



**Monitoring Report No. 022**

**GREENCASTLE BURIALS  
GREEN CASTLE  
COUNTY DOWN**

**LICENCE NO. N/A**

**PHILIP MACDONALD**



**Monitoring Report No. 022**

Greencastle Burials (SMR No. Down 057:017)  
Greencastle  
Co. Down

Philip Macdonald

## Site Specific Information

*Site Name:* Greencastle burials

*Townland:* Greencastle

*SMR No (if applicable):* Down 057:017

~~State Care~~      ~~Scheduled~~      Other      [delete as applicable]

*Grid Ref:* J241117 and J242117

*County:* Down

*Excavation Licence No (if applicable):* N/A

*Planning Ref / No. (if applicable):* N/A

*Dates of Monitoring:* 13/1/05 – 14/1/05

*Archaeologist(s) Present:* 13/1/05: Philip Macdonald and Peter Moore  
14/1/05: Philip Macdonald

### *Brief Summary:*

(e.g. monitoring carried out in advance of erection of sign, nothing of archaeological interest noted)

Monitoring carried out during the laying of drainage pipes in two mechanically excavated trenches, nothing of archaeological interest noted.

*Type of monitoring:* Observation of mechanically excavated trenches.  
(e.g., mechanical digger / hand)

*Size of area opened:* Trench One was L-shaped; its longest side (east-west) was 35.0 metres long, whilst its shortest side (north-south) was 11.5 metres long and it was 0.60 metres wide. Trench Two was 19.5 metres long (north-south) and 0.60 metres wide.

*Current Land Use:* Minor road and coastal defences.  
(e.g., farming / industrial)

*Intended Land Use:* Minor road and coastal defences.  
(e.g., residential, graveyard)

Plan of site, as issued by PHM/RBH, showing extent of area to be monitored:



