A Survey of the Earthworks of the District of Old Pallasgrean

(concluded)

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With this paper is completed the task of surveying the earthworks in the district of Old Pallasgrean, in east County Limerick, all but three of which lie south of the Mulkear River. Seventy-eight sites in all have been examined and listed numerically, each of which has been illustrated with a sectional profile,[1] except for site number 78 which was so overgrown that a detailed survey of it was not possible. Due to the circumstances under which this survey was undertaken it is not claimed that it is one hundred per cent complete or accurate in all its details, although it is believed, judging from surface indications alone, that no site could be added to the list and little more could be added to the descriptions. The author's intentions have not been more ambitious than to make a record in so far as was within his power of all these earthworks, and in so doing to give a lead as to what might profitably be done in other areas and, perhaps, eventually on a much grander scale. As a pointer towards the necessity for, and the value of, such a survey as has been undertaken in the district of Old Pallasgrean, it is worth while pointing out that out of the seventy-eight sites surveyed only sixty-three of them are marked on the relevant Ordnance Survey six-inch sheets, a matter that is not so much a reflection on the work of the surveyors who mapped the area but, rather, an indication of the value of local knowledge when allied to an interest in such matters.

It would be nice to be able to use this survey as a method of estimating the probable population of the area at a given time but, unfortunately, without scientific excavation of all the sites it is not possible to say whether they can all be dated to approximately the same general period or, indeed, if all of them are habitation-sites. The dating of ringforts in Ireland is still very much an open question, the known period of their use ranging from some centuries before Christ to well within the last five hundred years. However, the major period of ringfort construction and habitation appears to have been during the Early Christian Period, that is, from about A.D. 400 to A.D. 1000, and it is probable that most of the earthworks included in this survey can be tentatively dated to that period.

As in the earlier parts of this survey, the co-ordinates are measured *from* the map margins given, *i.e.*, N.20 ; E.10.5 cms. means 20 cms. *from* the northern and 10.5 cms. *from* the eastern margin of the relevant six-inch sheet.

[1] For the first 56 sites see *NMAJ*, 8(1959), 69-78 and 8(1960), 111-115.

57. ARDROE. Sheet 23 : N.25.3 ; E. 2.5 cms. Clanwilliam barony. Platform 147 feet in diameter with a bank 8 feet wide on its edge. Traces of a shallow ditch are visible outside the bank on the N.W. and E. sides where the bank is 6 feet high. A 15 feet wide, 3 feet deep ditch cutting across the southern part of the platform appears to be due to ancient disturbance. A square area, 12 feet wide, enclosed by low banks is faintly discernable in the S.W. quadrant. The adjacent field is uneven and crossed by numerous shallow trenches.

Named " Skaghaphreaghaun " on the O.S. map, but locally known as "Skagh."

58. BALLYTRASNA. Sheet 24 : N.26 ; E. 74.5 cms. Coonagh barony. Platform 99 feet in diameter which is slightly raised around its edge. Faint traces of an encircling ditch. Platform 3 feet high.

Not marked on the O.S. map.

59. BALLYNEETY NORTH. Sheet 33 : N. 9.8 ; E. 39.5 cms. Coonagh barony. Platform 93 feet in diameter and 3½ feet high. Encircling ditch 9 feet wide and with a 12 feet wide outer bank.

This earthwork is very well preserved. Marked on the O.S. map where the adjacent area is named " Palatine Street " ; the district is locally known as " Palatine."

60. BRITTAS. Sheet 14 : S. 19 ; E. 2 cms. Clanwilliam barony. Large earthen mound now much disturbed, 210 feet in diameter and rising 20 feet above the level of the field. An apparently artificial cutting runs from this mound to the river about 450 feet distant.

Not marked on the O.S. map. It is about 440 feet S.W. of Brittas Castle and appears to be an Anglo-Norman motte ; the *bretasche* (wooden tower) which originally crowned this mound is probably that which gave the townland its name.

61. BRITTAS. Sheet 14 : N. 23 ; E. 4 cms. Clanwilliam barony. Platform 90 feet in diameter and 2 feet high. A detailed survey was not possible owing to the presence of dense brushwood.

Marked on the O.S. map. Another site close by is marked on the O.S. map, but a search in the area failed to locate it.

62. CAHERCONREAFY. Sheet 23 : S. 28.5 ; E. 2 cms. Clanwilliam barony. Rectangular earthwork 115 feet long by 45 feet wide. It is 9 feet high at its eastern side and 5 feet high at its western side. There is nothing which would indicate that this earthwork was ever circular.

Marked on the O.S. map.

63. CASTLE-ERKIN SOUTH. Sheet 14: S. 3.2 ; E.16 cms. Clanwilliam barony. Earthwork 75 feet in diameter, 12 feet high and which has a shallow ditch, 15 feet wide, around its northern half.

