

Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork,
School of Archaeology and Palaeoecology,
Queen's University Belfast.

Monitoring Report No. 03
Dunnaman Court Tomb,
May 2004.

On behalf of



Monitoring Report: Dunnaman Court Tomb, Co. Down

SMR: DOW 055:030

19th May 2004

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CAF MR 03

1 *Background*

- 1.1 Archaeological monitoring of the excavation of the footprint for a new information board at Dunnaman Court Tomb (DOW 055:030), Co. Down, took place on the 19th May 2004. The monitoring was undertaken by Nicholas Beer of the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, Queen's University Belfast, on behalf of the Protecting Historic Monuments branch of the Environment and Heritage Service: Built Heritage, who funded the work.
- 1.2 Dunnaman Court Tomb, also known as the 'Giant's Grave', is an unusually long gallery grave (Jope 1966, 73). The monument is 13 m in length, c. 1.50 m wide and has a northeast – southwest alignment. It is constructed of large split granite boulders some of which were further split during quarrying in modern times (*ibid.*). No traces of the forecourt or its covering cairn survive. No sill stones are visible, but the surviving jamb-stones suggest a gallery of four segments (*ibid.*).

2 *Archiving*

- 2.1 A copy of this report has been deposited with the Environment and Heritage Service: Built Heritage. The records generated during the monitoring and the single find recovered during the course of the excavation are temporarily archived within the School of Archaeology and Palaeoecology, Queen's University Belfast.

3 *Monitoring*

- 3.1 Staff of the Environment and Heritage Service: Regional Operations requested that monitoring by an experienced archaeologist took place during the excavation of the footprint for a new information board at the site. The information board was located 10 m to the north west of the monument and 2 m south of the northern field boundary (Fig. 1). The principal objective of the monitoring was to ascertain the character and date of any deposits disturbed during the installation of the new board.
- 3.2 The footprint (Trench 1) was excavated by hand. Its final dimensions were 0.50 m x 0.55 m to a depth of 0.55 m. Underlying a dark brown, humic topsoil (Context No. 101; depth 0.30 m) was a stone feature containing voids (Context No. 102), which was excavated to a depth of 0.55 m. Context No. 102 consisted of a collection of sub-rectangular and sub-rounded stones set horizontally and which varied in length between 0.15 m and 0.50 m.

The sub-rounded stones were located above, and surrounding, the larger sub-rectangular stones.

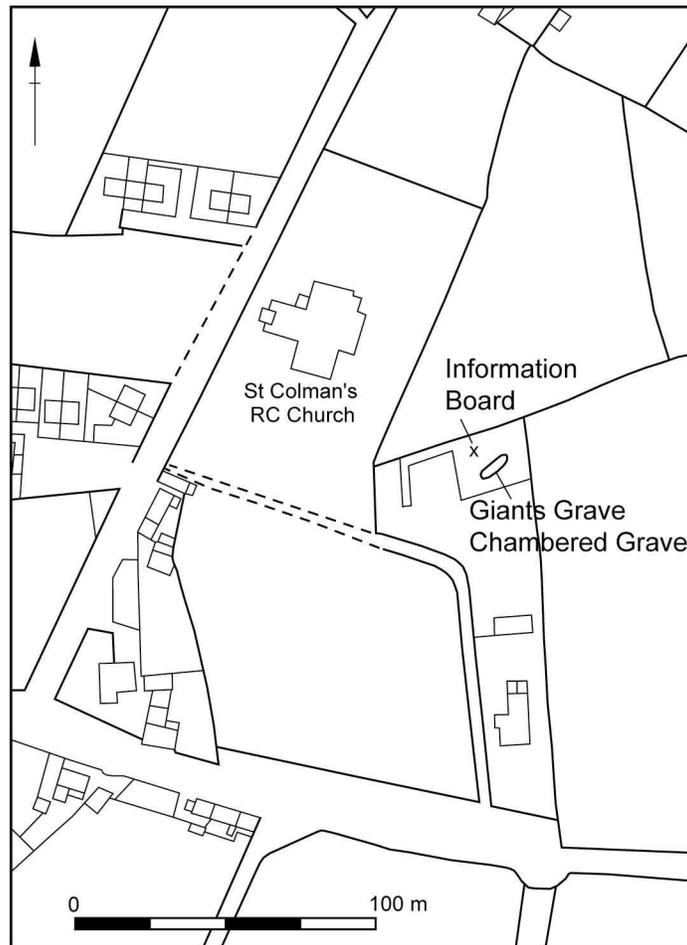


Figure 1: Location of Information Board at Dunnaman Court Tomb.