Figure One: Location map

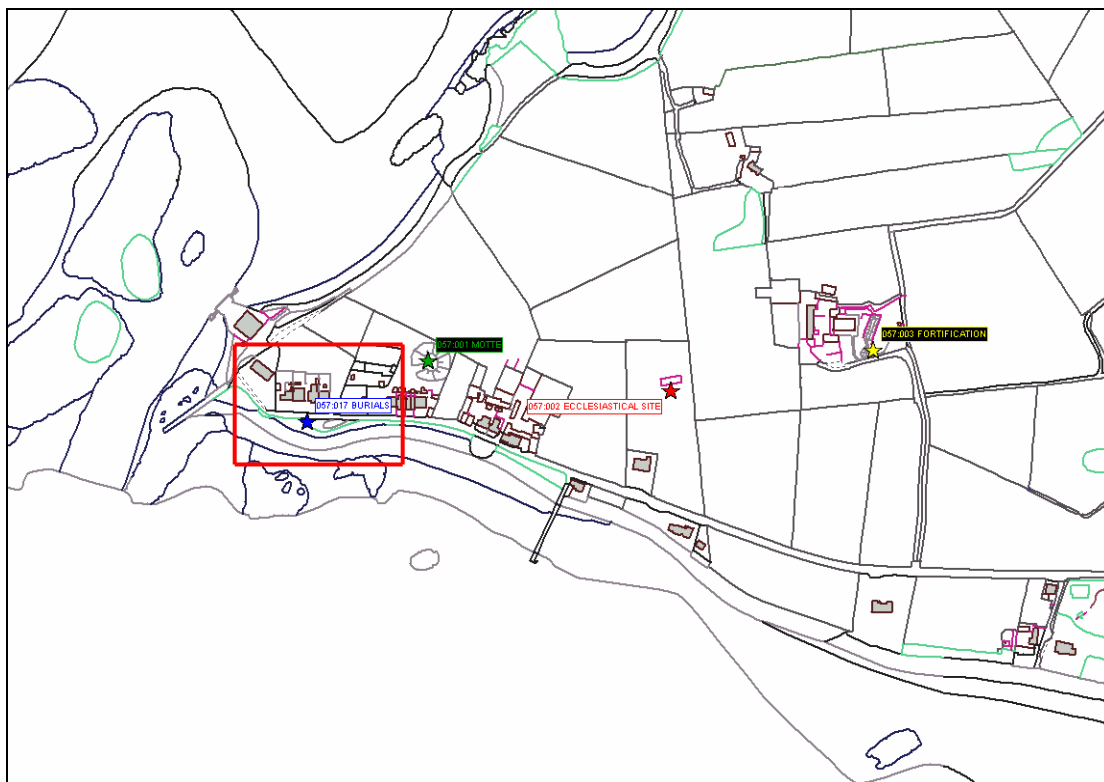


Figure Two: Detailed location map

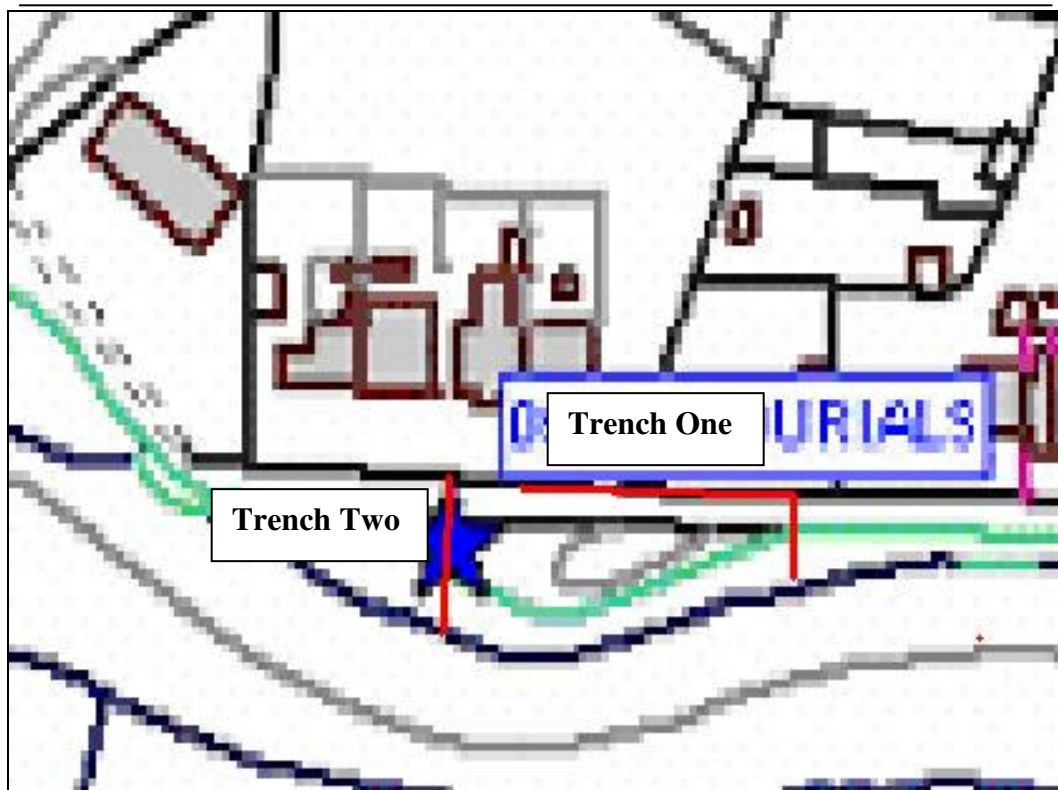


Figure Three: Location of monitored mechanically excavated trenches (marked as red lines)

**Brief account of the monitoring, including recommendations for further action (if applicable).**

*Introductory Remarks*

During January 2005 contractors working for the Roads Service laid drainage pipes in two mechanically excavated trenches along and across Greencastle Pier Road at Greencastle, Co. Down (Grid References J241117 and J242117). During the laying of British Telecom cables in May 2003 along the seaward (southern) edge of the road, a number of human bones, representing at least one inhumation, were disturbed (SMR No. Down 057:017) (see Fig.2). Radiocarbon dating indicated a thirteenth or fourteenth century date for the inhumation (D.Hurl *pers.comm.*). Given the possibility that the burials disturbed during 2003 might be part of a larger cemetery, monitoring of the excavation of the trenches dug for the Roads Service's drainage pipes was undertaken by Philip Macdonald and Peter Moore of the Centre for Field Archaeology on behalf of Declan Hurl, Environment and Heritage Service. Nothing of archaeological interest was noted during the course of the monitoring.

