Excavation of a Ringfort at Bowling Green, Thurles, Co. Tipperary

THOMAS FANNING

In 1969, bulldozing operations prior to housing development had interfered with a portion of a large ringfort in the townland of Bowling Green on the north-eastern limits of Thurles, Co. Tipperary. In August of the following year, at the request of the National Parks and Monuments Branch of the Office of Public Works, a rescue excavation was conducted at the site by the writer.

The ringfort was situated to the east of the town, on a low ridge (383 feet above O.D.) which commands a good view of the nearby Suir Valley and surrounding countryside.[1] The site itself consisted of a roughly circular area, some 50 metres in diameter, enclosed by a single bank and fosse giving an overall diameter of about 70 metres. Both bank and fosse were best preserved to the north. The bulldozing had removed the scrub and tree cover along the top of the bank and had also destroyed a considerable portion of the actual bank structure, particularly on the southern and western sides and to a lesser extent on the remaining sides. In places the top of the bank had been pushed over into the fosse. The fosse itself was clearly visible to the north and north-east, but only slight surface indications were discernible elsewhere on the site, and field fences and road widening had tended to obscure even those. To the north-east, a fairly large gap in the line of the bank suggested a possible entrance feature.

As the excavation was of a limited nature, it was decided to make a number of cuttings across the defences to determine their structure and to investigate as much of the interior as was possible in the circumstances. (Fig. 1).

STRUCTURE

Bank and Fosse

The natural stratigraphy of the site consisted of a glacial till (boulder clay) derived from carboniferous limestone overlain by grey-brown topsoils. Excavation of the northern cutting showed that the fosse had, at that point, been dug through the boulder clay to a depth of about 1.60 metres. It had filled up gradually, producing a number of recognizable layers varying from a fine grey-brown primary fill to a loose dark brown stony fill (Fig. 2). The western cutting presented a somehwat similar layering, although here the fill contained more of the boulder clay slip from the make-up of the bank. In the eastern quadrant it was apparent that recent dumping had obscured the fosse which, on excavation, proved to be wider but shallower there than elsewhere, and had a dark brown fill containing some slipped bank material; its

[1] The site is located in the townland of Bowling Green, Parish of Thurles, Barony of Eliogarty, Co. Tipperary; O.S. 6-inch sheet 41, 66 cm. from western margin and 26 cm. from southern margin; Nat. Grid Ref. S.137.492. It is marked on the 1841 and all subsequent editions. The O.S. letters for Co. Tipperary contain no information on either the fort or the townland.

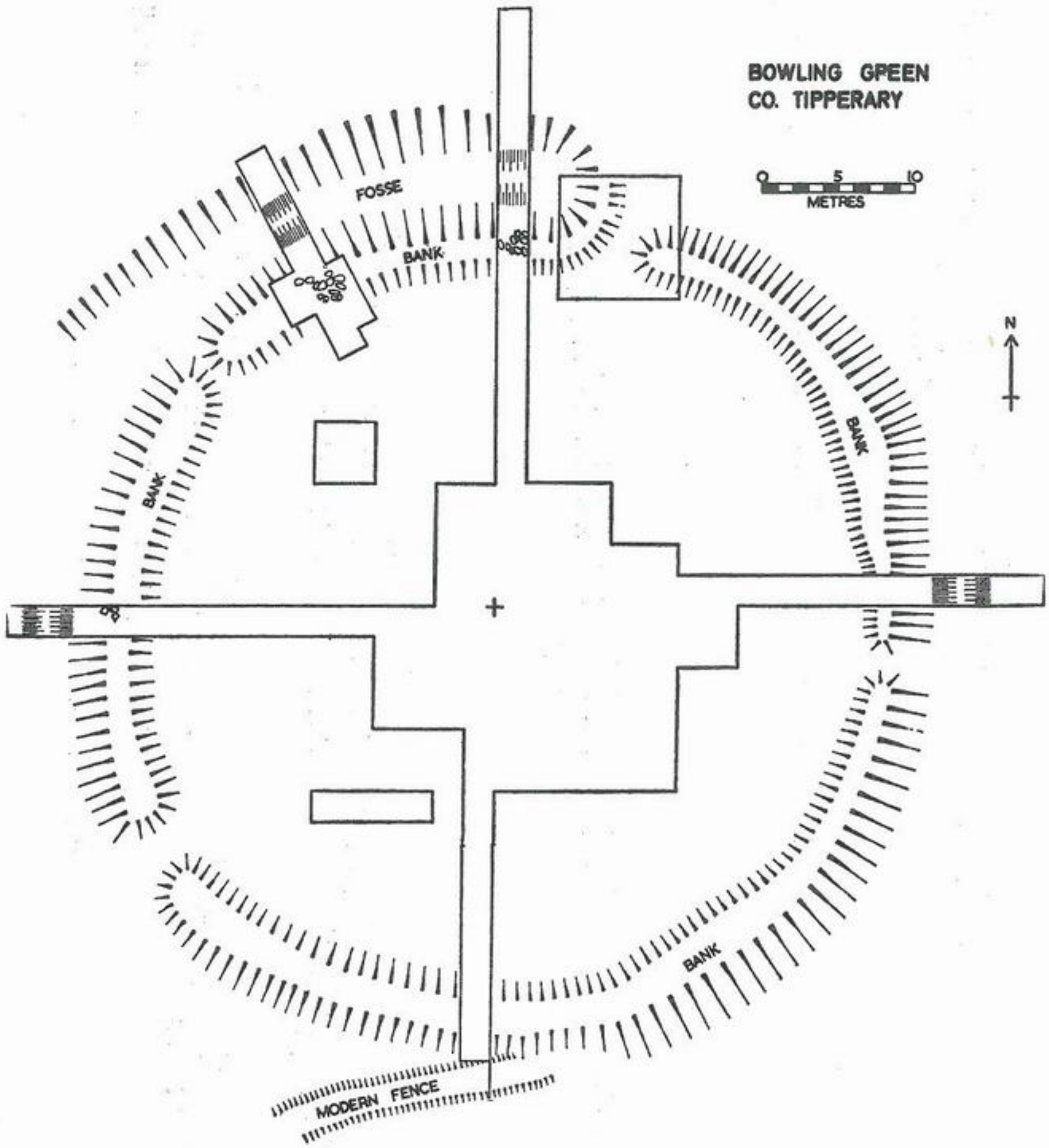

Fig. 1. Ringfort at Bowlng Green, Thurles, Co. Tipperary
(See Fig. 3 for plan of central area)

