

Background

Luas Citywest is the new 4.2km extension of the Luas Red Line (operating between The Point and Tallaght) at Belgard and running to Saggart. There are 5 new stops along this line at Fettercairn, Cheeverstown (Brookfield and Ard Mor), Citywest, Fortunestown and Saggart, as well as a Park & Ride facility at the Cheeverstown Stop.



Cheeverstown tower house in 1978 (Photo: H. Wheeler, National Monuments Service ©)

The **Railway Procurement Agency** carried out a number of archaeological investigations in advance and during construction of Luas Citywest.

Initially, an assessment of the potential impacts on the existing archaeological environment was undertaken by **Margaret Gowen & Company Ltd.** during 2006 and 2007. As part of this assessment, archaeological testing was carried out at the western extremity of Luas Citywest, an area falling within part of the historic village of Saggart and within c. 30m of a refurbished and altered medieval tower house (pictured on the front cover and inside). In September 2008, **Headland Archaeology Ltd.** carried out further archaeological testing along the route of Luas Citywest and following this, undertook archaeological monitoring of construction works during 2009 and 2010 in a number of areas that were inaccessible during the archaeological testing.

Although no new archaeological sites or artefacts were identified during the course of these investigations several interesting archaeological sites were highlighted in the surrounding landscape. Further research has

uncovered some fine archaeological objects that have been discovered in the vicinity of Luas Citywest, one of which is pictured below. This brochure describes these archaeological sites and objects.

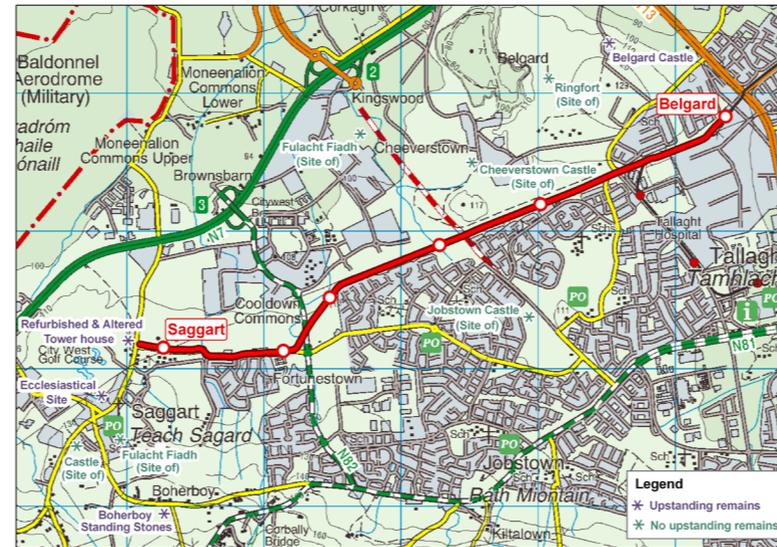
If you are interested in reading more about the background, methodologies and scope of archaeological investigations carried out for Luas Citywest please visit our website where you can download a copy of all professional reports at the following link:

<http://www.rpa.ie/en/rpa/archaeology/Pages/LuasCitywest.aspx>



Medieval bronze gaming piece (Photo: H. Roe (1945) reproduced by permission of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland ©)

LUAS CITYWEST



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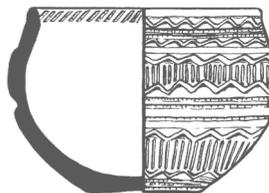
LUAS CITYWEST



An archaeological Landscape

Front cover

- TOP: Luas crossing the regenerated Nine Arches Viaduct in Milltown (Photo 'Suckindiesel'. From en.wikipedia, CC-BY-2.5)
- LEFT: Refurbished and altered medieval tower house, Saggart (Photo © F. Smith)
- CENTRE: Extract from John Rocque's map depicting the village of Saggart and surrounding area in 1760
- RIGHT: Drawing of a decorated Bronze Age bowl from a cist grave located on Tallaght Hill (Image © B. Ó Ríordáin & J. Waddell 1993)



