

Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork

School of Geography, Archaeology and Palaeoecology

Queen's University Belfast



Excavations at Elagh Castle
CAF Data Structure Report No. 99

Data Structure Report: Elagh Castle

Cormac McSparron

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Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| 1.0 Introduction, summary and acknowledgements | 1 |
| 2.0 Location and Physical Description of the Site | 2 |
| 3.0 Historical Background | 3 |
| 3.1 Introduction | 3 |
| 3.2 Where is Aileach? | 3 |
| 3.3 Aileach in Medieval Irish Sources | 6 |
| Aileach in the Annals | |
| Aileach in the Metrical Dindshenchas | |
| Aileach in Late Medieval Gaelic praise poetry | |
| Other Irish references to Aileach | |
| Discussion of the Medieval historical references to Aileach | |
| 3.4 References in English sources to Elagh Castle in the 16th and 17th Centuries | 13 |
| Map evidence | |
| Discussion of the Post-Medieval evidence for Elagh Castle | |
| 3.5 Previous Archaeological Investigations at Elagh Castle | 17 |
| 4.0 Description of the Excavations | |
| 4.1 Excavation of Trench 3 | |
| Artefacts from Trench 3 | |
| 4.2 Description of the excavation of Trench 4 | |
| Artefacts from Trench 4 | |
| 4.3 Description of the excavation of Trench 5 | |
| Artefacts from trench 5 | |
| 5.0 Discussion | 24 |
| 6.0 Conclusion | 26 |
| 7.0 Recommendations for Further Work | 27 |
| 8.0 Bibliography | 28 |

1.0 Introduction and summary

Elagh Castle survives as a partially collapsed masonry tower constructed upon a rocky outcrop overlooking the city of Derry / Londonderry and the Pennyburn depression to its west. It was in the later middle ages the main castle and residence of the O'Docherty's, although it is uncertain if they were the, original, builders of the castle, it seeming more likely that the existing remains were built in the 14th century before the O'Docherty's held the surrounding territory. The remains which we can see today are really the last phase of continuous activity at Elagh Castle stretching back to the very beginning of the Early Medieval Period when the site of Elagh Castle is likely to have been Aileach, the capital of the Cenél nEógain, one of the most important royal sites of Ireland.

In Summer 2013 a large community excavation was held at Elagh, as part of the Derry / Londonderry City of Culture. The excavation commenced on 12th August and finished on on 2nd September. The Community component of the Excavation commenced on 15th August and continued through to the 30th August. The days either side of the community component were used to put site infrastructure in place, layout the excavation trenches and backfill the site at the end. The excavation was carried out by the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, at Queen's University Belfast, in partnership with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency and supported by Derry City Council and the Tower Museum.

The excavation concentrated on three areas:

- an area to the south of the rock outcrop where field examination and geophysical survey had indicated the possible presence of an enclosure (Trench 3)

- an area to the southwest of the rocky outcrop where it was believed there may have been upstanding traces of the base of a curving wall (Trench 4)

- an area to the north of the rock outcrop where geophysical survey had indicated the possible presence of masonry (Trench 5)

The excavation revealed a large ditch and stone faced bank enclosing the site in the area excavated to the south of the trench (Trench 3). The stone faced bank was located on top of post-holes and stake-holes which may indicate the presence of an even earlier enclosure around the site. This bank and ditch, while providing no datable artefacts from archaeologically secure strata, is typical of the type of enclosure you would expect to find around a high status Early Medieval site.

On the summit of the site excavation revealed the presence of a largely robbed out stone wall and a rock cut gully (Trench 4). There was also a layer of compact material, on the north side of the robbed out wall which had the appearance of a surface, possibly the , rather disturbed, earthen floor of a building.

The excavation to the north of the site uncovered a large foundation filled with carefully chosen, well sorted, large rectangular blocks (Trench 5). This may indicate the foundation course of a very large masonry structure, probably a bawn (curtain wall) or associated structure around the later Medieval Castle.

All the trenches revealed fascinating and tantalising results which it is hoped can be built upon by future research.

