



**Monitoring Report No. 23**  
Revised 25/08/05

**DEVENISH ISLAND  
LOWER LOUGH ERNE  
COUNTY FERMANAGH**

**AE/05/96**

**NICHOLAS BEER**



**Monitoring Report No. 023**

Devenish Island (SMR No. FER 211:020)  
Lower Lough Erne  
Co. Fermanagh  
Nicholas Beer  
AE/05/96

## Site Specific Information

*Site Name:* Devenish Island

*Townland:* Devenish Island/Lower Lough Erne

*SMR No:* FER 211:020

State Care  Scheduled  Other

*Grid Ref:* H 224469

*County:* Fermanagh

*Excavation Licence No:* AE/05/96

*Dates of Monitoring:* 11/08/05

*Archaeologist Present:* Nicholas Beer

*Brief Summary:* Monitoring carried out in advance of the erection of information panels, on behalf of Environment and Heritage Service.  
Nothing of archaeological significance encountered.

*Type of monitoring:* Eight trenches excavated by hand.

*Size of area opened:* Eight trenches no larger than 0.4 m x 0.5 m.

*Current Land Use:* Scheduled monument in State Care.

*Intended Land Use:* N/A

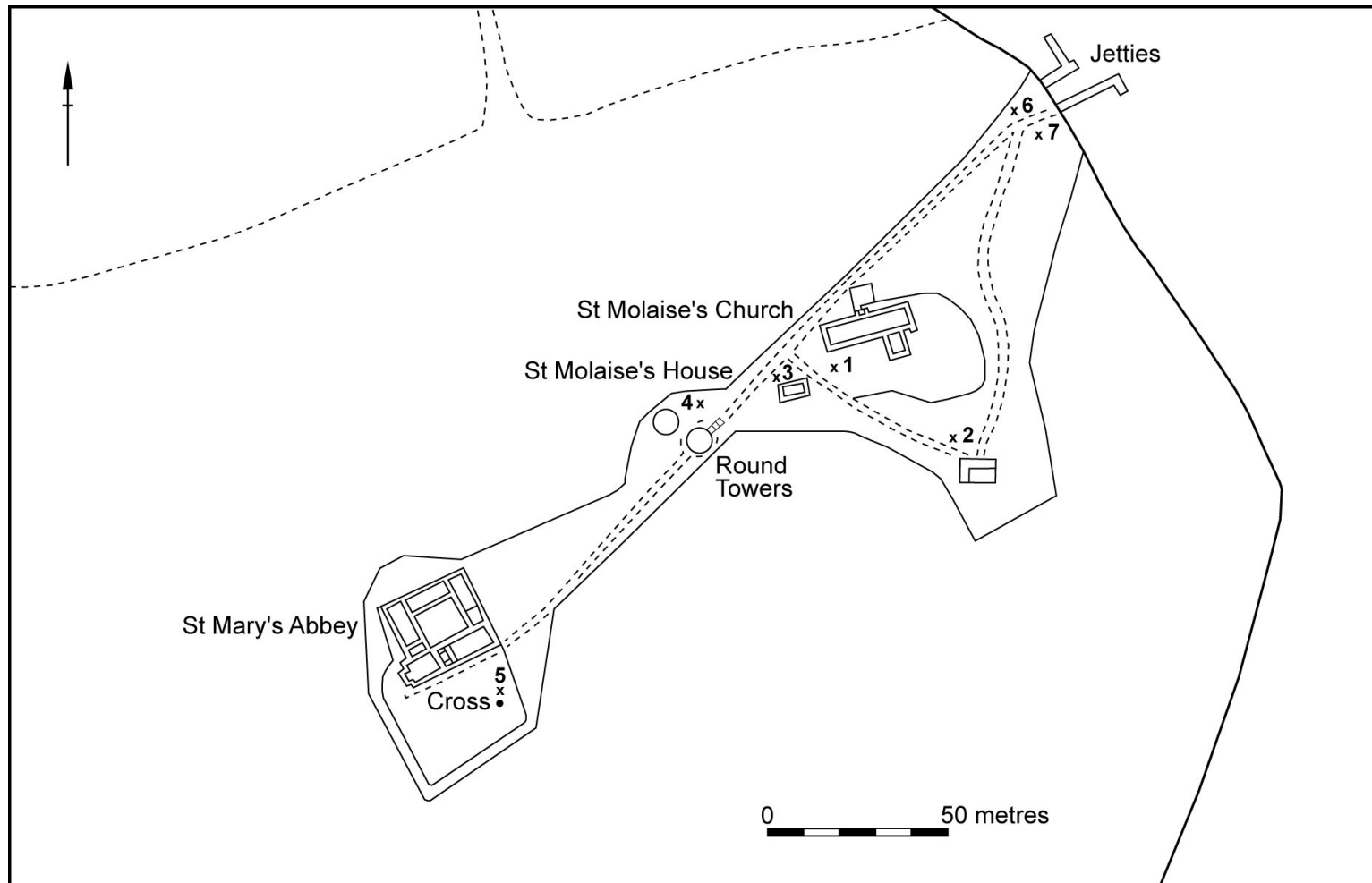


Fig. 1. Map illustrating the location of the seven trenches excavated at Devenish Island, Co. Fermanagh.

## **Account of monitoring results.**

A total of eight small trenches were excavated by hand for the installation of information panels on Devenish Island. The location of each trench (see Fig. 1) had been granted Scheduled Monuments Consent, by the Environment and Heritage Service, Northern Ireland. No archaeologically significant deposits or features were disturbed during the excavation of the trenches, however, a number of modern finds were recovered, a small amount of animal bone and a number of small fragments of human bone were recovered from Trench 5.

### **Trench 1**

A small trench (0.40m x 0.45m) was excavated to a depth of 0.55m for the installation of an information panel at Devenish Island, County Fermanagh. The information panel was located approximately 4m south of the south-western wall of St Molaise's Church (see Fig. 1.). During the excavation two deposits were discovered.