Prehistoric Period



Pair of prehistoric standing stones, Boherboy. Slade Valley is visible in the background (Photo: K. Whitney, South Dublin Libraries ©)

Luas Citywest is overlooked by the delightful Dublin Mountains, which are home to numerous prehistoric funerary and ceremonial monuments ranging in date from the Neolithic to the Iron Age (4000 BC–400 AD). One has only to look at the Ordnance Survey Discovery Series map of this upland area to see the density of funerary monuments such as megalithic tombs, cairns, barrows and mounds marked in the surrounding landscape, many of which still have visible remains.

For example, the remains of a stone-lined cist grave, dating to the Bronze Age (2200–500 BC), with its large capstone lying to one side, can be seen on Tallaght Hill near De Selby Quarry, c. 2km from Luas Citywest.

This grave appears to be part of a cemetery, as in 1848 skeletal remains accompanied by a beautifully decorated Bronze Age ceramic bowl (a drawing of which is pictured on the front cover) were found in a cist grave under a low mound on the same hill and during this discovery other cist graves were noted in the area. The bowl is now in the National Museum of Ireland.

The low-lying plains, where Luas Citywest is located, would undoubtedly have housed the people who built the upland ceremonial sites and were buried in the funerary monuments. Although there is not much evidence,

traces have been uncovered in recent years of where they lived and worked. These include the remains of a Neolithic house dating to c. 3759–3659 BC uncovered in Kishoge, c. 4.5km to the north of Luas Citywest; the remains of a *fulacht fiadh* or burnt mound in Brownsbarn, c. 900m north of Luas Citywest and a trough from a burnt mound located in Moneyatta Commons, just south of Saggart village.

These burnt mound sites predominantly date to the Bronze Age, although increasingly examples are being identified from earlier and later periods. Water was heated at these sites, which could then be used for a variety of purposes such as cooking, washing clothes, bathing or for use in a sauna or sweat house, and for industrial activities such as leather working and dyeing clothes.

Another prehistoric site, consisting of two large standing stones set in the ground c. 1.6m apart (pictured above, left) and known locally as 'Adam and Eve', is located c. 1.2km from Saggart village on the Boherboy Road. They most probably date to the Bronze Age; their exact date and original function, however, remains unknown. They could be burial markers, memorials to the lost dead or the remains of another type of prehistoric burial monument such as a portal tomb. Alternatively, they could be memorials to some long forgotten event, the location of a prehistoric ceremonial or ritual site, or markers of an ancient routeway passing through Slade Valley which is located c. 1.3km to the southwest of the standing stones and c. 3.5km south of Saggart Stop in the Dublin Mountains.

There is also a reference in St. John Joyce's book *'The Neighbourhood of Dublin'* to a ring of pure gold being found between Saggart and Rathcoole in 1387 AD. Due to its estimated value Joyce surmises that this must have been of considerable size and hence may have been one of the gold torcs, of which many examples are now on view in the National Museum of Ireland. These gold ornaments range in date from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age.

Historic Period

The advent of Christianity in the 5th century AD heralded a new age in Ireland, known as the Early Medieval period, which lasted until the arrival of the Anglo-Normans in 1169 AD. For the first time written evidence survives, adding a new dimension to the archaeological record.

Saggart was, during this period, the site of a Christian settlement and derives its name from the abbot, *Mo-Sacra*, who reputedly founded a monastery here in the 7th century. Evidence of this Christian settlement can still be seen today within the grounds of Saggart Cemetery, just a short stroll from the Saggart Stop.

In the cemetery's southern extent are the remains of a probable early Christian enclosure surrounding the ruined foundations (now largely covered by grass) of a church built sometime during the Medieval period (late 12th century–early 16th century AD). John Rocque's map drawn in 1760 (pictured on the front cover) labels this church as already in ruins by the 18th century.