Acknowledgements

This project could not have taken place if it hadn't been been

2.0 Location and Physical Description of the site

Location

Elagh Castle (LDY 14A: 003) is located in the townland of Elaghmore (C4158021650) , 5km from the centre of Derry / Londonderry (Fig 1). The site sits within an area of particularly rich agricultural land which runs from Elagh Castle north and west into Co. Donegal. The landscape gently slopes downwards to the south, into Derry City itself and towards the Pennyburn Depression, a low lying area which, until modern times, was an area of bog and wetlands, difficult to traverse, and which formed the boundary of Inishowen (Lacey 2001, 146). There are good views from Elagh Castle to the West, South and East. Views to the north are obscured by rising ground. Although there is not an unbroken view to the southeast it is possible to view the Sperrin Mountains, a distance of approximately 20 miles.

The topsoil is rich well drained loam sitting above a Dalradian schist bedrock. This mixture is excellent for all types of agriculture, being suitable for both pastoral and arable farming with currently simultaneous use of the fields around the site for potatoes, cereal crops, and as pasture for both cattle and sheep.

Physical Description of the site

Elagh Castle as it exists today is a fragment of a stone tower constructed upon an outcrop of Dalradian schist (Fig 2). The outcrop is roughly oval, measuring 25m north to south and 35m east to west. The tower is approximately 6m in width, 2m in thickness and 8m in height. There has been speculation since Davies and Sway (1939,204) that the existing tower is one of a pair making a gatehouse between them. On the northeast face there is a slot which has been suggested may be a portcullis slot (Jope *et al* 1950, 86 and McNeill 1997, 163). This implies the existence of a second tower to the northwest to make a double "D" gatehouse. However it has recently been reinterpreted by McNeill (Dr Tom McNeill, pers comm). McNeill now suggests that the slot visible on the northeast of the tower may be a latrine chute, and that a potential second "D" tower would have stood to the west of the existing tower. This negates the need for a second tower constructed to the northeast where the outcrop does not extend. On the inside face of the tower there are indications of structures attaching to it. There is a vague impression of a staircase, although this may be illusory. At the top of the tower there are a number of masonry fragments, unfortunately obscured by plant growth, which are reminiscent of crenellations, an impression supported by a sketch by Captain William Smith (Figure 3), initially drawn in 1802 and reproduced in the Ordnance Survey of County Londonderry (Colby 1837, 236).

The fragment of tower reveals two separate faces to the structure, an earlier face and a later outer face, which has a pronounced batter. The outer face is decorated with a row of larger stones towards its top, however there are no other architectural features, such as arrow loops, visible from the outside of the structure.

Comparison has been drawn between Elagh Castle and Harry Avery's Castle, located about 22 miles or 36km south of Elagh Castle (Jope *et al*. 1950). It consists of two, partially intact semi-circular towers constructed on top of a mound of gravel, sitting proud in an otherwise flat plain. The mound is slightly larger than Elagh's, measuring approximately 40m both north-south and east-west. There is somewhat more survival of masonry than at Elagh. Around the mound a curtain wall was constructed and, possibly, the interior of the mound levelled to produce a courtyard (Jope *et al*. 1950, 81) Two

towers are reasonably intact, compared to Elagh Castle, with evidence of a doorway between the two towers, a latrine chute and two windows facing outwards (*ibid*, 84). Jope noted that it was not a true gatehouse, as it had not a direct entry into the courtyard / mound but rather a towerhouse, in the form of a gatehouse, leading through to a courtyard. Direct entrance to the courtyard was probably provided by a door to the northeast of the mound between the main towers and a fragment of a smaller projecting tower (Jope *et al.* 1950, 82). Jope suggests that Elagh, which he believes to be a copy of English double “D” gatehouses, was the prototype for Harry Avery's castle (*ibid*, 90). This may be the case but Elagh Castle is, as we have noted above, a multiphase monument, with an inner and an outer masonry skin and it seems that it has existed in one form and been adapted to look like something else.

The date of the construction of Elagh Castle, as it currently stands is uncertain. Part of this uncertainty stems from the fact that so little of the building actually survives. The assumptions of the original form and nature of the tower are plausible but with disagreements as to where the second tower “D” might be and the nature of the portcullis (or is it a latrine chute), alternative interpretations are possible. Also the only depiction of the castle which appears to be an *actual representation* of the intact structure, Ashby's Map (Fig 4) (Hayes McCoy 1964), doesn't appear to show a double “D” gatehouse at all, just a courtyard with four large towers surrounding a two storey building.

