

# GeoArch

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Evaluation of Archaeometallurgical  
Residues from the  
M8/N8 Cullahill-Cashel: AR13 (E2366)

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# Evaluation of Archaeometallurgical Residues from the M8/N8 Cullahill - Cashel: AR13 (E2366)

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## Abstract

*Material assessed from this site comprised flots from the fills of two pits and a separate collection of macroscopic from one of them. The material from c42 merely comprised a few indeterminate tiny slag grains in the flots, but the material from c40 constituted a good assemblage of small slag pieces and micro-residues from iron-working (smithing). Such fines assemblages may accumulate with the hearth itself, and it is possible c41 represents a smithing hearth.*

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## Methods

All investigated materials were examined visually, using a low-powered binocular microscope where necessary. All significant macroscopic materials were summarily described and recorded to a database (Table 1). For microscopic residues a general statement of the nature of each assemblage was recorded. As an evaluation, the materials were not subjected to any high-magnification optical inspection, nor to any other form of instrumental analysis. The identifications of materials in this report are therefore necessarily limited and must be regarded as provisional.

## Results

Material assessed from this site comprised flots from the fills of two pits.

C40 (from pit c41) constituted a good assemblage of small slag pieces and micro-residues from iron-working (smithing). Such fines assemblages may accumulate within the hearth itself (as well as on adjacent floors), and it is possible c41 represents a smithing hearth. It is however an unusual elongate form (smithing hearths are usual more equidimensional).

Material from c42 (the upper fill of pit C3) merely comprised a few indeterminate tiny slag grains in the flots.

## Interpretation

The occurrence of smithing fines in c40 clearly indicates that this was either a hearth, or that smithing

was being undertaken close nearby, for hammerscale assemblages tend not to be moved far. The feature is certainly an odd shape for a hearth. The residues are themselves not particularly indicative of age – beyond a range of Iron Age to later post-medieval. The use of charcoal as fuel means the activity is likely to be pre-20<sup>th</sup> century.

The low number of slag grains in the sample from c42 does not necessarily indicate that this feature is metallurgical.

## Evaluation of potential

The limited amount of material from this site means that there is little potential for further understanding of the assemblage or the site through further analytical investigations.

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<b>site</b>	<b>sample</b>	<b>context</b>	<b>weight</b>	<b>no</b>	<b>notes</b>
e2366	13	40	218	42	very scrappy assemblage of small slag fragments, mostly of blebby slightly flowed slags, indicating an origin with the fuel bed, but it was not possible to discriminate between a hearth or a furnace assemblage
e2366	19	40			slag flats, flake hammerscale and small slag fragments
e2366	21	42			mainly natural stone, with a couple of probable slag grains

*Table 1: Summary catalogue*

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