

Radiocarbon dates from Belderrig Co. Mayo

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Belderrig, Co. Mayo: Radiocarbon Dates

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Eleven dates have been obtained from Belderrig so far. This very simplified account gives a very preliminary interpretation. All dates are in the table at the end. Please note that UB-7587, 7588, 7589 are taken from within one 25cm area and provide a clear sequence.

Beneath the stony layers

Five dates have been obtained on deposits sealed by the stony layer(s) across the site. These are:

Context	Material	Code	Date	Error	Cal BC (95.4%)
304	<i>Corylus</i> (hazel) shell fragment	UB-7589	5380	38	4334 – 4061
203	<i>Corylus</i> (hazel) shell fragment	UB-6882	5631	39	4538 – 4366
203	<i>Corylus</i> (hazel) shell fragment	UB-7585	5545	40	4456 – 4337
205	<i>Corylus</i> (hazel) shell fragment	UB-7586	5845	39	4823 - 4593
121	<i>Corylus</i> (hazel) shell fragment	UB-7583	5433	39	4353 - 4180

Superficial interpretation of these dates suggests activity through the mid – late fifth millennium. Further dates and analysis are required, not least to assess spatial variation.

The Stony Layer

Three dates have been obtained from the stony layer.

Context	Material	Code	Date	Error	Cal BC (95.4%)
135	<i>Corylus</i> (hazel) shell fragment	UB-7584	5362	38	4328 - 4053
302	<i>Corylus</i> (hazel) shell fragment	UB-7587	5255	36	4229 - 3978
303	<i>Corylus</i> (hazel) shell fragment	UB-7588	5201	37	4222 - 3952

UB-7584 comes from an area of some complexity, not fully excavated yet. Note that UB-7588 has a 91.2% probability of dating to 4070-3950 cal BC.

Hearth, Trench One

Three dates from two samples, both from short lived species, were obtained from a hearth sealed by 'tumble' of a prebog dyke. UB-7591 and UBA-7591 are replicate dates, the later obtained as part of the calibration of Belfast's AMS machine. They date the same sample. These dates from hazel and birch are very consistent and indicate activity in the mid fourth millennium.

Context	Material	Code	Date	Error	Cal BC (95.4%)
115	<i>Corylus</i> (hazel) charcoal, twig	UB-7590	4780	36	3646 - 3384
115	<i>Betula</i> (birch) charcoal, twig	UB-7591	4717	37	3633 - 3374
115	<i>Betula</i> (birch) charcoal, twig	UBA-7591	4732	30	3634 - 3377

Appendix One

Context	Description	Square	Sample	Material	Code	estimate	error	$\delta^{13}C$	Cal BC (95% confidence)
115	Burning in hearth	-	7	<i>Corylus</i> (hazel) charcoal, twig	UB-7590	4780	36	-23.0	3646 - 3384
115	Burning in hearth	-	7	<i>Betula</i> (birch) charcoal, twig	UB-7591	4717	37	-23.0	3633 - 3374
115	Burning in hearth	-	7	<i>Betula</i> (birch) charcoal, twig	UBA-7591	4732	30	-23.1	3634 - 3377
121	Grey clay-sand.	36D	16	<i>Corylus</i> (hazel) shell fragment	UB-7583	5433	39	-23.0	4353 - 4180
135	"Fill" of feature in c.0120 in row 36/37	37A	110	<i>Corylus</i> (hazel) shell fragment	UB-7584	5362	38	-25.0	4328 - 4053
302	Metalled stone surface	3A	35	<i>Corylus</i> (hazel) shell fragment	UB-7587	5255	36	-20.0	4229 - 3978
303	irregular stone surface, set in peat	3A	43	<i>Corylus</i> (hazel) shell fragment	UB-7588	5201	37	-18.0	4222 - 3952
304	?peat, containing fish bone in section	3A	64	<i>Corylus</i> (hazel) shell fragment	UB-7589	5380	38	-24.0	4334 - 4061
203	In-situ prehistoric land surface sealed by metalling	F6		<i>Corylus</i> (hazel) shell fragment	UB-6882	5631	39	-25.0	4538 - 4366
203	In-situ prehistoric land surface sealed by metalling	F4		<i>Corylus</i> (hazel) shell fragment	UB-7585	5545	40	-24.0	4456 - 4337
205	Sandy, possibly interface material beneath metalling	F2		<i>Corylus</i> (hazel) shell fragment	UB-7586	5845	39	-23.0	4823 - 4593