Running around the castle are portions of a curving field wall revetted on the outside with field stones, the ground level on the interior, especially to the west and south of the monument, slightly higher than the exterior. This curving field wall was first highlighted by Marks (1999), who suggested that it marked an enclosure, what she termed the “middle enclosure” around the monument (*ibid*, 5).

3.0 Historical Background

3.1 Introduction

There is an enormous wealth of historical references, mythology, folklore and early map making which seem to refer in one way, or another, to Elagh Castle. The references come in several separate types of documents and in several different contexts. There are annalistic references to Aileach (or some similar variant) in all the main Irish annals beginning in the fifth century and continuing into the thirteenth century. There are also references to Aileach in the Metrical Dindshenchas, a collection of poetical tales relating how various places in the Irish Landscape got their name. Aileach is mentioned several times in late Medieval Gaelic Praise poetry. These praise poems are all fanciful to one degree or another but they confirm its status as one of the great royal sites of Ireland and in one case imply that royal inauguration happened there.

In the later 16th century, when Aileach was occupied by the O'Docherty's, Aileach, now with a name closer to its modern form Elagh Castle, appears in the texts of English. At this stage it was the chief residence of the O'Docherty family and possibly had some sort of village or town type settlement close to it.

3.2 Where is Aileach?

Since the Ordnance Survey of County Londonderry (Colby 1837) a number of writers have associated Aileach, the capital of the Cenel Eogain, with the Grianan located on a hilltop in Co. Donegal, a short distance from Derry / Londonderry. This association is based on a number of separate pieces of evidence. Although not explicitly stated Colby seems to have an almost romantic desire to directly associate the more visually impressive Grianan with the tales of Aileach. He cites Gaelic sources which closely associate the Grianan with Aileach. Colby notes in Cormacan's "The circuit of Muircheartach mac Neill" a reference in a stanza to both Aileach and Grianan of Aileach in the next line

"You broughtest them all to Aileach
Into the Splendid Grianan of horses" (*ibid*, 222)

He cites also a reference to a poem by the eleventh century poet Flann which notes the proximity of Aileach to the "eastern shore", which Colby takes to mean Lough Swilly, indicating, in his view, that the Grianan, located about 4km from Lough Swilly, is likely to be Aileach (Colby 1837, 223). In the same stanza Flann notes the presence of a rath around Aileach, which since no rath was known around Elagh Castle at that time, (although our excavations have now uncovered a large enclosure, possibly of Early Medieval date around Elagh Castle) Colby takes as evidence that the Grianan, which has traces of outer enclosures, is Aileach. Colby noted also that the masonry remains at Elagh Castle are later Medieval while those at Grianan are more ancient.

At the time Colby's assertions were controversial. As early as 1838 the Dublin City Magazine published a note by the quasi-anonymous "W. B. _____" contesting Colby's assertion. It suggested that the Dindshenchas reference to Aileach as being in the proximity of Lough Foyle, suggests that Elagh Castle is the likely site of Aileach and that if the Grianan was a military structure, as Colby believed, its location was much less defensible than that of Elagh Castle.

By the early 20th century Colby's identification had entered the mainstream and the conventional view, as expressed by Hogan (1932), was that Aileach and the Grianan were one and the same.

However some still wondered. Morris (1936) was more equivocal, not wanting to dispute that association of Aileach and the Grianan but asserting that it was to Elaghmore (meaning the site of Elagh Castle) that Muirchertach repaired after his circuit of Ireland in 941 and not Grianan (*ibid*, 29).

From Warner (1983) onwards there has been a return to the view that Aileach was, at least at one stage, located at the site of Elagh Castle, which is, of course, within the townland of Elaghmore, which name itself is a strong indication of Elagh Castle's association with Aileach. Lacy (2001, 146) suggested that "proof" that Grianan could not be the original Aileach could be found in the fact that Grianan was outside the Early Medieval borders of Inishowen, something which modern roads and drainage of bogs and marshes has obscured. He suggested however that the Cenél nEógain, as they expanded territorially in the later eighth century pushed into land formerly occupied by the Cenél Conaill (*ibid*, 148) and may at that stage have constructed the imposing Grianan and made it their new Aileach. Lacy's general point was supported by Tierney (2003) who used 16th century praise poems of the O'Dohertys and MacDiarmadas to suggest that, at least in the 16th century, Gaelic authors identified the site of Aileach as Elagh Castle and not the Greenan.

