

➤ Case Study - Archaeological find at our Brownstown Sand & Gravel Pit in County Kildare.

In 1996 an Environmental Impact Assessment was carried out and there was no evidence to suggest any archaeological remains at the Brownstown site. However over subsequent years during a combination of monitoring of topsoil stripping, geophysical investigation and testing or full excavation, a range of archaeological features dating from the Neolithic to the Early Medieval period have been revealed.

To date six rectangular Neolithic houses, a beaker burial and eight figure-of-eight corn-drying kilns have been preserved by record. A rectangular enclosure, with a wide deep ditch, enclosed at least twenty-nine burials as well as in an ossuary. A complex inter-cutting series of wide ditches were excavated, as well as a series of smaller ditch and drain features. A possible sunken house was excavated to the east of the rectangular enclosure.

A barrow with opposed entrances enclosed five inhumation burials aligned east-west. A further 16 figure of eight corn-drying kilns contained remains of cereals. Seven of the kilns were enclosed by ditches and one contained an inhumation burial. Medieval linear features and burials were uncovered in 2006. In 2007 geophysics and excavation uncovered a further complex of intercutting ditches, kilns and ring-ditches.

All the above features were preserved by record by suitably qualified archaeologists at the expense of Kilsaran, under the direction of the appropriate Government Department. The discovery of so many Neolithic houses in such close proximity was a national first at that time and helped to expand our understanding of this early period of human habitation in Ireland.