The first deposit (Context No. 101) was a brown loam topsoil, which extended to a depth of 0.05m. Underlying the topsoil (Context No. 101) was a brown loam deposit (Context No. 102) which contained a number of loose stones and unmodified flint nodules. This deposit extended to a depth of 0.55m, where excavation terminated (see Fig. 2.). A single piece of modern glass was recovered from the brown loam deposit (Context No. 102).

### **Trench 2**

A small trench (0.40m x 0.40m) was excavated to a depth of 0.50m for the installation of an information panel at Devenish Island, County Fermanagh. The information panel was located approximately 20m north of the Devenish Island visitor centre, 1m east of the footpath (see Fig. 1.). During the excavation two deposits were discovered.

The first deposit (Context No. 201) was a brown loam topsoil, which extended to a depth of 0.04m. Underlying the topsoil (Context No. 201) was a brown loam deposit (Context No. 202), this deposit extended to a depth of 0.50m, where excavation terminated (see Fig. 2.). A single sheep's tooth was recovered from within the brown loam (Context No. 202).

### **Trench 3**

A small trench (0.40m x 0.40m) was excavated to a depth of 0.5 m for the installation of an information panel at Devenish Island, County Fermanagh. The information panel was located 1m south of the footpath and approximately 3m north-west of St Molaise's House (see Fig. 1.). During the excavation three deposits were discovered.

The first deposit (Context No. 301) was a brown loam topsoil, which extended to a depth of 0.05m. Underlying the topsoil (Context No. 301) was a brown loam deposit (Context No. 302) which contained a number of loose stones and unmodified flint nodules. This deposit overlay a brown loam deposit (Context No. 303) that extended to at least 0.50m, where excavation terminated (see Fig. 2.). No finds were recovered from these deposits.

### **Trench 4**

A small trench (0.40m x 0.40m) was excavated to a depth of 0.5m for the installation of an information panel at Devenish Island, County Fermanagh. The information panel was located approximately 3m north of the round tower and 5m east of the second round tower's foundations (see Fig 1.). During the excavation two deposits were discovered.