A point, implicitly recognised by many writers but explicitly recognised by Lacy (2001) is that Aileach is not the name of one place but a name which means different things in different contexts. Lacy notes four ways in which it is used

- i the "capital" of the Cenél nEógain
- ii the sub-kingdom of the Cenél nEógain
- iii the over-kingdom of the northern Uí Neill
- iv the townland names of Elaghmore and adjoining Elaghbeg in Co. Donegal

Its name is used both literally and poetically depending on context and the overwhelming majority of references to Aileach in ancient texts are simply the mention of individuals who were kings "of Aileach".

While Lacy's contention that the Cenél nEógain moved their capital to Grianan is by no means impossible, there is no firm evidence for it. The strongest evidence was the presence of a significant early Medieval monument at Grianan and the apparent absence of one at Elagh Castle (an absence possibly being challenged by this excavation). By the time of the expansion of the Cenél nEógain, they certainly controlled Grianan, and may have built the cashel there, but whether they transferred their capital to this spot remains uncertain.

The placename Elaghmore and the belief in the 16th century poems of Tadhg Dall Ó Huiginn (Knott 1922) that Elagh Castle is the site of Aileach, suggest that in the Later Middle Ages it was believed to be the site of Aileach. It is interesting to note that in this poem, which we will discuss further below, Ó Huiginn implies that it is Aileach which brings honour on the O'Dochertys and not the other way around. This means that the O'Dochertys, important lords as they undoubtedly were, had to define themselves by the existing historical and literary topography and would not have been able, as Colby suggested, to have shifted the name Aileach, from the Grianan, to a location which suited them better.

3.3 *Aileach from Medieval Irish Sources*

Aileach in the annals

There are dozens of references to Aileach in the various Irish annals. The vast majority of these are references to some activity or other of a member of the *cenél nEógain* who had the title “King of Aileach”. There are a number of references to Aileach the place or to activities at Aileach however.

The earliest annalistic reference to Aileach, in the form of a reference to a King of Aileach, is from the Annals of Tigernach for 489

“The battle of Cellosnad in Mag Fea, wherein fell Aongus son of Nadfraech and his wife, and Ethne the Horrible, daughter of Cremthann son of Éanna Cennselach. The victors were Illann son of Dungal and his brother Ailill, and Eochaidh the Wounder, and Muircheartach, son Erc, king of Ailech.” (Stokes 1993, 120)

The earliest annalistic reference to Aileach as an actual place is from 676 AD where the Annals of Ulster relates the

“Destruction of Ailech Frigrenn by Fínnechta” (MacAirt and MacNiocaill 1983, 145).

Almost identical references are to be found in the Annals of Inishfallen and Tigernach.

In the successive centuries most of the references to Aileach are to the activities of “Kings of Aileach”.

At the end of the ninth and in the tenth centuries the Kings of Aileach were active against the Vikings. The Annals of the Four masters, but not the other annals, relate the sacking of Aileach in 900AD by the “Foreigners”. This exclusive entry in this late compilation is unusual ,but it's significance, if any, is uncertain (O'Donovan 1854, 562).

In 939 the Annals of Ulster relate a Viking raid on Aileach and the capture and later ransom of the King of Aileach, Muirchertach Mac Niall(MacAirt and MacNiocaill 1983, 389). It is not made clear however if it the actual site of Aileach or the kingdom around it, which is attacked.

The next reference to the place Aileach is in 1101/2 when it was sacked by Muircheartach ua Briain

“An expedition was made by Muirchertach ua Briain and by Leth Moga into Connacht, and over Eas Ruaidh into Tír Eógain, and they razed Ailech and burned and outraged many churches also, including Fathain of Muru and Ard Sratha. They went thereafter over Fertas Camsa and burned Cúl Rathain and committed slaughter there. They afterwards took the hostages of the Ulaid. They went home over Slige Midluachra” (ibid, 539).