Not marked on the O.S. map. This site is locally believed to be the burial-mound of the O'Flaherty clan killed when raiding in the district. Just west of this mound is a burial ground (marked as such on the O.S. map) which is locally

known as " Kilmurry." The site of a castle (of which there are now no visible remains) is also marked on the O.S. map, S.3 ; E. 14 cms.

64. CLOGHAREADY SOUTH. Sheet 33 : S. 26.7 ; E. 43 cms. Coonagh barony. Platform 87 feet in diameter with traces of a bank on its edge and encircled by a 9 feet wide ditch which has traces of an outer bank. Platform 6 feet high.
This earthwork is excellently preserved. Marked on the O.S. map, close to the county boundary.

65. EYON. Sheet 14 : S.19.5 ; E. O.1 cms. Clanwilliam barony. Platform 20 feet in diameter and 8 feet high. Encircled by a 12 feet wide ditch which has traces of an outer bank. Very damaged due to work (in 1934) on the adjacent river bank and as a result only about one third of the original site remains.
Marked on the O.S. map. Situated across the river from Brittas Castle.

66. GARRANE MORE. Sheet 24 : N. 27.5 ; E. 50.5 cms. Coonagh barony. Earthwork 180 feet in diameter and 2 feet high. Bounded by a stream on the N.W. side. A road cuts across the S.W. side.
Marked on the O.S. map, but as a small enclosure and not as an antiquity. Local tradition, however, regards this site as a fort.

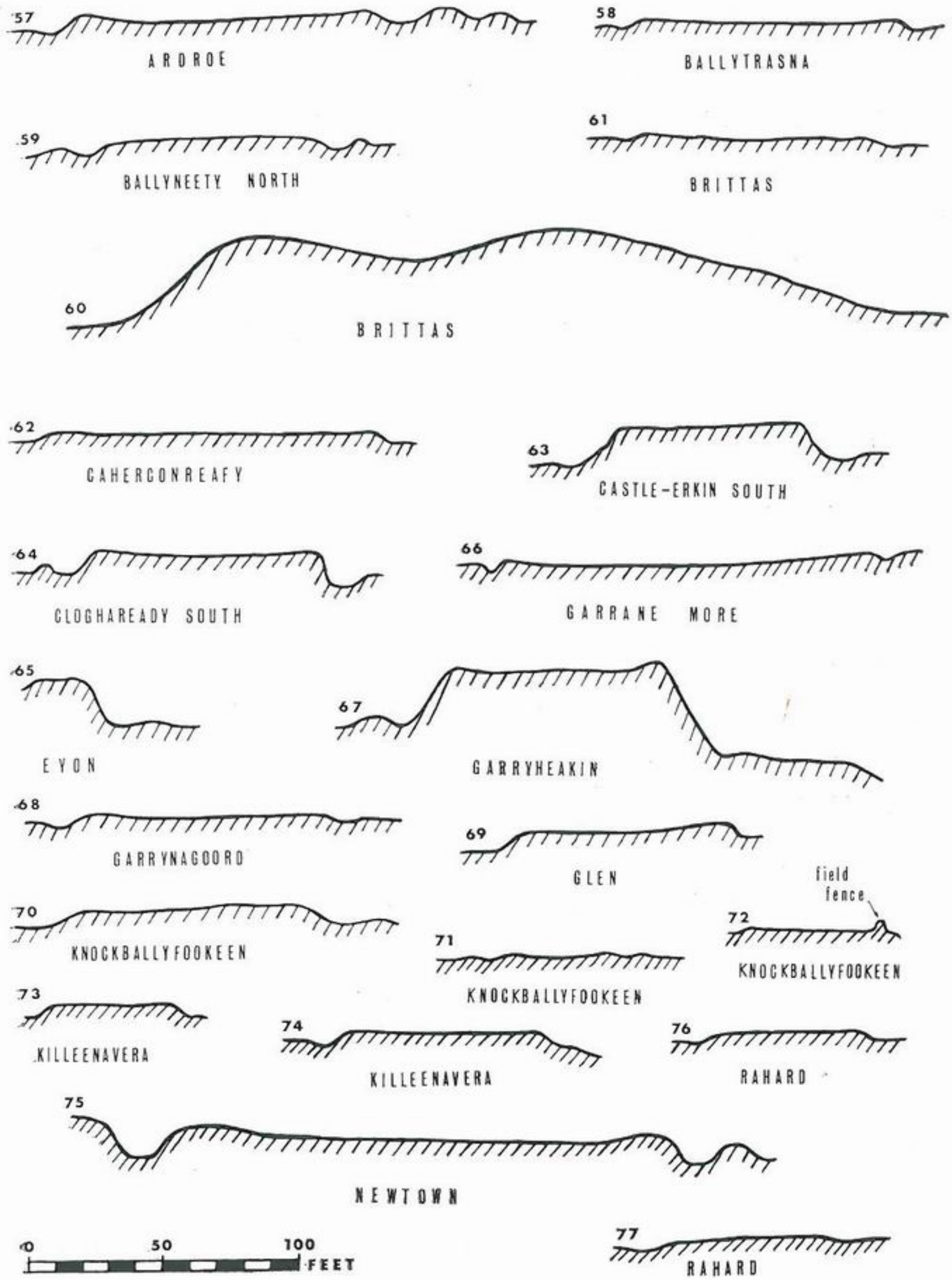
67. GARRYHEAKIN. Sheet 33 : N. 13 ; E. 25.5 cms. Coonagh barony. Platform 78 feet in diameter with a low bank on its edge. It rises 35 feet above the level of the field on the S. E. side and 20 feet on the N. side. It is encircled by a shallow 5 feet wide ditch which has a 12 feet wide outer bank.
Named " Rahard " on the O.S. map.