### *Trench One (13/1/05)*

Trench One was L-shaped; its longest side (east-west) extended along the northern edge of Greencastle Pier Road and was 35.0 metres long, whilst its shortest side (north-south) was 11.5 metres long and extended across the road and through the coastal defences immediately to the south (fig.3). Both elements of the trench were 0.60 metres wide.

Stratigraphically, the latest deposits in Trench One were two thin layers of poor humic sandy loam topsoil located either side of the road (Context Nos.101 and 106). To the north of the road, the humic sandy loam (Context No.101) overlay a mottled dark grey sand (Context No.102) which filled a steep-sided, linear, east-west running negative feature (Context No.103) in which an earlier service pipe had been laid. Local residents identified this pipe as a now disused water pipe. The feature into which it was laid (Context No.103) had a maximum depth of 0.75 – 0.80 metres and was at least 0.60 metres wide. Most of the longest side of Trench One was set within this feature although periodically the sequence of deposits underlying the road (Context Nos.107, 108, 109 and 110) were exposed along its southern edge.

A second steep-sided, linear, east-west running negative feature (Context No.105) was exposed on the southern edge of the road in the shortest side of Trench One. A series of British Telecom cables had been laid in this feature, which was 0.6 metres wide, approximately 0.5 metres deep and backfilled with a loose fill of concrete and stone chippings (Context No.104).

Both features cut through the road which was surfaced with a thick (maximum depth 0.10 metres) layer of tarmac (Context No.107) that had been laid on to a thin hardcore (depth 0.07 – 0.10 metres) of small beach pebbles (Context No.108), which in turn was laid over a thick deposit (depth 0.30 – 0.40 metres) of consolidated yellow-grey sand with occasional pebble inclusions (Context No.109). The presence of several plastic bottles within the consolidated sand (Context No.109) suggested that it was a recent, artificial deposit. Underlying the consolidated yellow-grey sand (Context No.109), and cut into an underlying deposit of dark grey sand (Context No.110), was the truncated base of a third trench for services (Context No.113) which was backfilled with dark grey sand (Context No.114).

Underlying the sequence of deposits associated with the road (Context Nos.107, 108 and 109) was a deposit of dark grey sand (Context No.110), which in turn overlaid in the southern part of the trench a complex of unconsolidated, old beach deposits made up of lenses of gravel and sand (Context No.112). At the southern end of the trench these two deposits had a combined exposed depth of approximately 1.5 metres. The southern edge of the trench was defined by the coast defences which consisted of a deposit of large boulders and modern building rubble (Context No.111) that butted against the deposits of dark grey sand (Context No.110) and gravel and sand (Context No.112).

Apart from the features associated with modern services (Context Nos.103, 105 and 113) and the coastal defences (Context No.111), no features or deposits of

archaeological interest were observed in Trench One. In addition, no archaeological finds or disarticulated human bone were observed.