Interestingly the entry for this event in the Annals of the Four Masters refers to the destruction of “Grianan-Oiligh” (O'Donovan 1854, 969), one of only a handful of usages of this term in Gaelic texts.

Annalistic references continued to be made concerning kings of Aileach until 1251 when the Annals of Ulster relate the death of

“Ardghal Ua Flaithbertaigh royal heir of Ailech, candle of the championship and hospitality of the North of Ireland” (MacCarthy 1893, 314).

After this date there are no further annalistic references to Aileach which may be a reflection of the beginnings of an desire by the Cenél nEógain, the leading dynasty of whom were becoming the O'Neills, to see themselves as kings of Ulster rather than Ailech.

Aileach in the Metrical Dindshenchas

The Metrical Dindshenchas contain three poems which tell of the origins of Aileach. These poems are all relatively late, the Dindshenchas being a twelfth century compilation (ref) and as such they must be used with caution, being a collection of folklore, myth and invention frequently composed to fit a contemporary political agenda.

The first poem (Gwynn 1903, 93) concerning Aileach tells the tale of the slaying of Aed, the son of the Dagda, by Corrgend of Cruach. Corrgend, to make amends, constructs a tomb for Aed. He chooses a huge stone from the shores of the lough and carries it to the place of the tombs construction where upon he makes a cry “Ail” followed by “Ach” and expires. The place named from that day after his death cry.

The fortification at Aileach was, according to the poem, constructed by Imchell the castle builder, around the grave of Aed. The poem suggested that sometimes the place was called Aileach Imchell and notes that it is the dwelling place of the war gods Nemain and Neit.

This poem mentions a second name for Aileach, Aileach Fingrenn, a place noted in all the main annals as being destroyed in 676. The poem states it as having been built in the “midst of Aileach of the kings”, by Frigriu, a Pict, for Aileac, the daughter of a King of Scotland. This Aileach Fingrenn was later seized by Eoghan and Eoghan’s ownership of it blessed by St Patrick. It is uncertain from this text if this is a second structure within the landscape of Aileach or a second building within Aileach’s enclosure.

The third poem concerning Aileach (Gwynn 1903, 101)(which we will discuss here out of sequence because of how it elaborates what is in the first poem)makes plain that Aileach Fingrenn is a second name for Aileach rather than a separate site. It suggests that Aileach is given to Aileac the daughter of Ubthaire “the high king of Scotland “ who had eloped with Frigru going from Kintyre to “the Ulaid’s land”, to protect them from Ubthaires vengeance. The poem also repeats the story of Aed and Corrgenn, including the detail that it was the seduction of Aed by Corrgenn’s wife Tethra which lead to Corrgenn’s vengance. This Poem also mentions the construction of Aileach’s ramparts around the grave, noting that the “rath of goodly devices, the best in Erin” was built by “Garbán and Imchell”. Interestingly the poem states that Aileach Fingrenn was a dwelling of the Ulaid.

The second poem (Gwynn 1903, 107)concerning the naming and history of Aileach was composed by Flann Manistrech, Lector of Monasterboice, who died in 1058 (MacNeil 1913). He opens the poem by apologising for covering a topic already addressed by the poet Eochaid Ua Flainn the author of one of the other poems concerning Aileach in the Metrical Dindshenchas (ibid, 38). The certain knowledge of the composition of this poem before Flann’s death means that this is a text dating to

an era when Aileach was in use, certainly before its sacking of 1101/2 and two full centuries before the title King of Aileach stopped being used. It is similar to the other two poems, somewhat shorter, with a few different details. These stories must therefore have been in circulation at the time of Aileach's use.

Collectively the three poems agree on several points

- The origin of Aileach as the tomb of Aed,
- That it was fortified by Imchell, leading it to sometimes be called Aileach Imchell.
- That the site upon which it was built was sacred to and occupied by the war gods Neit and Nemain leading to it being called on occasion Ailech Neit.
- The use of Aileach as the fort of Frigrú, the Pict, and his lover Aileac, the daughter of the Scottish King, in their flight from her father

In addition the first and third poems suggest, one implies the other explicitly states, that Aileach was at some stage a stronghold of the Ulaid and as Ailech the daughter of the Scottish King, was the mother of the three Collas by the High King of Ireland (Eochaid Doimlén), they seem to have been suggesting that it was a subsequent stronghold of the Collas, (and therefore the Airgilla?) also . Poem one only implicitly states that Aileach was an Ulaid stronghold but does add that it was seized by the Uí Neill in the fifth century

“Eogan of their famous men whom he cleansed both soul and body, gained possession by force of sanctity; the Briton blessed the abode.

