

**Kathy Sinnott, MEP,
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1st October 2007.

Dear Ms Sinnott,

Thank you for your letter of the 19th September 2007. Unfortunately, Ms. Dáire O'Rourke, is on extended leave of absence at the moment, and I am acting in her capacity.

Human remains have been found on a number of archaeological sites on the M3 Clonee-North of Kells Motorway Scheme. In the Gabhra Valley these include Collierstown 1 and Lismullin 1.

Collierstown was discovered to be a forgotten early medieval burial site probably dated to between the 5th – 7th centuries AD. The remains of sixty-two individuals buried in the Christian fashion – extended inhumations oriented West-East - were uncovered and fully archaeologically excavated.

The disarticulated and partial remains of two individuals were uncovered adjacent the early medieval souterrain at Lismullin. These remains have not yet been scientifically dated however the stratigraphic evidence currently suggests that they are more likely to be associated with early medieval or later activity on site rather than an earlier period.

To date none of these burials have been dated to the period between 300BC-300AD, however post-excavation analysis is ongoing and this includes an extensive programme of scientific dating.

To date only one artefact has been tentatively dated to the early centuries AD, which may overlap with the time period of your interest. This artefact is a ringed pin currently interpreted as being of late Iron Age date, from a kiln at Lismullin 1. A photo of this pin has been published and can be viewed on the NRA website.

The number of archaeological sites found on this section of the route, which passes through the Gabhra Valley, is broadly consistent with the number of sites found on the remainder of the M3 scheme, and with other road projects in Co. Meath and throughout Ireland. Sites do not occur evenly spaced along the route however the number of sites found equates to between 1.5-2.8 sites per km of road or a site every 400-600m.

This and other information is publicly available on the NRA's website and the scheme website www.m3motorway.ie.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Swan', written over a horizontal line.

Rónán Swan,
Acting Head of Archaeology.