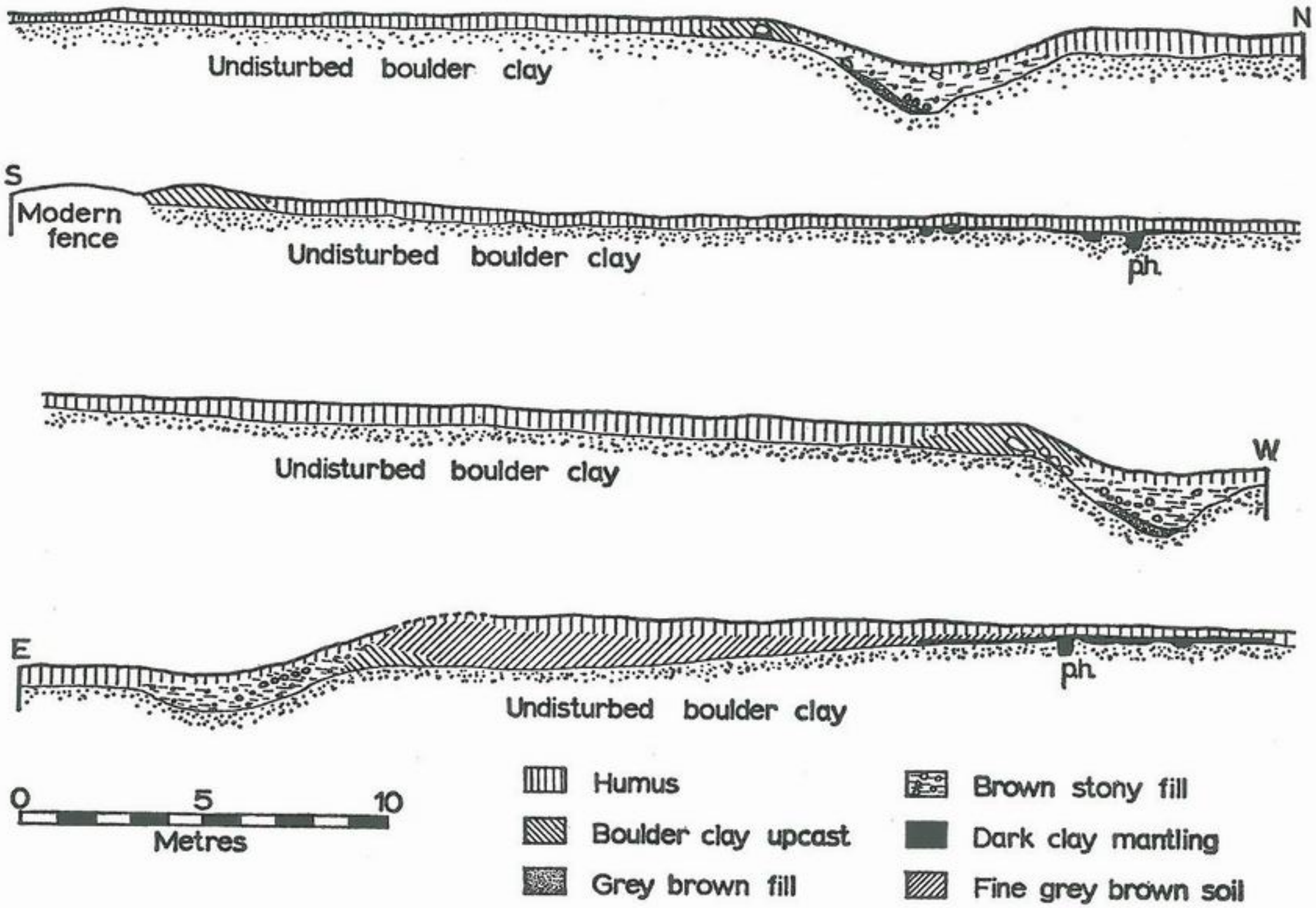

Fig. 2. Bowling Green, Co. Tipperary : sections

shallow nature may be due to the fact that the slope of the ridge was more pronounced in this sector.

The low bank which surrounded the fort had been badly scarped by the bulldozing. In some areas it showed only as a very slight rise in the ground surface. This rise was most apparent in the north-west where excavation showed a greater depth to the fosse. Here, perhaps owing to the absence of the natural slope, a higher and stronger rampart had apparently been necessary. Excavation in this northern sector showed that the bank consisted mainly of material (boulder clay) derived from the fosse. There was considerable evidence that stone had been utilized in the construction of the bank. In the northern cutting the remains of what appeared to be an external stone facing was found. Only a few stones remained in situ, but others were located in the fill of the fosse and on the outer slope of the bank. A small cutting in the north-west sector revealed a further section of this feature, better preserved and showing the stones set as a basal core to the bank with the larger stones, averaging 50 cm. by 40 cm., forming a substantial outer facing. Some stones belonging to this feature were located in the western cutting, but no traces appeared in the eastern or southern cuttings.

A cutting was made across the gap in the north-east where it seemed likely that a possible entrance existed. There was some evidence for a break in the fosse and a possible causeway but, as the immediate area had been badly disturbed by recent digging and dumping, the picture was unclear.

Apart from animal bone, finds from the fill of the fosse and from the cuttings across the bank were few and of no special significance.

Interior

The interior of the fort was covered by a thick layer of humus which contained some small stones in its lower levels. It had a fairly constant depth of 30 cm. and in most areas directly overlay the undisturbed boulder clay. Quite a number of objects were found in this level, though mostly of a modern character.

Evidence for earlier activity and habitation came largely from the centre of the fort. Removal of the humus cover in this sector revealed a thin layer of black stony soil resembling a clay mantling spread as a floor level.[2] Within and around this area were a number of post-holes and stake-holes, a probable hearth-site and some shallow pits and trenches ; a small area of rough pebble cobbling also came to light (Fig. 3). The majority of the finds came from this occupation level.

