



Ransboro N.S. Heritage Project

'The Lost Barrow'

Prepared by: Parents Association members Breda Scott and Bernice Guckian on behalf of Ransboro National School, County Sligo

Project Owner: Ransboro National School

24 September 2015



PROJECT SUMMARY

This project was borne out of a request for the Parents Association to first explore and maintain an on-site enclosure at Ransboro National School as a potential educational nature-walk project for the students. During the fact-finding stage of this project the enclosure was determined to be archeological monument SLI014-195 (National Monuments Service maps circa 1860) with potential historical and archaeological significance. The enclosure has been described as an unexplored 'cairn', 'glacial kame' and possibly a significant barrow in the Seafield landscape, in direct view of Queen Maeve's' cairn, by archeological researchers.

The aim of this document is to detail the project timeline from its start date, April 2015, to outline next steps, and detail the potential project objectives and education benefits to the primary stakeholder - Ransboro National School.

PROJECT TIMELINE

Event: April 2015 - Parents Association Meeting

- This project was first initiated at the Schools request for the newly formed Parents Association ("7th Class - The Grownups") to assist with the setup of a nature walk around an enclosed area at the rear of the school grounds. The focus at this point was to install seating for the children, and to identify flora and fauna in the area using information posters. It was understood that this was a protected area but the exact origins and history of this enclosure were unknown. Breda Scott and Bernice Guckian offered to drive this project.
- Parent Cathy Sheridan volunteered the assistance of her husband Dr. Andrew Whitefield, Lecturer of Archeology based at National University of Ireland Galway with an initial assessment of the site - and to help identify procedures that could be carried out within archaeological guidelines.

Event: 22nd April 2015 - Enclosure Site Visit

- Dr. Whitefield visited the enclosure with team members - and provided National Monuments service maps, circa 1860, which detailed the enclosure as monument SL014-195. (See Appendix A)
- This enclosure rests between a cluster of four barrows, or burial monuments which date principally to the Iron Age, in the immediate surrounding area. Whilst the enclosure was higher and wider in diameter than these other barrows, Andrew believed it to also be a barrow and potentially a burial site of significance - an assessment corroborated by Archeological Department colleagues. The location of the enclosure in relation to Queen Maeves' may also be of great importance. There are burials inserted into some of the Neolithic (Stone Age) monuments at Carrowmore and many other Iron Age barrows on the peninsula, as well as an Iron Age presence at the Culleenamore middens.
- It was noted that due to site works and development a portion of the enclosure had been disturbed, however the rest of the enclosure appeared relatively intact.
- The potential for the children and community to learn from its archaeological significance became very apparent.

Tasks Identified - Fact Finding

1. In order to understand and learn more about this enclosure we agreed that the first step was to fact-find i.e. source and review archaeological surveys completed on this enclosure, and enclosures of similar status, in an attempt to determine the history and potential of this lost barrow.
2. Andrew offered to provide equipment and resources, free of charge from NUI Galway to perform a site survey - but suggested that the local Heritage Officer be contacted to provide advice on next steps prior to the survey or any cleanups of the enclosure.
3. Meet with School Principal to share site-visit discussions, outline project potential and source archived reports or data on this enclosure.
4. Source reports from Archeology Library in NUI Galway.

Event: 28th April 2015 - Meeting with School Principal

- Team members met with Principal Siobhan Clarke to provide an update on findings, and discuss the learning potential for school children i.e. projects on Iron Age, gathering of local folklore and creating awareness of the school and community's historical significance.
- All agreed on the need to protect the site until further analysis. Approval was granted to progress further with project fact-finding.
- Siobhan provided a copy of the report attached - See Appendix B. This report is entitled: *'04E0711 - Final report for Septic Tank and Percolations Area at Seafeld and Breeogue, Co. Sligo', Dated 2005*

This report details archaeological research performed by the Author prior to the development of the new septic and percolation area for the school in 2005. This document detailed a recent local history of the related site and referred to SL014-195 as either an 'enclosure', 'cairn', mound or 'glacial kame'. The Author was requested to perform an excavation on the enclosure by the Parish, after it was deemed to be an Archeological monument by the Office of Public Works, but due to limited resources this did not take place - and the enclosure remains unexplored and uncategorized.

Event: May 2015 - Project Team Meeting

- This meeting was called to review Archeological Reports sourced and plan next steps.
- Andrew Whitefield has sourced two additional archeological surveys for review - "The Archaeological Excavation at Carrowmore Co. Sligo, Ireland" from 1980 and the "Excavation and Environmental Analysis of a Neolithic Mound and Iron Age Barrow Cemetery at Rathdooney Beg, County Sligo, Ireland", Dated 1999, See Appendix C

The latter report details an excavation performed at an enclosure of similar size in Rathdooney Beg of similar size and age - which is also in proximity to a neolithic monument and inter-visible with Queen Maeve's cairn.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

1. To protect and explore monument SL014-195 or 'The Lost Barrow' with the full participation of the student body as a 'real-life' geography and history lesson. Key education activities identified for the student body include:

- Gathering of folklore from the local community - developing an awareness and pride in local heritage, traditions and history - and forging bonds between both parties.
- Historical fact-finding missions/outings for the student body
- Lessons on Archeology - what is it, how does it work and why is it so important
- Geography lessons on the landscape and its benefits as a place to live and die in the Iron Age
- Foster an awareness of each students obligation to protect and respect local heritage
- Mini-class projects exploring life in the Iron Age - through arts and crafts, recreating the monuments with drawings, stories or model making.
- Ultimately generate an educational program, or package, which can be used as a standard every year to educate students, at different levels, on their local heritage.

2. To determine the archeological significance of this unexplored cairn and its place in local history.

- Ransboro National School has an timely opportunity to avail of the support offered by the Archeological Department at NUI Galway. The University is committed to supporting local archaeological initiatives and has offered to commit researchers and advanced geographical survey equipment at the outset of this project.
- The enclosures relative obscurity, with alterations due to ground works through the centuries - coupled with this renewed awareness of its national monument status, highlights a pressing need to identify the boundaries of this enclosure and protect the site.

NEXT STEPS

• **Meet with County Sligo Heritage Office**

Obtain guidance from the Local Heritage Officer in Sligo on best procedures for protecting the enclosure.

• **Conduct a geographical survey of the enclosure SL014-195**

Mr. Joseph Fenwick BA MA and Senior Technician at NUI Galway is scheduled to perform an advanced GPS survey of the enclosure in November in order to identify the monument boundaries and outline - without disturbing the landscape. During his site visit time can be allotted for Joseph to meet-and-greet

senior students and give a talk on this archeological process. The results of this assessment will be collated and analysed - and the results presented to the school.

- **Ransboro National School will assess the information received from the Heritage Officer and the Survey Technician in order to decide how to proceed.**

POTENTIAL PROJECT CONTRIBUTORS

- National University of Ireland, Galway
- County Sligo Heritage Office
- Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaelteacht
- National Monuments Service
- Heritage Council
- National Museum of Ireland
- Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government
- Royal Irish Academy
- Department of Folklore, UCD

APPENDIX A

National Monuments Service Map - 1890 (with Pointer to Enclosure - red dots on each barrow)