The first deposit (Context No. 401) was a brown loam topsoil, which extended to a depth of 0.04m. Underlying the topsoil (Context No. 401) was a brown loam deposit (Context No. 402), which extended to a depth of 0.50m, where excavation terminated (see Fig. 2.). A small amount of animal bone was recovered from within the loam deposit (Context No. 402).

## **Trench 5**

A small trench (0.40m x 0.40m) was excavated to a depth of 0.50m for the installation of an information panel at Devenish Island, County Fermanagh. The information panel was located approximately 1m north of the plinth adjacent to the stone cross in the upper graveyard (see Fig. 1.). During the excavation four deposits were discovered.

The first deposit (Context No. 501) was a brown loam topsoil, which extended to a depth of 0.04m. Underlying the topsoil (Context No. 501) was a deposit (Context No. 502) which contained a number of loose stones and unmodified flint nodules and extended to a depth of 0.25m, this most likely represents a lense within the brown loam soil. Underlying the stoney lense (Context No. 502) was a brown loam subsoil deposit (Context No. 503), which in turn overlay a deposit containing a number of large stones (Context No. 504). This deposit was discovered at a depth of 0.50m at which level the excavation terminated (see Fig. 2.). A small amount of human bone was recovered from this trench including a probable fragment of human cranium (Dr. Colm Donnelly, pers comm.). The recovery of a number of unassociated fragments of human bone is not unexpected as this trench was located in the upper graveyard (see Fig. 1.). Confirmation of the exact nature of the human remains recovered will be undertaken by Dr Eileen Murphy (School of Geography, Archaeology and Palaeoecology, The Queen's University Belfast).

## **Trench 6**

A small trench (0.30m x 0.40m) was excavated to a depth of 0.50m for the installation of an information panel at Devenish Island, County Fermanagh. The information panel was located approximately 1m north of the footpath to the west of the jetty (see Fig. 1.). During the excavation two deposits were discovered.

The first deposit (Context No. 601) was a brown loam topsoil, which extended to a depth of 0.05 m. Underlying the topsoil (Context No. 601) was a sandy deposit (Context No. 602) which contained a number of beach rolled pebbles, this deposit extended to at least a depth of 0.50m, where excavation terminated (see Fig. 2.). A small amount of animal bone was recovered from within the sandy deposit (Context No. 602). It is probable that the sandy deposit (Context No. 602) is an old beach deposit probably from a period of increased water levels within the Lower Lough Erne.

## **Trench 7**

A small trench (0.3 m x 0.4 m) was excavated to a depth of 0.5 m for the installation of an information panel at Devenish Island, County Fermanagh. The information panel was located approximately 3m south of the footpath to the west of the jetty (see Fig. 1.). During the excavation two deposits were discovered.

The first deposit (Context No. 701) was a brown loam topsoil, which extended to a depth of 0.05 m. Underlying the topsoil (Context No. 701) was a sandy deposit (Context No. 702) which contained a number of beach rolled pebbles, this deposit extended to at least a depth of 0.50m, where excavation terminated (see Fig. 2.). A small amount of animal bone was recovered from within the sandy deposit (Context No. 702). It is probable that the sandy deposit (Context No. 702) is an old beach deposit probably from a period of increased water levels within the Lower Lough Erne.



## Trench 8

Although a total of eight excavation trenches were planned, the final interpretative panel which was located upon the south facing wall on the south-western corner of St Mary's Abbey (see Fig. 1.), was in the event, mounted upon a wall. As a result there was no need to excavate a foundation trench as the panel required no foundation post.