The post-holes did not conform to any coherent pattern, and differed as to their composition and size. Five of them were quite substantial, averaging 70 cm. in diameter, being dug into the boulder clay to a depth of about 35 cm. and packed on one side with stones. Their fill consisted of black soil and a charcoal-flecked boulder clay. This would suggest that an upright post had been placed against one face of the hole

[2] A sample of this soil, together with some samples of the fine grey-brown soil layer found in the SE quadrant, were sent for analysis (including phosphorus determination) to the Soils Division of the Agricultural Institute at Johnstown Castle, Co. Wexford. The results showed that it differed from the latter and was possibly an older or more mature soil. It contained a higher phosphorus level on a number of counts including calcium phosphorus and reductant soluble P. These high levels are also indicative of human activity. I am grateful to Mr. T. Shanley of the National Soil Survey for this analysis.

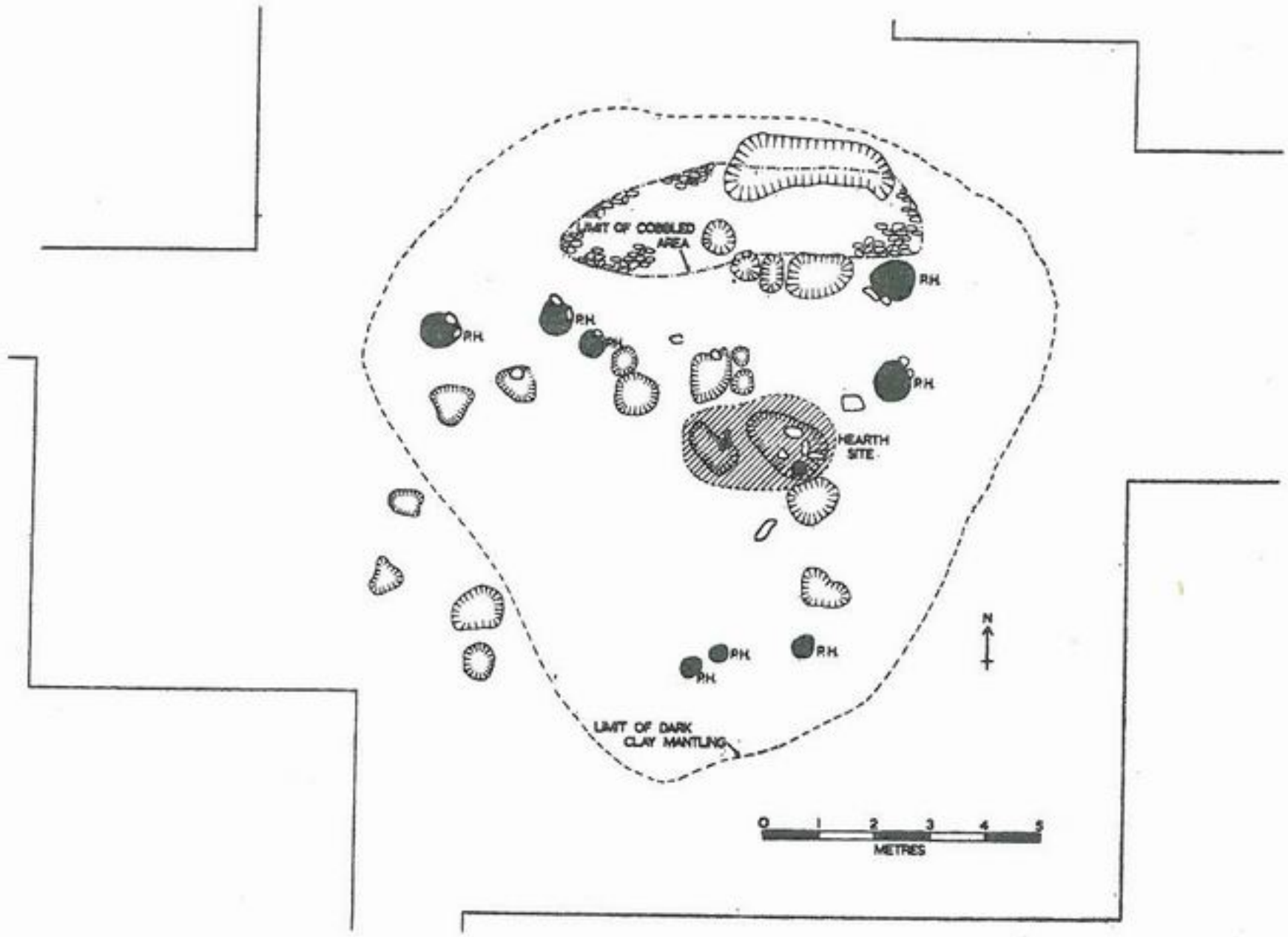

Fig. 3. Bowling Green, Co. Tipperary : plan of central area

and then fixed firmly in position by the packing-stones and the clay packing. The remaining post-holes were smaller and less clearly defined. They were cut into the boulder clay to a depth of *c.* 20 cm. and filled with black soil and small packing-stones.

The hearth-site showed as a clearly defined area of burnt and reddened earth surrounding two pits of charcoal and dark soil mixed with some stones ; small fragments of burnt and unburnt animal bone were found in this fill. Within the burnt area there appeared a number of small holes cut into the boulder clay to a depth of *c.* 15 cm. They probably held stakes associated in some way with the hearth, perhaps as pot-hangers. A number of shallow pits containing a mixture of dark soil and charcoal were located around the hearth and at the western limits of the dark clay mantling. Finally, towards the northern margin of the habitation area and partly overlain by the cobbling, there occurred some depressions resembling shallow trenches which, when emptied, proved to have a depth of only 10 cm. No purpose can be assigned to these.