3.3 No clear alignment was discernable although the voiding increased in size, depth and frequency in the northwest corner of the trench. At a depth of 0.5m a small deposit of sandy loam soil was encountered. This deposit was sampled (Sample One) and assigned Context No. 103. The stone feature (Context No. 102) appeared to form two vertical wall structures (containing a high proportion of rounded stones) that were visible to a greater depth through the voiding and defined the edges of Context No. 103 in the southeast of the trench. However, it is likely that Context 103 was formed by the falling of soil through the voiding of Context 102.

3.4 The required depth for the installation of the new board was met at 0.55 m and therefore no further excavation of the feature was warranted. The Context 102 was covered with plastic sheeting to protect it from damage by the concrete footing for the sign.

4 *Discussion*

4.1 The stones (Context No. 102) appeared to form the roof of a chamber or possibly the lintel stones of a souterrain. When the uppermost rounded stones were removed, sub-rectangular stones were present below, which appeared to be the stone lintels of a tunnel or chamber. The rounded stones (Context No. 102) were also visible defining the edge of a fill (Context No. 103) and beginning to form the supporting walls of the sub-rectangular lintel stones.

5 *Recommendations*

5.1 Given the limited scale of the investigations, the character and date of the feature recorded during the monitoring remains unknown. Although not warranting publication, given the close proximity of Dunnaman court tomb this discovery should be placed within the SMR records for the monument (DOW 055:030) for future reference. No additional post-excavation research or other resources will be necessary.

6 *Credits and Acknowledgements*

6.1 The monitoring was undertaken by Nicholas Beer (Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, Queen's University Belfast). For their assistance during the course of the monitoring and the preparation of this report, the author is grateful to: John Davidson (Queen's University Belfast), Dr Colm Donnelly (Queen's University Belfast), Declan Hurl (Environment and Heritage Service: Built Heritage), Dr Philip Macdonald (Queen's University Belfast),

James McEvoy (Environment and Heritage Service: Regional Operations) and John O'Neill (Queen's University Belfast). The illustrations were prepared by Ruth Logue of the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, Queen's University Belfast.

7 Bibliography.

Joep, E. M. (editor), 1966. *An Archaeological Survey of County Down*, H.M.S.O. Belfast.

Photographic Plates



Plate 1. Dunnaman Court Tomb, facing east.



Plate 2. Trench 1. Exposed stone feature (Context No. 102), at depth of 0.4 m, facing north.