Patrick (not weary his strength), whom men shall obey in all times, blessed by the will of God the home of Eogan, above all oppression” (Gwynn 1903, 107)

As these poems are not reliable historical records of the distant past they must be seen more as records of what was believed about Aileach at their time of composition, which we have seen above is probably the eleventh century and what the authors wished to be believed about the distant past. That the site is one of great antiquity is believed by all three authors associating the site with the Tuatha de Dannan. They also accept that , after its origins as a site of the Tuatha de Dannan it was not, at first, a place of any scion of the Uí Neill but a site used by other groups, the Ulaid and the Airgilla from their descent from the three Collas , before being conquered by the Cenél nEógain. This event is associated with a blessing by Patrick. This is fanciful and an attempt to legitimise Uí Neill power in that area by association with Patrick and also to date Uí Neill expansion in that area to the fifth Century. Given that the Cruthin were still a significant power in north Co. Derry / Londonderry in the seventh century, until their power became seriously weakened after the battle of Mag Roth in 637 when the Uí Neill decisively defeated the Ulaid (Byrne 1973, 114), it is possible that the Ulaid, in the form of the Cruthin, held Aileach until a period much closer to this date than the date given in the Dindsenchas.

Aileach in late Medieval Gaelic Praise Poetry

There are a number of references to Aileach in later Medieval Gaelic Praise Poetry. One of the earliest references to it is from Gofraidh Fionn Ódálaigh (MacKenna 1952). The subject of the poem is Diarmuid Ó Briain, Lord of Thomond, and was written about 1350. In the poem the poet suggests that Diarmuid's success will be so great as to bring him the lordship of Teamhair and Aileach, in other words that he will become king of Ireland.

Other references occur in the poems of Tadhg Dall Ó Huiginn (Knott 1922). Several poems simply refer to persons who are described as being "of Aileach". A single reference refers to the "faultless steeds" of Aileach in a poem dedicated to Sorley MacDonald (Knott 1922, 119)¹.

Ó Huiginn also makes numerous mentions to Aileach in a poem to Sean Ó Dochartaigh. The poem discusses Aileach and its history, and the, in effect, ennoblement of the Ó Dochartaigh by their possession of Aileach (Knott 1922, 135 and Tierney 2003, 183). The poem also gives a rare written description of the form of the castle, which it describes as having four towers, a detail which, we shall discuss below, fits other evidence. Most importantly it seems to explicitly identify Aileach with Elagh Castle, the possession, at that time, of Sean Ó Dochartaigh (Sir John O'Docherty) (Tierney, 2003, 182-3).

Other Irish references to Aileach

A somewhat problematic reference to the use of Aileach is found in a letter from Donnell O'Neill, King of Ulster, to Fineen MacCarthy, "King of Desmond", attempting to recruit him to the O'Neill / Bruce cause in the wars of 1315 to 1318 (Wood 1927). The letter was given at "ulech 8 cal April 1316". The "ulech" probably indicates Aileach. If this letter was reliable it would indicate a King of Ulster in residence at Aileach in 1316. Unfortunately this letter may be not what it seems. The letter does not exist in its original form but is a copy. The date is contradictory. It mentions the election of a Pope, who was not elected until August 1316, however Wood (ibid, 144) believes this to be a simple copyists error. O'Murchadha (1982) sees other problems with this letter. Although he acknowledges that there are several possible Finneen MacCarthys in the early fourteenth century none seem politically important, certainly none seem to be King of Desmond. Also O'Murchadha thinks that some of the use of language in a fourteenth century text is unusual. He notes the use of "totum regnum albanicum" in the text whereas when O'Neil sent his Remonstrance to the Pope he referred to the people of Scotland as Scotti, the more usual Medieval Irish usage in Latin (ibid, 64). O'Murchadha in addition takes issue with the use of Ulech, which he thinks may be a consciously obscure form of Aileach chosen by a forger. He suggests Aileach is an unsuitable place of residence for a fourteenth century King of Ulster because of its abandonment in 1101. O'Murchadah may be