All the features described above were situated within the area covered by the black stony soil, quite clearly a habitation deposit. In it were animal bones and the majority of the finds. Although some form of wooden structure had evidently stood

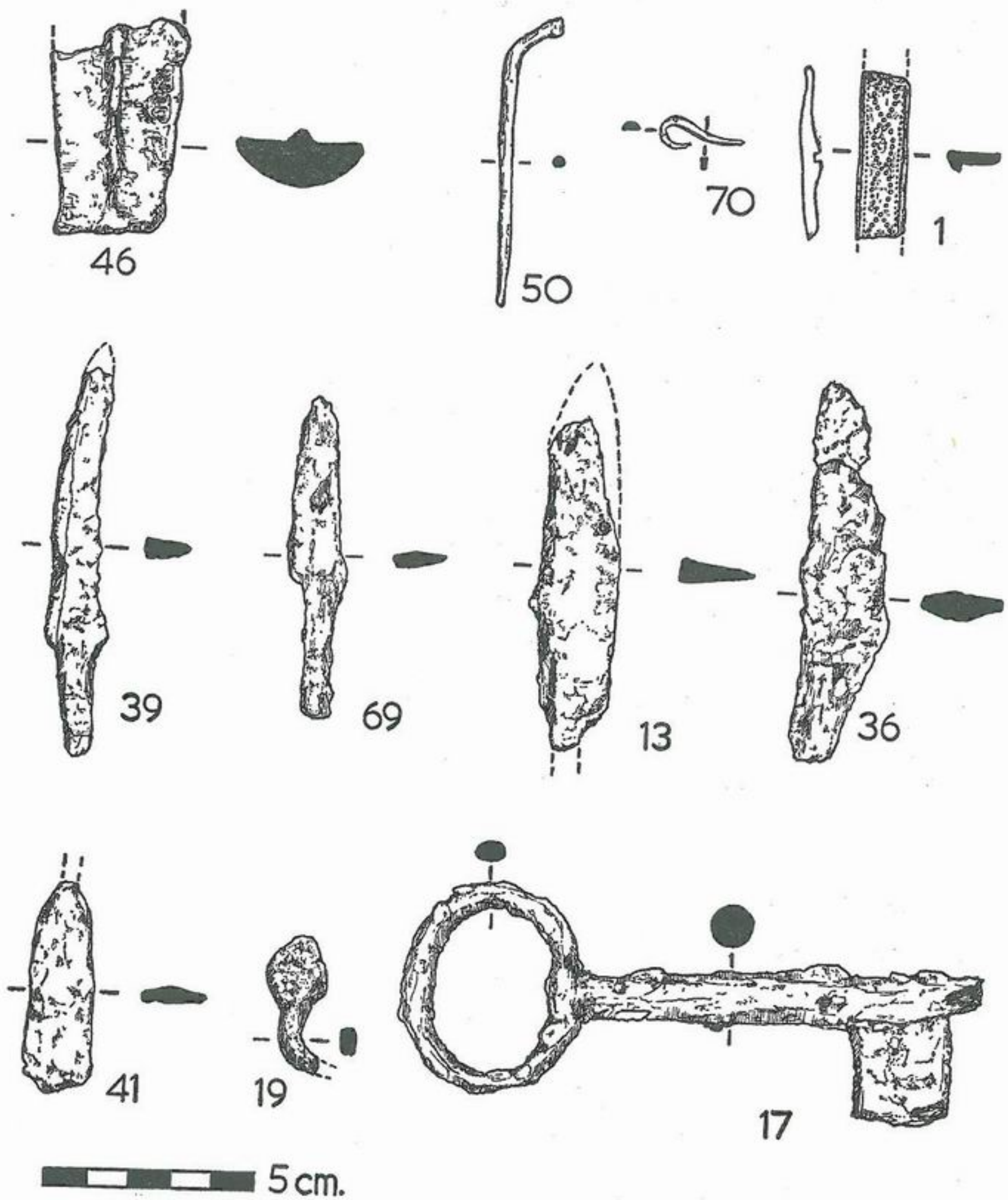

Fig. 4. Bowling Green, Co. Tipperary : bronze and iron objects

in this area, its exact nature and plan were unclear. The black nature of the deposit made it difficult to determine the precise level of the post-holes and their relationship to each other. Some recent disturbance—firing and digging—had also taken place in the area. Two of the post-holes were large enough to have held the main supports for a side-wall and, taken in conjunction with the post-holes at the eastern limits of the habitation area, they might possibly suggest a rectangular structure, although there is not, however, sufficient evidence to warrant such a definite conclusion. Additional features may have existed to the south, but this seemed unlikely and time did not permit a total excavation.

In the south-eastern quadrant of the site, after the humus had been stripped, a layer of fine soil was exposed. It was first noticed at the eastern limits of the habitation area where it overlay the dark stony mantling. As excavation of the eastern cutting proceeded it was discovered that this soil layer deepened considerably (max. depth *c.* 1.20 m.), the original ground level shelving away to the east (Fig. 2). The soil make-up of this layer was similar to that associated with a well developed lawn—easily dug and almost entirely free of stones—even in its lowest levels. It was an even grey-brown in colour with streaks of dark brown.[3] In the circumstances, only a portion of this layer could be uncovered and investigated. It did not appear in the southern or northern sections and its general limits would seem, therefore, to have been confined within the south-eastern quadrant. Evidently the original ground level in this sector had been raised by the introduction of this soil, probably to provide a level platform within the fort. The stratification indicated that it post-dated the dark stony mantling associated with the habitation deposit. The layer extended across the line of the bank where it overlay some redeposited boulder clay. As the stone facing was missing in this sector it could be argued that the introduction of this layer had entailed some interference with the structure of the bank and was, therefore, a later feature. As, however, a considerable portion of the bank had been demolished, the exact relationships could not be determined. A few objects, to be discussed later, were found in the portion of this layer which lay nearest to the habitation area, but otherwise it was archaeologically sterile.

FINDS[4]

BRONZE (Fig. 4)

Leg of Skillet (:46)[5]

Leg of a cast bronze skillet. Single midrib with slight flanges. Semi-circular cross-section. The midrib fades towards the base of the leg which shows signs of wear.

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[3] Dr. Michael Conroy of the National Soil Survey, Oak Park, Carlow, who examined this soil layer, agreed that it can only be explained as a redeposited soil which had been subjected to the normal growth process. I am grateful for his comments on this and other problems relating to the soil structure of the site.

