

# The metal objects at Termonfeckin, Co. Louth (17E0663)

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## **Introduction**

Archaeological research ahead of construction work at Termonfeckin, Co. Louth uncovered several late medieval ditches and pits (Giacometti 2018). These yielded several iron objects and a strip of copper-alloy. It is unclear if the objects are related to the nearby forge implied by the metalworking waste (Rondelez 2018).

## **Description of the objects**

Two of the iron objects, a square-headed nail (Fig. 1) and a twisted flat iron bar (Fig. 2) were recovered from large pit C15 which also contained organic material, metallurgical waste and late medieval pottery. Two iron bars bolted together at one end (Fig. 3), likely a piece of machinery, was also found in the same pit but was considered to be of modern date.

Another iron nail, round-headed (Fig. 4), was found in fill C54 of ditch C53 together with late medieval pottery, two small pieces of slag and animal bone.

From fill C57 in ditch C31 came an iron hook (Fig. 5), late medieval pottery and animal bone while the only find from fill C44 in nearby small pit C43 was a bent square-sectioned iron bar (Fig. 6). The widenings at both ends of this bar appear to be corrosion product.

Fill C34 within ditch C33 yielded a narrow strip of copper-alloy material with a pointed and curved end (Fig. 7). This could be either a crudely made hook or a piece of production waste. This fill contained a large quantity of iron smithing slag (Rondelez 2018) and late medieval pottery. Radiocarbon analysis on a charred seed from fill C34 returned a 13<sup>th</sup>-century date.

## **Interpretation and conclusions**

The assemblage of metal objects is limited and not out of the ordinary for a late medieval settlement. It is unclear if the objects would have been used or produced in the nearby forge implied by the metalworking waste (Rondelez 2018). If the copper alloy object is indeed production waste then this aspect of the metalworking activities was not reflected in the other metalworking remains (ibid.).

## **Bibliography**

Giacometti A. 2018 *Termonfeckin Preliminary Stratigraphic Report – 17E663*. Unpublished Preliminary Report, Archaeoplan Ltd.

Rondelez P. 2018 *The metalworking remains at Termonfeckin, Co. Louth (17E0663)*. Unpublished specialist report, the author.

**Descriptive catalogue**



*Fig. 1. Find (15:1). Square headed iron nail. Length of shaft: 37mm, diameter of shaft: 5mm. width of nail head: 15mm, thickness of nail head: 7mm.*



*Fig. 2. Find (15:2). Flat, slightly twisted iron bar. Length: 65mm, width: 12-16mm, thickness: 4mm*



*Fig. 3. Find (15:3). Possible piece of machinery. Two flat bars of iron bolted together at one end. Length of longest bar: 95mm, width of long bar: 14-17mm, thickness of long bar: 5-6mm, length of short bar: 90mm, width of short bar: 14-16mm, thickness of short bar: 5mm. diameter of bolt: 23mm, thickness of bolt: 21mm*



*Fig. 4. Find (54:54). Round-headed nail. Length of shaft: 28mm, diameter of shaft: 7mm, diameter of nail head: 17mm, thickness of nail head: 11mm.*



*Fig. 5. Find (57:41). Iron hook. Length of shaft: 45mm, width of shaft: 15mm, thickness of shaft: 5mm, diameter of hook: 25mm, width of hook: 15mm, thickness of hook: 9mm.*



*Fig. 6. Find (44:1). Bent square-sectioned iron bar. Length of bar: 105mm, thickness of bar: 7mm*



*Fig. 7. Find (34:67). Copper alloy strip with curved end. Length of strip: 57mm, width of strip: 1-4mm, thickness of strip: 1-2mm*