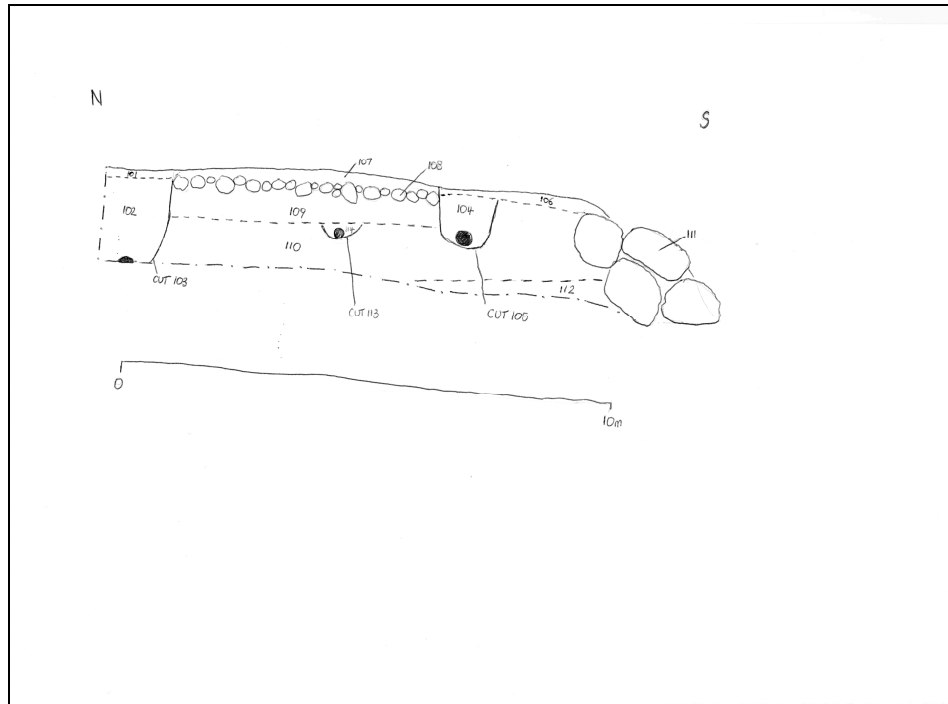


Figure Four: Sketch of west-facing section of Trench One

#### *Trench Two (14/1/05)*

Trench Two was 19.5 metres long (north-south) and 0.60 metres wide. The trench was located approximately 6.0 metres to the west of the western end of Trench One. It was laid out across Greencastle Pier Road, an adjacent layby and through the coastal defences immediately to the south (fig.3).

The stratigraphic sequence in Trench Two was closely comparable with that uncovered in Trench One. To the north of the road a steep-sided, linear, east-west running negative feature (Context No.202) was partly exposed. This was filled with a mottled dark grey sand (Context No.201) and is probably part of the trench containing the disused water pipe which was exposed in Trench One (where it was recorded as Context No.103).

To the south of the road two linear negative features (Context Nos.204 and 206) containing modern services were exposed. Immediately to the south of the road was an east-west running feature (Context No.204), which was 0.6 metres wide, approximately 0.5 metres deep and backfilled with a loose fill of greyish sand and stone chippings (Context No.205). It contained British Telecom cables and is probably a continuation of one of the features exposed in Trench One (i.e. Context No.105). The southernmost linear feature in Trench two was a northwest-southeast running, steep-sided negative feature (Context No.204), backfilled with a rubble-rich sandy

deposit (Context No.205), and into which had been laid a modern plastic pipe of uncertain purpose. The two linear negative features to the south of the road were cut through a thick deposit (maximum depth 0.20 metres) of modern rubble hardcore in a sandy matrix (Context No.207) which made the surface of the layby adjacent to the road.

The sequence of deposits associated with the coast road (Context Nos.208, 209 and 210) was closely comparable with those exposed in Trench One. They consisted of a thick (maximum depth 0.10 metres) layer of tarmac (Context No.208), laid on to a thin hardcore (depth approximately 0.10 metres) of beach pebbles (Context No.209), which was in turn laid over a partially exposed deposit (maximum exposed depth 0.25 metres) of consolidated yellow-grey sand with occasional pebble inclusions (Context No.210).

Underlying the sequence of deposits associated with the road, and only exposed in the southern part of the trench, was a thick deposit of dark grey sand (Context No.212; recorded as Context No.110 in Trench One), which in turn overlaid, in the southern part of the trench, a complex of unconsolidated gravel and sand deposits (Context No.213; recorded as Context No.112 in Trench One).

Apart from the features associated with modern services (Context Nos.202, 204 and 206), no features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed in Trench Two. In addition, no archaeological finds or disarticulated human bone were observed.