68. GARRYNAGOORD. Sheet 23 : E. 1 ; S. 30 cms. Clanwilliam barony. Platform 90 feet in diameter with traces of a bank on its edge. Encircled by a shallow ditch 6 feet wide. Platform 4 feet high in its northern half and 2 feet high in its southern half.
This earthwork is well preserved. Marked on the O.S. map.

69. GLEN. Sheet 24 : S. 27 ; W. 23 cms. Coonagh barony. Platform 81 feet in diameter and 4 feet high with traces of a collapsed bank on its edge. No encircling ditch is visible.
Marked on the O.S. map.

70. KNOCKBALLYFOOKEEN. Sheet 24 : S. 16 ; E. 27 cms. Coonagh barony. Platform 100 feet in diameter and 6 feet high with an encircling ditch 12 feet wide. There are traces of a wide shallow ditch connecting this site with a pit or hollow, 60 feet wide and 6 feet deep, which is about 60 feet N.E. of it.
Marked on the O.S. map.

71. KNOCKBALLYFOOKEEN. Sheet 24 : S. 22. 5 ; E. 33.5 cms. Coonagh barony. Earthwork, possibly a ring-barrow, which measures 22 feet in internal diameter, and rises about 6 inches above the level of the field. Encircled by a shallow ditch 2 feet wide which has a 6 feet wide outer bank. There are traces of an ancient



Sectional profiles of Sites 57 to 77.

6 feet wide bank enclosing a square area, about $\frac{1}{8}$ of an acre, around this earthwork.

Not marked on the O.S. map.

72. KNOCKBALLYFOOKEEN. Sheet 24 : S. 23 ; E. 33 cms. Coonagh barony. Platform 45 feet in diameter and 2 feet high. Faint traces of an encircling ditch.

Not marked on the O.S. map.

73. KILLEENAVERA. Sheet 24 : N. 28.2 ; W. 11 cms. Clanwilliam barony. Platform with unusually flat top which is 45 feet in diameter and 4 feet high.

Not marked on the O.S. map.

74. KILLEENAVERA. Sheet 24 : N. 29 ; W. 11 cms. Clanwilliam barony. Platform 87 feet in diameter and 5 feet high. Around the western half is a ditch which is 6 feet wide, but not around the eastern half where the surrounding ground slopes steeply downwards.

This earthwork occupies a commanding position and is well preserved. Marked on the O.S. map.

75. NEWTOWN. Sheet 33 : N. 3.5 ; E. 28.5 cms. Coonagh barony. Platform 180 feet in diameter with traces of a bank on its edge. Encircled by a 15 feet wide ditch which has an outer bank except on its S.E. side where the level of the field is higher than the earthwork. Platform 10 feet high.

Marked on the O.S. map.

76. RAHARD. Sheet 33 : N. 9 ; E. 27 cms. Coonagh barony. Platform 60 feet in diameter and 3 feet high with faint traces of a bank on its edge. Portion of the eastern half shows signs of disturbance.

Marked on the O.S. map.

77. RAHARD. Sheet 33 : N. 6 ; E. 24.5 cms. Coonagh barony. Platform 60 feet in diameter and 1 foot high. Encircled by a shallow ditch, 2 feet wide.

Marked on the O.S. map.

78. BALLYSHONEEN. Sheet 24 : S. 22 ; E. 36 cms. Coonagh barony. This earthwork is at present completely hidden under a dense thicket which is used as a fox covert ; it was, therefore, not possible to survey it.

Named " Rathaniska " on the O.S. map.