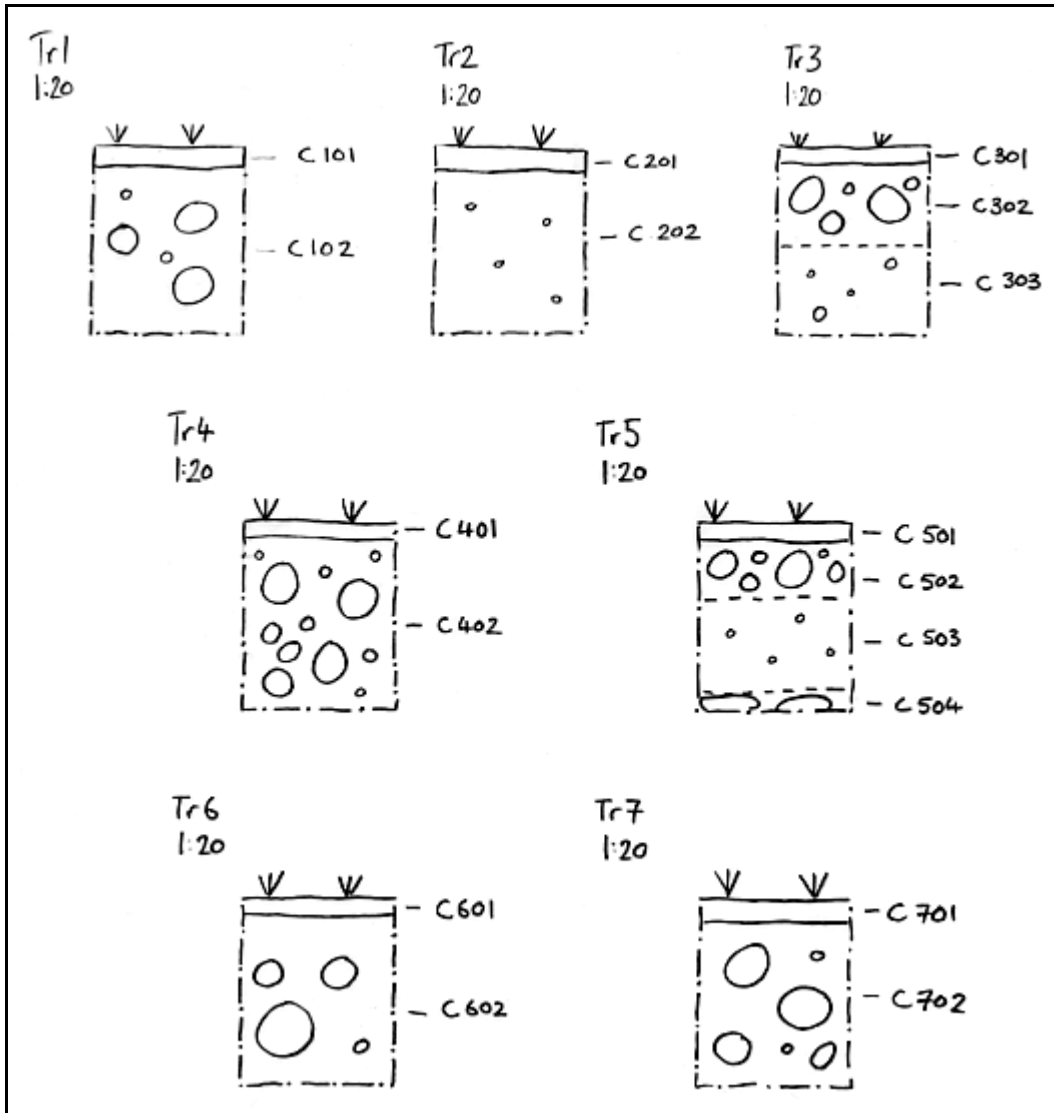


Fig. 2. Sketch sections of all Trenches excavated at Devenish Island.