[4] The finds from this excavation have been deposited in the National Museum and are registered there as E91:1-70. In the catalogue the words length, thickness and width have been abbreviated to L, T and W respectively.

[5] The numbers after the finds are the National Museum registration numbers—all should be preceded by the excavation number E91, *e.g.*, the full registration number of this object is E91:46.

Corroded in places. Found in the layer of grey-brown soil in the SE quadrant.
L. 4.84 cm.; max. W. 3.14 cm.; max. T. 1.5 cm.

Pin (:50)
Simple stick-pin. Shank, circular in section, tapering towards point which is slightly facetted. Upper shank curved over, terminating in a tiny pin-head which is partly corroded and possibly incomplete. The shank has a dark green patina. Found in the layer of grey-brown soil close to the leg of the bronze skillet.
L. 7.57 cm.; max. T. of shank 3 mm.

Tongue of Buckle ? (:70)
Small looped strip, probably the tongue from a buckle. For most of its length it has a thin rectangular section and seems to be undamaged ; the looped end is slightly wider and is D-shaped in section. Found in the habitation deposit in SE quadrant.
L. 2.1 cm.; max. W. of stem 3 mm.

Decorated Strip (:1)
Thin flat strip, probably cast, with a simple pattern of slightly raised dots on one face. On the reverse there is a slight flange along one edge. This increases in height at about midway where it is broken by a 2 mm. wide indentation. Function unknown. Found in humus in NE quadrant.
L. 4 cm.; W. 1.14 cm.; T. (excluding flange) 1.5 mm.

IRON (Fig. 4)

Quite a number of iron objects were recovered during the course of the excavation. All were, for the most part, heavily corroded. A few fragments, found in the humus layer and almost certainly of modern origin, are omitted from this report.

Knife (:39)
Small one-edged knife. Rectangular-sectioned tang. The blade has a slightly curved back and the point is damaged. Found in habitation deposit in SE quadrant.
L. 9.2 cm.; L. of blade 6.5 cm.; max. W. of blade 1.1 cm.; T. of blade 6 mm.

Knife (:69)
Small one-edged knife. Tang of thin rectangular cross-section, slightly damaged and bent. The blade has a straight back.
Found in the fill of the fosse in E cutting.
L. 7.5 cm.; L. of blade 4.3 cm.; max. W. of blade 1.2 cm., T. of blade 3 mm.

Knife (:13)
One-edged knife. Tiny portion of tang remains, rectangular in cross-section. The pointed portion of the blade is missing. Found in the humus in SE quadrant.
L. 7.62 cm.; L. of blade 7.15 cm.; max. W. of blade 1.8 cm.; T. of blade 7 mm.

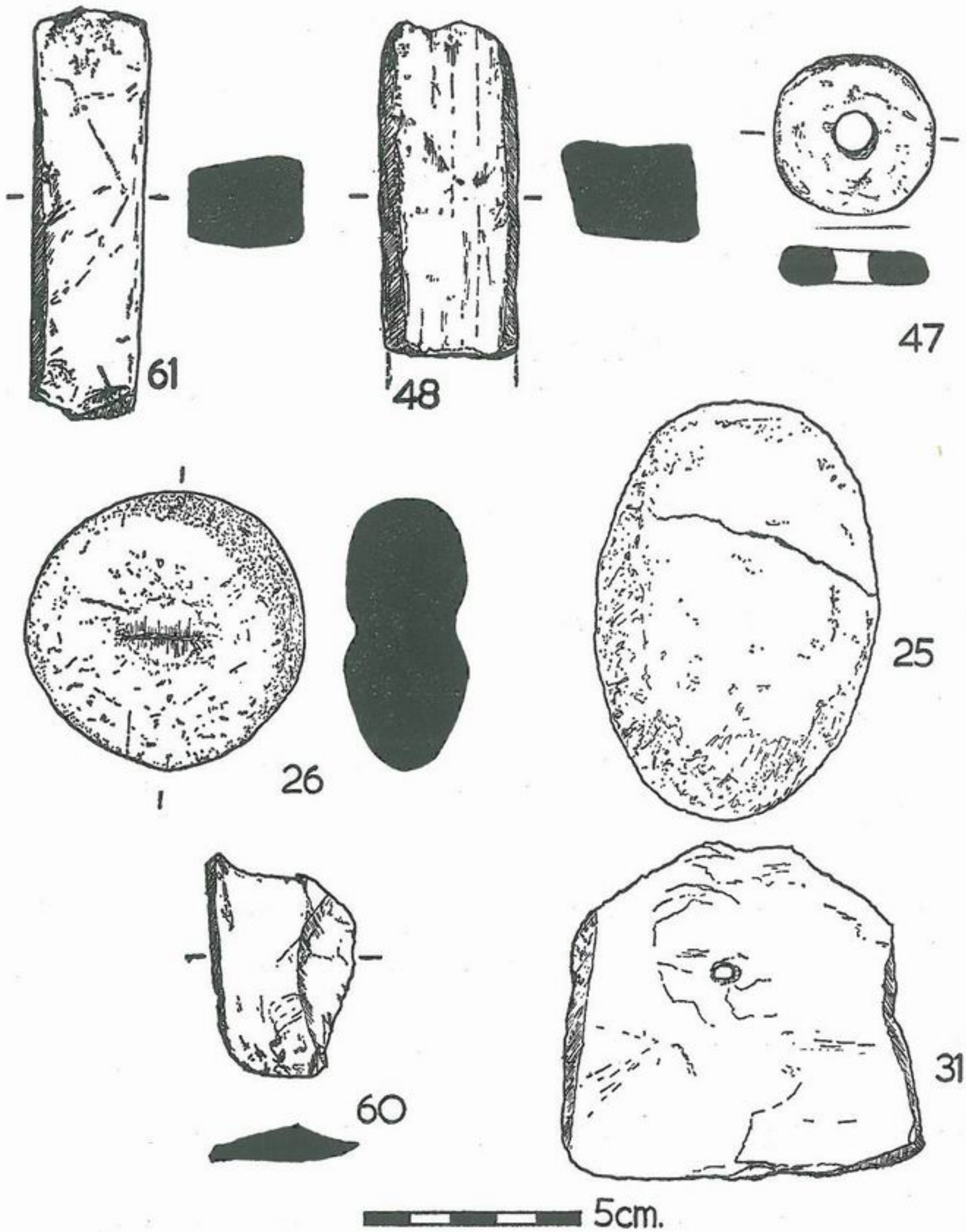


Fig. 5. Bowling Green, Co. Tipperary : stone objects

Knife-blade (?) (:36)
Blade-like fragment, probably from a knife; very corroded and in two fragments. Found in the fill of the fosse in W. cutting.
L. 9 cm.; max. W. 2 cm.; T. 7 mm.

