Black Pig's Dyke Regional Project - Phase 2: Progress Report 1

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The following provides a brief summary of progress on Phase 2 of the Black Pig's Dyke Regional Project between commencement 1st July 2015 and 11th September 2015.

2.0 PROGRESS REPORT

In general work to date has concentrated on desk study to refine the project methodology and pinpoint potential excavation locations. Around 10 potential sites have been identified across the project area in the desk study and field visits to further assess these locations/liaise with landowners will be undertaken 21-22nd September, with applications for licences to excavate being subsequently made.

In addition Dr Susan Lyons's reassessment of charcoal samples from Aidan Walsh's excavations at Aghareagh West is nearing completion. Preliminary results indicate, as previously reported by Aidan Walsh, a predominance of oak but there is also ash (from the S bank), hazel (charcoal and nutshell), willow, pine and heather (Calluna), which is rare in the charcoal record as it rarely survives the charring being quite scrubby. Matching the new charcoal identifications to the original stratigraphic record is underway with a view to interpreting the charcoal record and choosing samples for a new suite of radiocarbon dates. The presence of so many short-lived species provides excellent potential for refining the site's radiocarbon chronology.

Bone identification on a sample of bone from the Doon of Drumsna ring-ditch excavation is underway by Dr Linda Lynch. Once the identification has been completed the bone will be radiocarbon dated along with the Aghareagh West samples.

Archaeological excavations at 2-3 locations to retrieve OSL samples from bank sections will be undertaken October, which will add another set of dates with which to build up a new chronology for the Black Pig's Dyke. The OSL team at University of Oxford, led by Dr Jean Luc Schwenninger, have been appointed to obtain and analyze the samples.

Work is also being undertaken on providing content for a series of posters relating to the Black Pig's Dyke in the project counties.