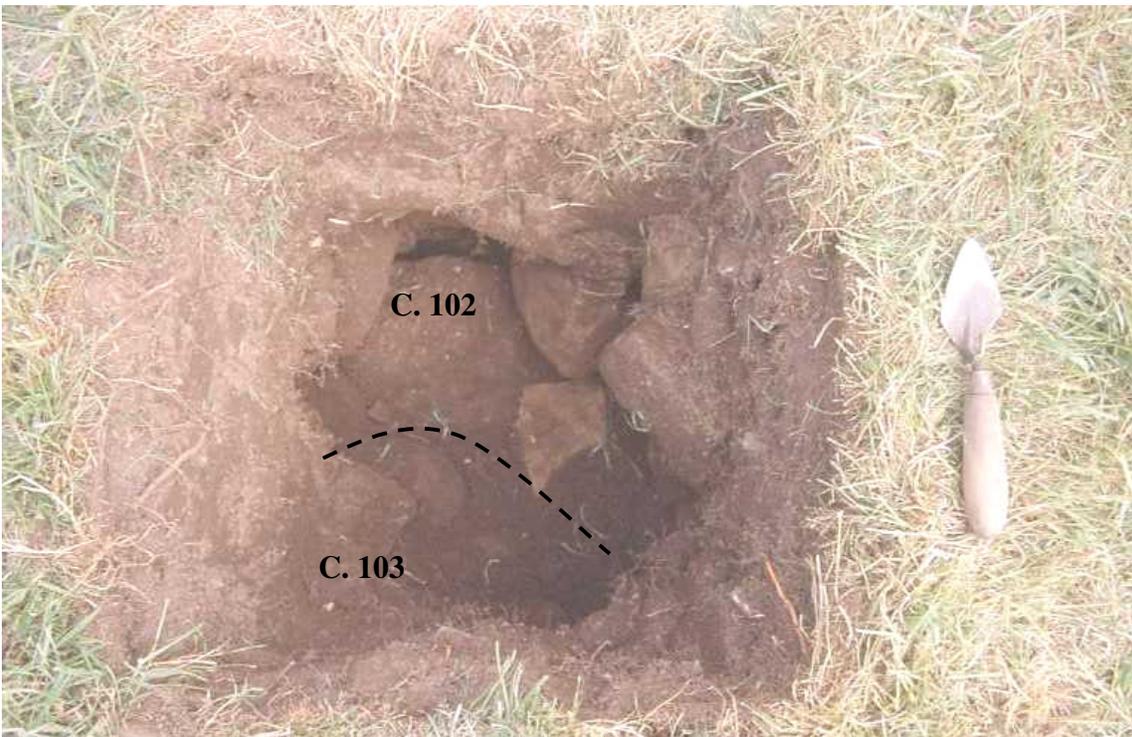


Plate 3. Trench 1. Exposed stone feature (Context No 102) and loose sandy deposit (Context No. 103), at final excavated depth of 0.55 m, facing north.

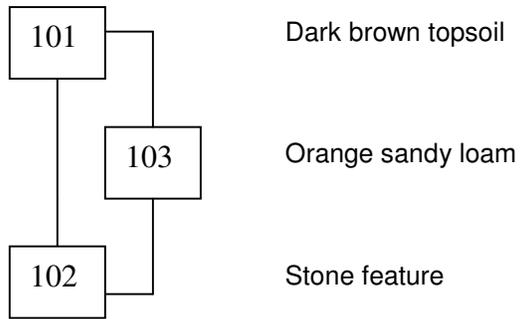
Appendix One: Context Register

Trench One

- | | |
|--------|--|
| C. 101 | Dark brown humic loam, topsoil. |
| C. 102 | Stone feature, stones ranging from 0.1 to 0.5 m in length. |
| C. 103 | Loose orange sandy loam. |

Appendix Two: Harris Matrix

Trench One:



Appendix Three: Photographic Register

Film One: 19 / 05 / 04

Colour Slide Film, Kodak Elite-chrome 100 ISO.

Image	Facing	Subject
1	North	Trench One, Context No. 102 at 0.25 m.
2	East	Trench One, Context No. 102 at 0.25 m.
3	North	Trench One, Context No. 102 at 0.35 m.
4	East	Trench One, Context No. 102 at 0.35 m.
5	North	Trench One, Context No. 102 and 103 at 0.5 m.
6	East	Trench One, Context No. 102 and 103 at 0.5 m.
7	North	Trench One, Context No. 102 and 103 at final depth.
8	North	Trench One, Context No. 102 and 103 at final depth.
9	East	Dunnaman Court Tomb.
10	East	Dunnaman Court Tomb.

Appendix Four: Field Drawing Register

Trench One

Drawing No.	Context No.	Scale	Content
1	102	1:10	Context No. 102 at depth of 0.25 m.
2	102	1:10	Context No. 102 at depth of 0.5m.

Appendix Five: Sample Register.

Trench One

Sample No.	Context No.	Content.
1	103	Loose orange sandy loam.