduff from the southwest
4.0 POTENTIAL EXCAVATION LOCATION G - BPD-005 CLOGH 2, CO. LONGFORD

Coordinates
232627, 283319

Accessibility
Located c.700m west of a local public road. It is accessed along the edge dense of cultivated forestry. The land is poorly drained and access may be an issue.

Description
Shown as large double banked and ditched section of the Black Pig's Dyke on the historic maps. Both banks and ditch are well preserved and clearly evident. A stream runs along the centre ditch. Two relatively recent paths for livestock have been cut through the northern bank to provide access to the stream. The exposed sections show some evidence of stratigraphy, including a narrow layer of mid brown redeposited? till that may represent surviving bank material.
Potential Excavation Location
Plates

Figure 6: The easternmost path through the bank from the northeast

Figure 7: Westernmost path through the bank from the southwest
5.0 POTENTIAL EXCAVATION LOCATION C - BPD-002 CORRACLOONA, CO. LEITRIM

Coordinates
200484, 3432200

Accessibility
Located c.360m west of a local public road. There is a possible farm track that runs towards the site from the west directly to the location where the bank is cut. This would provide convenient access. The field containing the potential site is poorly drained but relatively clear of brambles and gorse. The surrounding fields however are densely covered.

Description
Shown as large banked and ditched section of the Black Pig's Dyke on the historic maps. A double and ditch are still clearly evident. A farm track has been cut through both the bank and ditch at the possible excavation location. This track is shown on the second edition map and therefore is at least 100 years old. The section is much denuded and it is difficult to ascertain how much would have to be stripped back to reach the original bank material.
Figure 8: Double bank and ditch from the northeast

Figure 9: Path through the bank from the east