¹There are a number of references to horses in association with Aileach, note also the reference in the Circuit of Muirheartach mac Neill (Morris 1936, 29) to "Splendid Grianan of the horses", Tadhg dall O'Huiginn in his poem to Sorley MacDonnell "*Oileach* with its faultless steeds" (Knott 1922, 119) and the reference to the 1101 destruction of "Grianan-Oiligh" (REF) where the annalist quotes a poem commemorating the event

"I never heard of the billeting of grit stones,
Though I heard of the billeting of companies,
Until the stones of Oileach were billeted
On the horses of the king of the West."

mistaking the Grianan for Aileach as there is evidence, of course, for Elagh Castle's occupation in the high Middle Ages, in the form of the existing masonry ruins, although their date has not yet been firmly established. O'Murchadha also focused on the personality of the person, Thomas O'Sullivan, who sold the letter to an English collector, and his Irish source, Thomas O' Duin, who apparently had it in his keeping. O'Murchadha believed that O'Duin was a fabrication, no supporting evidence of his existence being found elsewhere, and O' Sullivan his creator. O' Murchadha noted the general similarity of the Remonstrance, O'Neill's letter to the Pope, to O'Neills letter to MacCarty. He explained this by suggesting O'Sullivan had access to a library with a copy of the Remonstrance in it. This is an interesting contention but it is also true that two letters from one author would have similarities. In conclusion O'Murchadha suggests the letter may be a forgery. The 18th century was an era when many forgeries were sold to unsuspecting collectors. His arguments are quite persuasive but not conclusive. His assertion that Aileach was abandoned in 1101 contradicts documentary records which show that the title "King of Aileach, was used until at least 1251. Also the masonry remains at Aileach, "Docherty's Tower", seem reminiscent of an earlier era of castellation that the towerhouses of the 15th and 16th century. Their similarity to the O'Neill construction at Harry Avery's Castle suggests that they may date to the 14th century and be of O'Neill construction. If the letter is a forgery it has some accidental support from the archaeological remains.

Discussion of the Medieval historical references to Aileach

When discussing the Early Medieval History of Elagh Castle so much hinges on whether it is the actual site of Aileach as to make this the single most important question to be addressed. As discussed above opinion has at different times viewed Grianan as the likely site of Aileach and Elagh. However the modern position expressed by Lacey (2001), that the topography and geographical extent of Inishowen make it unlikely for at least the initial site of Aileach to have been at Grianan. Now that there appear, from the recent excavations, to be indications of early Medieval activity at Elagh Castle, one of the main objections to identifying Elagh as Aileach, is removed. Lacy suggested also that there may be two Aileachs, an initial Aileach at Elagh Castle, followed by a second Aileach constructed at the Grianan in Donegal as the Cenél nEógain expanded. While this cannot be disproved there is really very little evidence to support it. As noted above there are texts which associate Grianan and Aileach but this is not surprising given that Grianan is within Aileach, when Aileach is used as a name for a territory as opposed to the name of a central place of the Uí Neill. In fact the very term "Grianan-Oiligh" with Oiligh the genitive case, used by the Annals of the Four Masters entry on the destruction of Aileach in 1101, implies that the Grianan is part of the greater Aileach, the territory of Aileach and not the royal site of Aileach.

It is perhaps enlightening to look at what a contemporary writer thought of the meaning of Grianan. The ninth century scholar Cormac Mac Cullenan in his glossary disagreed with the traditional assertion that Teamhuir (Tara) was the name of an early Irish Princess of Egyptian extraction. Instead he believed that it meant a conspicuous place, by comparison with a Greek word of the same meaning. He then glossed the word Teamhuir with grianan small "g") suggesting therefore that grianan also meant a conspicuous place (Petrie 1839, 131). Whether his etymology is correct or not is irrelevant, what is important for this discussion is that in the mind of the Early Medieval scholar grianan means simply a conspicuous spot which the "Grianan of Aileach" certainly is.

Having established that Elagh Castle is almost certainly the site of Aileach it is possible to look at the analistic and poetic accounts of Aileach's origin and development to see what firm information can be derived from it.