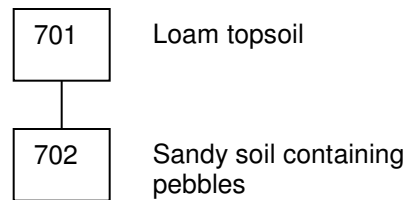
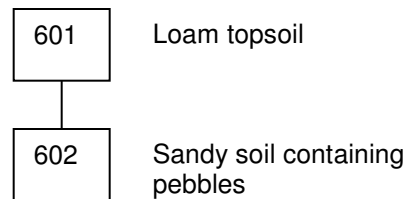
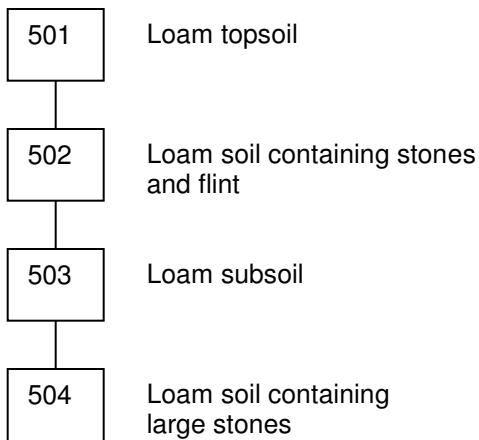
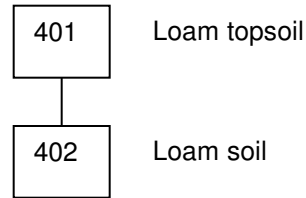
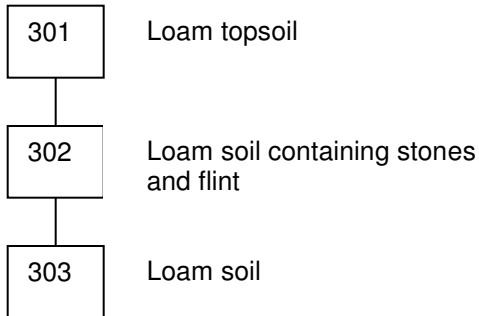
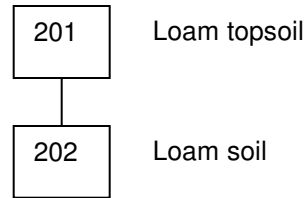
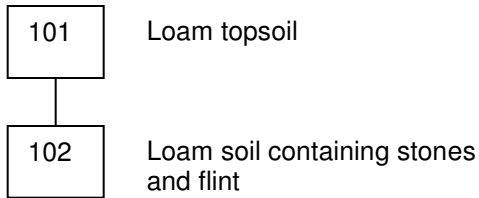
## **Site Stratigraphy**

It would appear that a number of the deposits within different trenches are analogous to each other. The topsoil deposits are the same across the entire site; Context Nos. 101, 201, 301, 401, 501, 601 and 701. The brown loam soil with stone and flint inclusions is present in a number of trenches; Context Nos. 102, 302 and 502. The brown loam soil deposit is present in a number of trenches; Context Nos. 202, 303, 402 and 503. Both the brown loam soil and the brown loam soil with stone and unmodified flint nodules probably represent a single heterogeneous subsoil type with uneven distribution of stone and flint inclusions which were recorded in the trenches as separate context Nos. The beach like sand deposit containing pebbles was present in two trenches; Context Nos. 602 and 702. It appears that those trenches excavated within the ecclesiastical site at Devenish Island contain similar stratigraphic sequences, whereas the two trenches near to the jetties on the east of the island (Trenches 6 and 7) were a probable raised beach stratigraphic sequence.

## Appendix One: Context Register

<b>Trench Number</b>	<b>Context Number</b>	<b>Description</b>
1	101	brown loam topsoil
1	102	brown loam deposit containing stones and unmodified nodules
2	201	brown loam topsoil
2	202	brown loam soil
3	301	brown loam topsoil
3	302	brown loam deposit containing stones and unmodified nodules
3	303	brown loam soil
4	401	brown loam topsoil
4	402	brown loam soil
5	501	brown loam topsoil
5	502	brown loam deposit containing stones and unmodified nodules
5	503	brown loam soil
5	504	brown loam soil containing large stones
6	601	brown loam topsoil
6	602	sandy deposit containing beach rolled pebbles
7	701	brown loam topsoil
7	702	sandy deposit containing beach rolled pebbles

## Appendix 2: Harris Matrices



### **Appendix Three: Archive**

***Finds:*** 1 piece modern glass (Context No. 102)

5 small bags animal bone (Context Nos. 202, 402, 503, 602, 702)

1 small bag human bone (Context No. 503)

***Photographs:*** 16 35mm print images held by CAF.

***Plans / Drawings:*** 7 sketch sections in site notebook.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_