Tanged Object (:41)
Corroded iron object with a plano-convex cross-section. Slight remains of a tang. Possibly portion of a knife ? Found in habitation deposit in SE quadrant.
L. 4.9 cm.; max. W. 1.55 cm.; T. 3 mm.

Horseshoe Nail (:19)
Small, corroded horseshoe nail of fiddle-key type. Head partly obscured by accretion. Found in habitation deposit in SE quadrant.
L. 3.1 cm.; W. of head 1.3 cm.; T. of head 8 mm.

Key (:17)
Large key. The form of the bit is obscured by corrosion. Bow in the shape of a flat ring. Found in humus in NE quadrant.
L. 13.8 cm.

Rod (:16) (not illustrated)
Corroded rod with pointed end, possibly a pin or nail. Shank circular in section. Head bent and obscured by accretion. Found in SE quadrant at margin of habitation deposit.
L. 6.8 cm.; T. of shank 3 mm.

STONE (Fig. 5)

Hone (:61)
Hone of shaly sandstone, smoothed on two side faces and one broad face. Rectangular in cross-section. Found in habitation deposit in SE quadrant.
L. 9.6 cm.; max. W. 2.7 cm.; max. T. 2 cm.

Hone (:48)
Portion of a fine-grained sandstone hone with all four faces smoothed from use. Slight groove at unbroken end. Rectangular in cross-section. Found in habitation deposit in SE quadrant.
L. 7.6 cm.; Cross-section at break, 3 cm. by 2.2 cm.

Spindle-whorl (?) (:47)
Perforated disc of shaly sandstone, possibly a spindle-whorl. Found in habitation deposit in NE quadrant.
Diameter 3.73 cm.; T. 8 mm., diameter of perforation 8.5 mm.

Strike-a-light (:26)
Circular quartzite strike-a-light, grooved centrally on both faces. Found in habitation deposit in NE quadrant.
Diameter 6.5 cm.; max. T. 2.85 cm.

Maul (?) (:25)
Large oval stone of coarse-grained sandstone with pecked surface ; slightly cracked. Found in habitation deposit in NE quadrant.
L. 9.7 cm.; max. T. 6.6 cm.

Chert Flake (:60)
Chert flake showing signs of probably having been artificially worked. Found in habitation deposit in SE quadrant.
L. 5.53 cm.; max. W. 3.3 cm.; max T. 9.7 mm.

Roofing-slate (:31)
Portion of a roofing-slate with small nail-hole perforation. Found in humus layer in SE quadrant.
Max. W. 8.2 cm.; T. 5.7 mm.

BONE (Fig. 6)
Needle (:62)
Upper portion of needle. Shank oval in cross-section, widening and flattening slightly towards the head which is perforated through its broad face. Found in habitation deposit in SE quadrant.
Surviving L. 2.73 cm.; max. W. 7.5 mm.; max. T. 3.3 mm.

Bone Object (:43)
Polished and worked bone probably an ox rib. It may have been used as a form of scoop or knife. Found in habitation deposit in SE quadrant.
L. 8.7 cm.; max. W. 1.3 cm.; max. T. 6.4 mm.

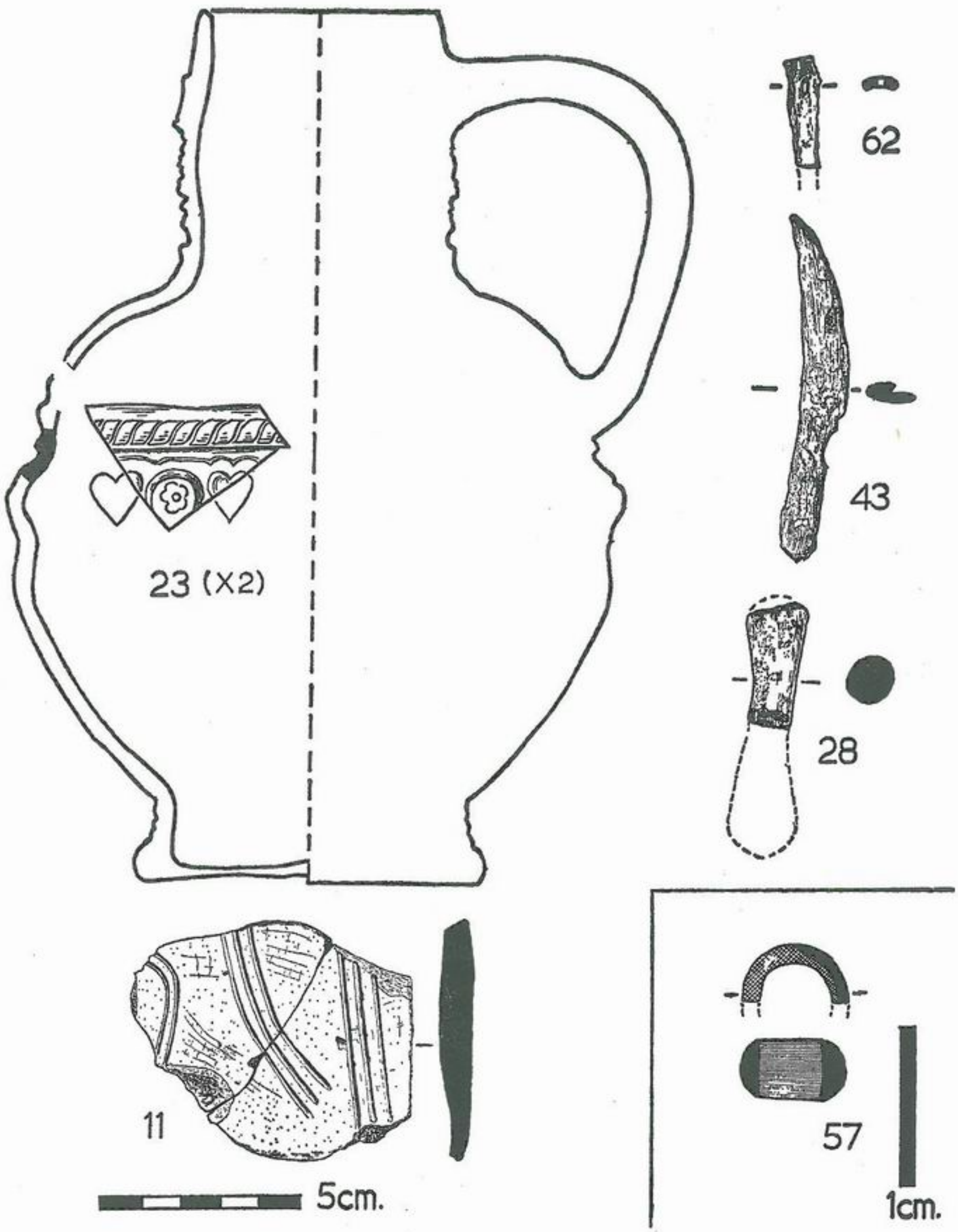
PIPE-CLAY (Fig. 6)