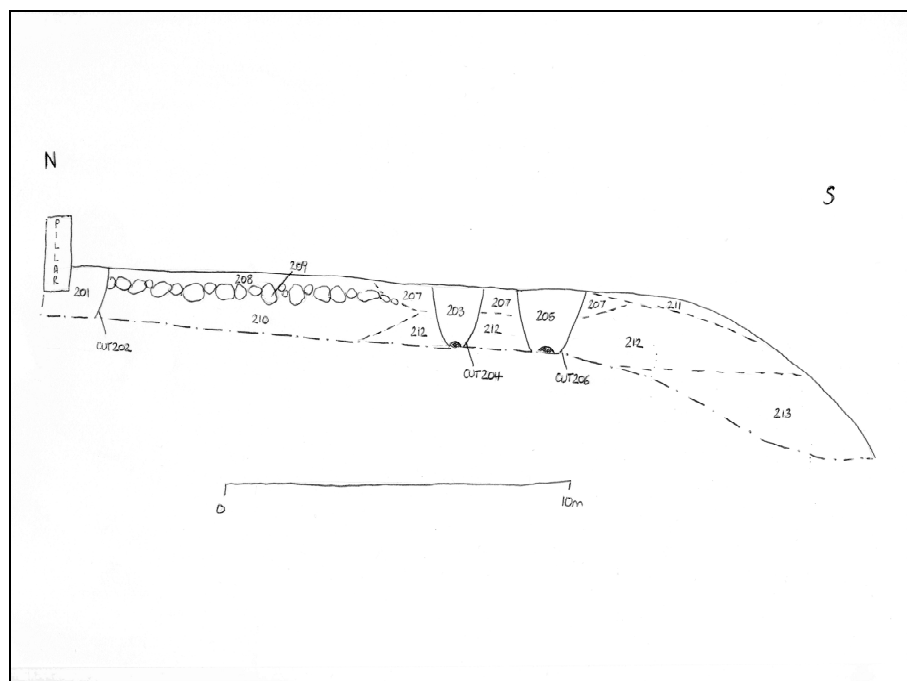


Figure Five: Sketch of west-facing section of Trench Two



*Discussion*

In his consideration of the burial disturbed in May 2003; Declan Hurl identified two possible interpretations: either the burial was part of a hitherto unrecognised formal cemetery or the informal burial on unconsecrated ground of a body washed up on the shore. Although no evidence of additional inhumations was observed during the monitoring undertaken at Greencastle in January 2005, this should not be considered conclusive evidence that the definite inhumation on the southern side of Greencastle Pier Road was an isolated burial. The majority of the deposits through which the Roads Service's drainage pipes were laid had previously been disturbed during the laying of modern service pipes. Consequently, little of the area disturbed by the Roads Service's contractors could reasonably be expected to contain intact archaeological deposits.



Plate One: Monitoring of the mechanical excavation of Trench One in progress  
(looking west)

### *Recommendations For Further Action*

It is recommended that a copy of this report is lodged with the Sites and Monuments Record.

It is not considered worthwhile publishing the results of the monitoring undertaken at Greencastle in January 2005.

### **Archive:**

(List any records from the monitoring e.g. finds, photos and plans and state where they are currently available for inspection.)

### *Finds:*

No finds were recovered during the course of the monitoring.

### *Photographs:*

Only two digital images were taken during the course of the monitoring (see details below). The images are digitally archived within the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, School of Archaeology and Palaeoecology, Queen's University Belfast.

DSCN2215: Monitoring of the mechanical excavation of Trench One in progress (looking west) (reproduced here as Plate One)

DSCN2216: Monitoring of the mechanical excavation of Trench One in progress (looking west)

### *Plans / Drawings:*

Only two sketch sections were made during the course of the monitoring (see details below). The images are digitally archived within the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, School of Archaeology and Palaeoecology, Queen's University Belfast.

Drawing 1: Sketch of west-facing section of Trench One (reproduced here as Figure Four)

Drawing 2: Sketch of west-facing section of Trench Two (reproduced here as Figure Five)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_