



Monitoring Report No. 13

**KILNASAGGART INSCRIBED PILLAR STONE
KILNASAGGART
COUNTY ARMAGH**

AE/04/141

NICHOLAS BEER

Site Specific Information

Site Name: Kilnasaggart

Townland: Edenappa

SMR No: ARM 032:006

State Care Scheduled Other

Grid Ref: J06181490

County: Armagh

Excavation Licence No: AE/04/141

Dates of Monitoring: 25 / 08 / 04

Archaeologist Present: Nicholas Beer

Brief Summary: Monitoring conducted in advance of the installation of an information board, on behalf of Regeneration of South Armagh (ROSA). A single fragment of disarticulated human skull was recovered from the subsoil.

Type of monitoring: Single trench excavated by hand.

Size of area opened: 0.3m x 0.3m

Current Land Use: Monument in State Care located in the middle of a pasture field enclosed by bank and hedge.

Intended Land Use: N/A

Plan of site showing extent of area monitored:

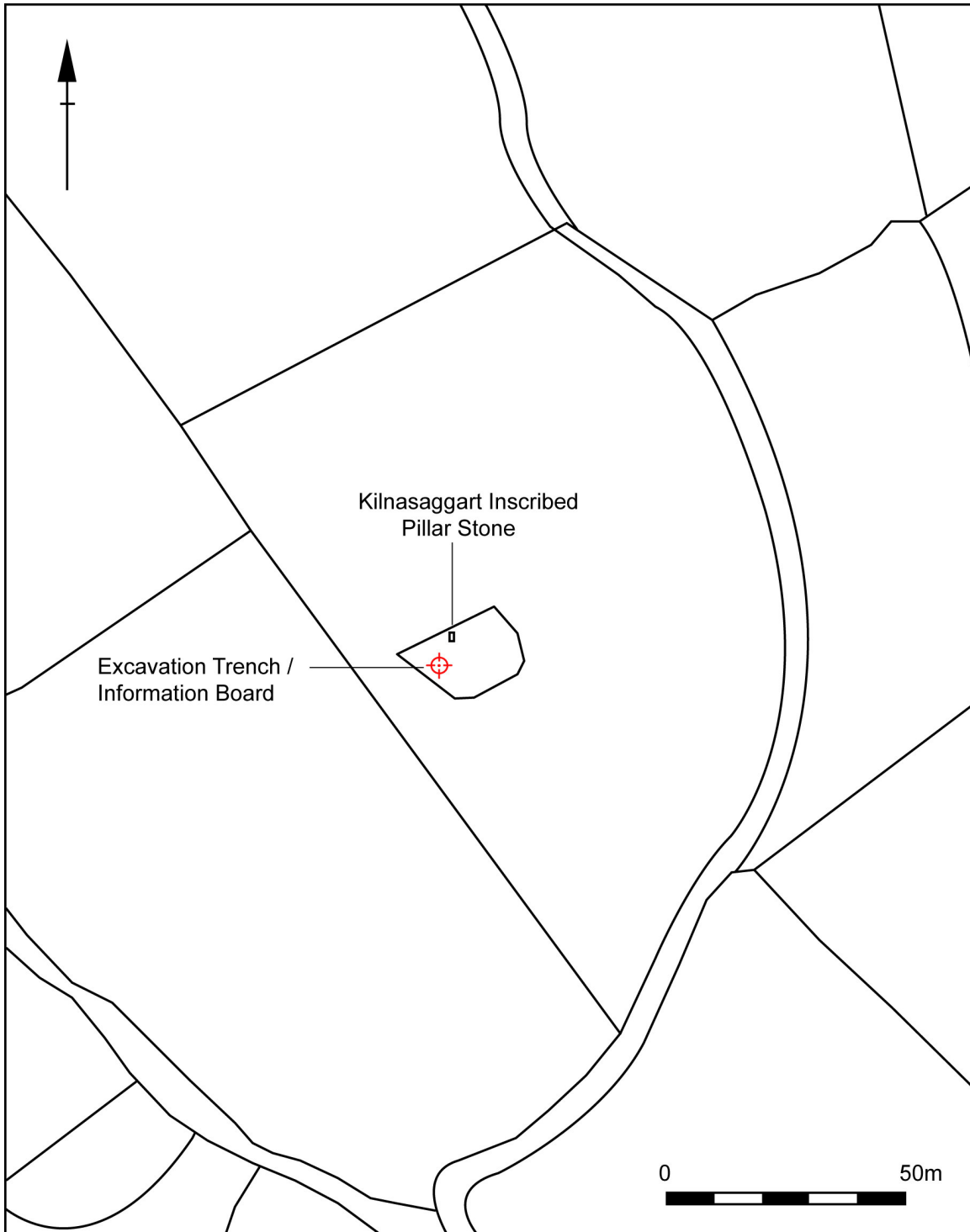


Figure One: Plan of approximate location of Kilnasaggart information board

Account of monitoring results.

A single trench was excavated for the installation of an information board at the site of the Kilnasaggart inscribed stone pillar. The site is enclosed by a bank and thorn hedge, believed to have been constructed in 1908 by local volunteers at the request of the County Louth Archaeological Society (Hamlin 1976, 519). The site was the subject to two seasons of excavation, in 1966 and 1968. The results of the excavations are summarized by Hamlin (1976, 519-522), who records the discovery of a number of Early Christian burials. The site and surrounding fields are scheduled and, as a result, scheduled monument consent was required for the placement of the information board. A small trench 0.3m x 0.3m and 0.7m in depth was excavated by hand, 8m to the southwest of the monument.

During the excavation two deposits were uncovered; a dark brown loam topsoil (Context Number 101), which extended to a depth of 0.3m, and underlying it a brown sandy loam subsoil (Context Number 102), which extended to the base of the trench at 0.7m. Occasional small stone inclusions were encountered during the excavation of both deposits. No evidence of any features was observed.

Towards the base of the trench (0.55m) a small fragment of human skull was retrieved from Context Number 102 (Small Find Number 001). At the required depth of 0.7m a small, irregular-shaped void was encountered in the south of the trench with the approximate dimensions of 0.1m x 0.1m. The base of the trench was covered with plastic sheeting to prevent any possible damage to underlying deposits, the information board was installed and the trench was carefully filled with concrete.

The fragment of human skull was not associated with any other finds, nor was evidence observed to suggest it was directly associated with either a cut feature or an otherwise undisturbed inhumation. It is probable that the find is a disarticulated fragment from an Early Christian burial similar to those uncovered elsewhere in the immediate vicinity of the inscribed pillar stone during the 1966 and 1968 excavations (Hamlin 1976, 519-522). It is possible that the small void uncovered at the base of the trench may be part of an undisturbed, stone-lined Early Christian burial, although the restricted size of the trench renders a more definite interpretation impossible.

The human skull fragment was reported to the Police Service Northern Ireland, Newry, County Armagh, who recorded the find of probable Early Christian origin and noted that no further action, on their behalf was necessary.

Bibliography:

Hamlin, A. E. 1976. *The Archaeology of Early Christianity in the North of Ireland*. (Unpublished Ph. D thesis, three volumes), Queen's University Belfast.

Archive:

Finds: Human bone, skull fragment (SFN. 001).

Photographs: 2 slide images held by CAF.

Plans / Drawings: None.

Signed: _____

Date: _____