Wig-curler (:28)
Half of a wig-curler. Found in humus in SW quadrant. Surviving L. 3.1 cm., max diameter 1.3 cm.

Clay Pipe (:38) (not illustrated)
Portion of the stem and bowl of a clay pipe. Faint lettering on one side of the stem can be read as "-croghery"—probably to be interpreted as "Knockcroghery." Found in humus in SE quadrant.
Surviving L. 4.8 cm.

GLASS (Fig. 6)

Bead (:57)
Half of a tiny deep-blue bead which had a large perforation. Found in habitation deposit in SE quadrant.
Diameter 6.5 mm.; diameter of perforation 1.7 mm.



Fit. 6. Bowling Green, Co. Tipperary : pottery, bone, pipe-clay and glass objects

POTTERY (Fig. 6)

A number of tiny sherds of Medieval pottery were found in the course of the excavation. Surface finds included potsherds of a modern character and earthenware sherds, the majority probably 'local' products of 17th to 19th century date. Only the following sherds are of special interest.

Two matching Medieval sherds (:49) (not illustrated)
Fine well-fired body sherds with a pinky yellow inner slip and a mottled green glaze. Grey fabric. Probably from a 13th century jug of English type. Found in the layer of grey-brown soil in the SE quadrnat.

Small fragment of blue and white stoneware (:23)
Mr. John Hurst, F.S.A., Inspector of Ancient Monuments, Department of the Environment, London, has kindly examined this sherd and reports : "This is a fragment from the upper part of a late Raeren jug (see outline drawing). These are common forms in the late Raeren—early Westerwald products, a decade on either side of 1600, the unglazed pinky colour of the present fragment suggesting the earlier Raeren type and, therefore, probably of the period 1590-1600, although it could be slightly later ; the Westerwald type are usually glazed grey inside. This form of vessel is a rare occurrence in England, let alone Ireland."[6] Found in the humus layer in the SW quadrant.

Two matching sherds of sgraffito ware (:11)
Hard reddish-pink ware. Dark brown internal glaze. Greenish-brown sgraffito decoration on a greenish-yellow ground. Possibly an import from the extensive North Devon centre, and dating to the 18th century.[7] Found in humus in SE quadrant.

ANIMAL BONES

Miss Geraldine Roche, M.Sc., has kindly examined the animal bones from the site and reports that ox, pig, and sheep are represented, together with a small quantity of horse. All the bones were fragmentary and some of the long bones may have been deliberately broken in search of marrow.

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[6] A range of Raeren jugs of this type can be seen in K. Koetschau, *Rhenisches Steinjug* (München 1924) pls. 63-64 and 66-67. I am grateful to Mr. Stephen Moorhouse for this information and the drawing in Fig. 5, also to Dr. R. Glasscock, Dept. of Geography, Queen's University, Belfast, for considerable help with the pottery from the site. A piece, probably from a Raeren wine bottle, was found in the secondary Medieval stratum at Dooneendermotmore, Co. Cork—see M. J. O'Kelly, *PRIA*, 55,C(1952), 45, Fig. 3,10.

[7] J. K. Knight, *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, 23(1970), 404-405 and 410-411.

DISCUSSION

This site can be described as a platform-type ringfort built on a natural rise but artificially raised in one sector. Its defensive character can be seen not alone in the fairly substantial earthen and stone bank with its accompanying fosse, but also in the actual siting which commands a good view of the immediate countryside. The area enclosed is quite large and would have been adequate if the intention was to protect stock as well as people. Evidence for buildings within the fort was not very clear but sufficient to indicate the presence of a free-standing wooden structure in the south-east quadrant—a structure which was probably repaired or rebuilt a number of times during its lifetime. This structure and its associated finds of domestic objects and animal bone are consistent with the view that such sites (*i.e.* ringforts) are defended farmsteads. Although undoubtedly of pre-Christian origin in type, the majority of excavated ringforts have proved to belong, both as to the date of their construction and occupation, to the Early Christian Period, with quite a few examples producing evidence for occupation, and some apparently of construction, in Medieval times.[8] Unfortunately, the objects found at the Bowling Green site are not closely datable and offer little help in determining a possible date for its construction and occupation.

Apart from animal bones, no objects were recovered from the primary fill of the fosse, and as none of the cuttings across the bank yielded any significant finds, only the objects found in the habitation deposit remain to be considered. Iron knives are amongst the more common type of find from ringforts. The small, one-edged, tanged version are generally given an Early Christian dating, but the form continued in use without much change into Medieval times.

