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Evaluation of residues from M1
Northern Motorway (J2009):
Rathmullan 9 (01E0390)

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Abstract

This site yielded a single clinker fragment from a non-archaeological context. The material is probably, but not certainly, post-medieval.

Contents

Background	1
Methods	1
Description	1
Evaluation of potential.....	1
Appendix 1: summary catalogue	2

Evaluation of potential

This piece of clinker has no significant potential for advancing understanding through detailed analysis. It is not of high priority for retention.

Background

This report is an evaluation of archaeometallurgical residues from Rathmullan 9 (01E0390) on the M1 Northern Motorway development, excavated by D. Nelis, on behalf of Irish Archaeological Consultancy Ltd.

Methods

All materials were examined visually and using a low-powered binocular microscope where necessary. 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.

It should be noted that after washing the overall weights of the material submitted in many cases differs significantly from those originally recorded.

Description

The catalogue for this site is presented in Appendix 1.

One fragment of vesicular clinker was submitted from Rathmullan 9. The fragment weighed 27g and had no distinct form. Clinker is the partially melted residue from burning of coal. It can result both from metallurgical process and from other high temperature uses of coal (such as steam engine boilers). Isolated fragments in agricultural settings are difficult to interpret, possibly be due to clearance of the firebox on agricultural steam engines ('traction engines'), but disposal of blacksmithing waste is also possible.

Coal was used as fuel on the east coast from the medieval period, but widespread use is mainly post-1800.

Appendix 1. summary catalogue of material

Site: Rathmullan 9 (01E0390)

<i>context</i>	<i>sample</i>	<i>weight (g)</i>	<i>quantity</i>	<i>description</i>
94	92	27	1	fragment of moderately dense vesicular clinker with abundant shale fragments

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