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Souterrain in Grallagh Lower Td., Co. Waterford

By J. P. McCARTHY

A souterrain was discovered here* when the weight of a tractor passing overhead caused a collapse of the roof of Chamber 1. It was surveyed in March 1976. The landowner, Mr. Thomas Curran of Ballylangdon has consented to keep the site open for future inspection. The site is not directly connected with any visible surface structure. A small uni-vallate ringfort is however situated c.160m S.S.E. of the site. The bedrock is a slaty sandstone.

The souterrain consists of three chambers. Chamber 1 is clay-cut and has an irregularly circular plan. As a result of the collapse of the roof, there is a large deposit of soil on the E side. Running from the NW, SW and SE corners of the chamber are three low tunnels, the maximum average height of which is 30cm. Due to a soil fall the SW and SE tunnels could not be explored. However, that portion of the NW one which could be entered showed that the height of the tunnel decreased outward. It gave no indication of leading to another chamber. In the N wall of the chamber is a short, narrow, rock-cut creepway leading to Chamber 2. This chamber is oblong in plan, orientated NW/SE and totally rock-cut. The cleavage lines of the bedrock are also orientated in this direction. At the W end of the chamber is a dry-stone built wall. In this is the entrance to a creepway running W. The creepway is roofed with five lintels. Its S wall is slab-lined while the N wall is rock-cut. It slopes gently upwards from the floor of Chamber 2. It enters the SE corner of Chamber 3 which is a dry-stone built beehive chamber. The capping slab of this chamber is cracked and in danger of collapsing. Its floor is rock-cut.

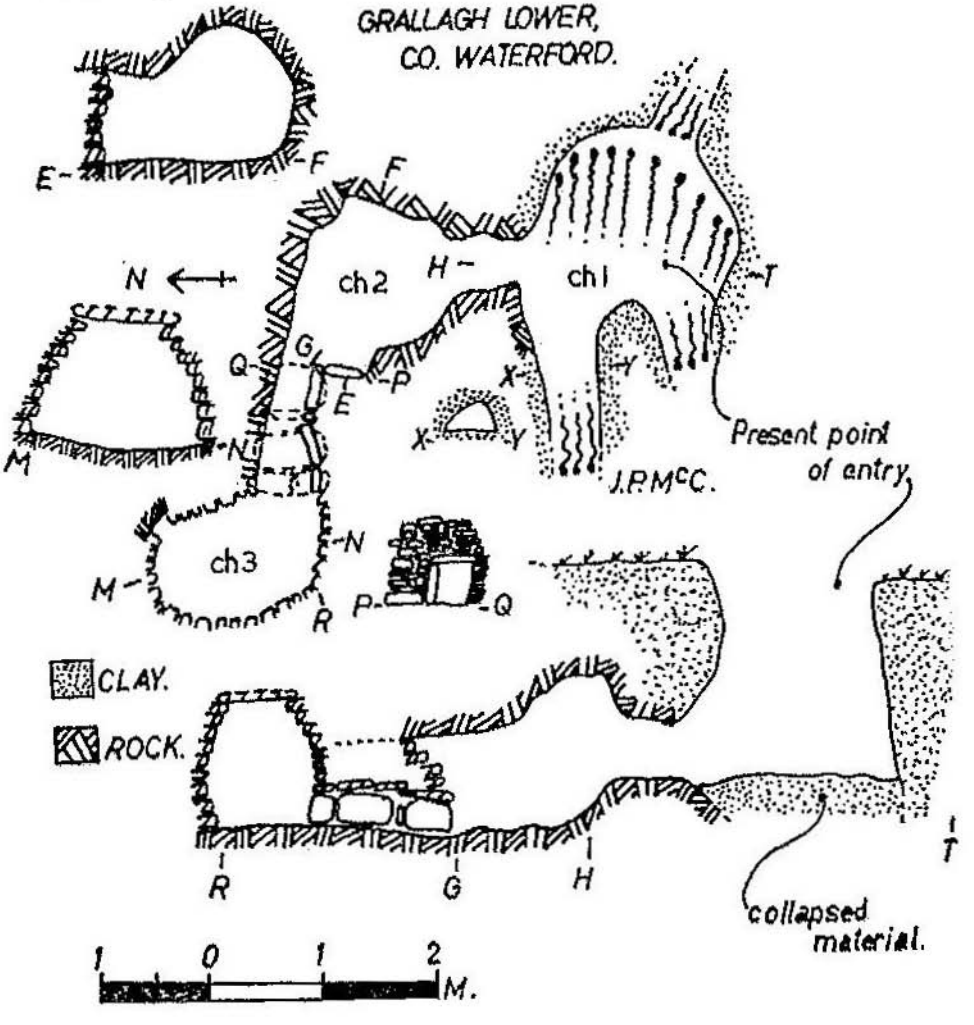
Dimensions

	Chamber 1.	*Chamber* 2.	*Chamber* 3.
Length	2.00m (NS axis)	1.70m	1.60m (NS axis)
Width	1.70m (EW axis)	1.40m	1.10m (EW axis)
Height	1.20m	.90-1.30m (E-W)	1.00m
	Creepway CH1-CH2	Creepway CH2-CH3	NW Tunnel
Length	50cm	1.20m	1.90m
Width	45cm	30-40cm	50-30cm
Height	50cm	30-40cm	40-20cm

* TD. Grallagh Lower; PH: Ardmore; BY: Decies-within-Drum. O.S. 6" Waterford Sheet No. 38; 19.5cm from W, 16.3cm from N. O.D. 300-400.'

Comments

There was no indication of the position of the original entrance to the site. Perhaps this was located at the end of one of the tunnels from Chamber I. A particular feature of interest at this site is its construction in three different types of material i.e., rock, stone and clay.



Acknowledgements

I wish to thank the landowner, Mr. Curran for allowing me to investigate the site and I am grateful to Miss Margaret Gowan for assisting me in the survey.