Little can be said concerning the stone objects such as the hones and the spindle-whorl. Similar objects are known from other excavated ringforts dating to the Early Christian Period, *e.g.* Raheennamadra, Co. Limerick, and Cahercommaun, Co. Clare.[9] The strike-a-light is paralleled at Ballinderry Crannog No. 2, Co. Offaly, where the excavator mentions examples dating from the Migration Period and now in Bergen Museum.[10] Scrapers of flint and chert may seem out of place in a ringfort assemblage, but they are of quite frequent occurrence and were probably used to scrape and clean animal skins. It has been suggested, however, that some of these flakes and blades may have been used as lathe-tools in the manufacture of jet armlets or bracelets.[11]

The tiny blue glass bead and the small bronze buckle-tongue came from the lowest levels of the habitation deposit. The former can be paralleled at sites such as Garryduff I, Co. Cork,[12] and belongs to a type which date from the early Iron Age onwards. The buckle-tongue is similar in size and form to a specimen attached to a small plain

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[8] E. Rynne, *PRIA*, 63, C (1964), 271ff.

[9] M. Stenberger, *PRIA*, 65,C(1966), 49, Fig. 4, 36, and H. Hencken, R.S.A.I. extra vol. (1938), 43, Fig. 27:123.

[10] H. Hencken, *PRIA*, 47,C(1942), 65, Fig. 32:537. My thanks are due to Mr. E. Rynne, Dept. of Archaeology, University College, Galway, for this reference.

[11] L. Alcock, *Dinas Powys*, Cardiff 1963, p. 176, Fig. 39:2. I am grateful to Dr. M. Herity, Dept. of Archaeology, University College, Dublin, for this reference.

[12] M. J. O'Kelly, *PRIA*, 63,C(1963), 76, Fig. 13:608.

buckle from Lagore Crannog, Co. Meath.[13] This would seem to suggest a date in the Early Christian Period, but the tongue could equally well have belonged to a buckle of Medieval type.[14] The presence of a horseshoe nail of fiddle-key type in the same occupation level would appear to favour a date early in Medieval times[15] but, again, it must be stressed that a consideration of the finds can only offer a very general date for this level.

Although the site lies within the area traditionally accepted as being the battlefield of Thurles (an adjoining townland is named *Log na Fola*—Hollow of the Blood), no identifiable relics were recovered which could be associated with this encounter in 1174 between the forces of Thomond, under Domhnall Mór Ó Briain, and the Normans of Leinster, under Strongbow, which occasioned the first defeat of the latter on Irish soil.

Reference has already been made to the pottery found in the course of the excavation. As none of the sherds were directly associated with the habitation level they can shed no light on the date of this stratum. Some of the 17th and 18th century sherds can be paralleled in the finds associated with the late 17th century re-occupation of the Early Christian monastic site at Liathmore-Mochoemog, about six miles east of Thurles.[16]

The purpose served by the artificial raising of the SE quadrant within the interior of the fort is unclear, and the question posed by its presence must, on the whole, remain unanswered. An approximate dating for this feature can be offered from a consideration of some of the objects recovered from it. The bronze stick-pin belongs to a type of dress-fastener about which little is known but which seems to have become popular early in Medieval times and which probably remained in fashion for a lengthy period. The Bowling Green specimen is extremely simple and devoid of any distinctive features. An early Medieval date (13th century) can be assigned to the potsherds (E91: 49), but as they were found close to the habitation layer they may represent a link with the horseshoe nail. The leg of the bronze skillet, on the other hand, belongs to a form current in the 17th century,[17] and this would seem to suggest a probable terminal date for the deposition of the layer. Assuming this to be the case, could the fort have been used in connection with the bowling green the tradition of which is enshrined in the name of the townland ? The origin of the bowling green is locally placed in the 17th century, and its establishment and use associated with the Purcells of Loughmoe, but documentary proof is lacking and its exact nature, date and location are uncertain.[18] Although perhaps unlikely, it is not improbable that the

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[13] H. Hencken, *PRIA*, 53, C(1950), 81, Fig. 20:20.
[14] *London Museum Medieval Catalogue*, 1940, pl. LXXV,6.
[15] *Ibid.*, Fig. 36:7.
[16] Information from the excavator, Dr. R. Glasscock prior to publication. For preliminary reports on this site see *Old Kilkenny Review*, 22 (1970), 31-34, and 23 (1971) 45-46.
[17] The *London Museum Medieval Catalogue*, 1940, illustrates (pl. LV) a bronze skillet with a somewhat similar leg. A closer parallel exists in the Ulster Museum (Reg. no. U.M. 673-34). This latter skillet bears a date of 1662, and its legs have the central midrib and lunate section of the Bowling Green specimen.
[18] Information supplied by Very Revd. Canon Fogarty, P.P., Templemore. In the Down Survey (1654-'56) the old place-name for this district is given as Cassis Land, an area which in 1640 was in the ownership of the Lady Viscountesse Dowager of Thurles and James, Earl of Ormond.

interior of the fort was utilized and possibly altered in connection with this green. The sherds of 17th and 18th century wares, including the small piece of a Raeren jug securely dated to the first decade of the 17th century, and possibly the wig-curler, all of which were found scattered throughout the humus layer in various parts of the site, may, therefore, have some significance. Most of this material could be explained in terms of periodic dumping on a site which was in close proximity to a fairly large town but it may also represent some association with the bowling green.

To sum up, it would appear that only a general date in the Early Christian or Early Medieval periods can be assigned to the construction and occupation of the ringfort, although the latter period, on the balance of the evidence, seems more probable. A precise date for the final abandonment of the site as a place of habitation cannot be accurately assessed. Some activity took place within the fort in the 17th and 18th centuries, possibly connected with the bowling green or, perhaps more likely, with occasional dumping or temporary encampment.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank Mr. Christopher Foyle, the landowner, for his permission to excavate and Mr. Thomas Ryan, the lessee, for his co-operation at all times. For their valuable assistance during the excavation I wish to thank Kathleen Ryan, Máire De Valéra, Maura O'Meara, John Taylor, James Briscoe, Patrick O'Halloran, Sean Galvin and Leo Swan. My thanks are also due to Aighleann Ní Fhlathartaigh and Frank Hickey for the finished drawings of the plans and finds. Finally, I would like to thank the many people in the Thurles area, too numerous to mention individually, who helped, in varied ways, while the excavation was in progress. The excavation was undertaken on behalf of, and financed by, the National Parks and Monuments Branch of the Office of Public Works.