Located a short distance from the medieval church foundations, near the cemetery's western perimeter wall, is a granite grave slab decorated with a double-headed ringed-cross (pictured above, right). A roll moulding is also visible around the edges and the slab has been shaped to taper slightly. The decoration appears to indicate a 10th century date, although a 13th/14th century



Early medieval stone cross (Photo: Patrick Healy Collection, South Dublin Libraries ©)



Grave slab in Saggart Cemetery (Drawing: P. Ó hÉailidhe (1973) reproduced by permission of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland ©)

date has also been suggested. The grave slab is currently set upright in the ground, however, originally it would probably have been a recumbent slab, lying flat on the ground with the decorated surface facing upwards. An early medieval stone cross can also be seen within the cemetery, decorated with a ringed-cross on one side (pictured to the left) and a very worn ringed-cross on the other side near the broken end of the shaft.

Following the arrival of the Anglo-Normans in 1169 AD, who brought with them new building types, new systems of land organisation and agrarian developments, the character of the Irish landscape changed. There was also widespread warfare between the new arrivals and the Irish tribal clans during this period.

The lands surrounding Luas Citywest were situated just within the boundaries of an area under the direct control of the Anglo-Normans, later to be known as the Pale. As a result, this area suffered greatly throughout the Medieval period from the wars between the Irish tribes and the inhabitants of the Pale. In one 13th century historical document, Saggart and its environs are referred to as "the lands of war" and the village is recorded as suffering from successive raids and burnings by the O'Byrne's and O'Toole's.

Historic Period

These troublesome times necessitated the construction of defensible and fortified dwellings that could withstand the successive raids. A number of these fortified dwellings or tower houses were built in the area during this period. Saggart had two, of which the refurbished and altered remains of one are still visible today, c. 220m from the Saggart Stop (pictured to the right and on the front cover). There was also a fortified dwelling in each of the townlands of Cheeverstown, Jobstown and Belgard. The 15th–16th century tower house at Cheeverstown, located within Belgard Quarry, was still standing in 1978 (pictured overleaf), however, as at Jobstown, there are no visible remains there now.

Belgard medieval tower house (pictured below, right) has been altered through successive generations, note the 18th century battlements and Gothic windows. It is also incorporated into an 18th century mansion, which is now the headquarters of Cement-Roadstone Holdings.

Also dating to the Medieval period is a small bronze gaming piece (c. 4.6cm in diameter) found at Swiftbrook House, Saggart during the 1940's and decorated with an antlered stag (pictured overleaf). This may have been associated with Saggart's second castle, located nearby. There are now no visible remains of this castle. Close by, however are the remains of a former mill pond, which is a strong reminder of the industrial heritage of Saggart. This former mill pond was part of the Swiftbrook Paper Mills which was founded in 1760. The paper mill became very well known for its Ancient Irish Vellum and Erin brands and was an important employer in the village of Saggart.

Another significant part of the area's industrial heritage was the Dublin and Blessington Steam Tram which opened for service in 1888. This tramline was, for the most part, constructed on the already existing public road or its verge and its rolling stock comprised double deck passenger wagons pulled by small steam powered locomotives as well as a number of commercial wagons. At Terenure it connected with horse drawn trams travelling onwards to the city centre.



Saggart tower house prior to refurbishment (Photo: H. Wheeler (1978) National Monuments Service ©)

The tramway had two stops close to Saggart; The Jobstown Inn Stop and The Embankment Stop. This latter stop was a great advantage for Swiftbrook Paper Mills, located to the immediate south of Saggart village, which could avail of the tramway services to transport materials to and from Dublin city. The tramway continued to service this area for almost half a century providing much needed infrastructural support for both the rural and commercial economy as well as enhancing the daily lives of the local communities. However, a combination of the effects of the First World War, the Irish Civil War and the advent and increasing popularity of more modern kinds of transport, saw the Dublin and Blessington Steam Tram gradually go into decline. By 1932 the last tram had travelled along this route and the line closed for service in December of that year.



Belgard medieval tower house (Photo: F. Smith, RPA)