The oldest information we have about Aileach potentially comes from the Metrical Dindshenchas. These poems all relate the same primary origin myth of the slaying of Aed, the Dagda's son by Corrgend and the subsequent burial by Corrgend of Aed at Aileach. Each tale tells of the search by Corrgend for a stone suitable to bury Aed beneath, the stone is so great that even a heroic figure like Corrgend expires beneath its load. This seems like a reference to a prehistoric grave of megalithic proportions and may indicate that at the time of the composition of the Dindshenchas there was a megalithic tomb at Aileach or at least the memory of one. This of course would be in keeping with other Royal sites like Tara or Rathcroghan where there are important megalithic tombs within the ritual landscape.

The earliest annalistic entry to mention Aileach is the entry, from the Annals of Tigernach, on the battle of Cellosnad in Mag Fea in 489AD (see above). One of the victors in this battle is "Muircheartach, son Erc, king of Ailech". This entry is found in no other Irish annal. In contrast the next entry for Aileach "Destruction of Ailech Frigrenn by Finnechta" in 679 is found in the Annals of Ulster, Tigernach and Inishfallen. The presence of the 489 entry in only one annal is unusual. All the Annals we see today are compilations, copies and edits of earlier annals. Kathleen Hughes, through close textual analysis and comparison, has identified that the Annals of Ulster and Tigernach are each compilations of the tenth century which are based on a single earlier work. Up until 913 almost all the Ulster and Tigernach entries are very similar, probably copied from a single source, which Hughes calls the Ulster Chronicle and which is itself based on an Iona Chronicle and a Bangor Chronicle (Hughes 1972). The presence of an early entry, present in the Annals of Tigernach but not in the Annals of Ulster is highly suspect and probably indicates that it is an insertion made after 913. The reason for its insertion is probably an attempt to push the expansion of the Uí Neill and their taking of Aileach farther back into antiquity.

It is likely therefore that the first reliable annalistic entry we have is the entry relating to the destruction of "Aileach Frigrenn" in 679. This name is of course explained, as we have discussed above, in the Metrical Dindshenchas as the name of a Pict called Frigriu who had eloped to "the Ulaid's land" with, Aileac, the daughter of the Scottish High King. Also the third poem in the Dindshenchas states that Aileach Frigrenn was, at some stage, occupied by the Ulaid, although of course the Dindshenchas also attempt to push the Uí Neill capture of Aileach back into the fifth century by telling of Patrick blessing Eoghan's ownership of Aileach after he had siezed it.

These two attempts, one annalistic one poetic, to assert a fifth century capture of Aileach, imply that the two sources share a common view of early Irish history which accepts that Aileach was a palace of the Cenél nEógain and therefore that Aileach, if not constructed by the Cenél nEógain should at least have been captured by its founder Eoghan. It may be that one of the texts, probably the first poem from the Metrical Dindshenchas, is deliberately propagandising on behalf of the Uí Neill.

The next annalistic reference, from all the main annals, to Aileach as a place, is also, possibly, one of the last, that of 1101 noting the razing of Aileach by Muirchertach ua Briain. The entry in the Annals of the Four Masters elaborates on the other entries It suggests that it is more than simply destroyed but dismantled and some of the stones carried back to Luimneach (MacAirt and MacNiocail 1983, 539). Many writers have taken this to mean the end of Aileach as place of habitation or regular use,

however it was not the end for the use of the term Aileach as the name of a kingdom. It seems unreasonable to suggest that Aileach was simply abandoned, it seems more likely that it was repaired, even if it was no longer the centre of the kingdom of the Cenél nEógain.

The form of Aileach is barely hinted at in any of the Medieval sources, with just a few exceptions. The third poem from the Metrical Dindshenchas (Gwynn 1903, 107) mentions a “rath” at Aileach.

“A lofty keep is Ailech Frigrenn, the hero's rath, a fort that fosters schools, lime-white house of granite”

and

“He bade them build a rath round the smooth slender folk to be a rath of goodly devices, the best in Erin”

The implication is that Aileach must have an enclosure, meaning in this case presumably a large earthen bank and ditch.

The poem “Inishowen” by Tadhg Dall O’Huiginn describes Elagh Castle as having a “labyrinthine(?)four-towered court” (Knott 1922, 135). The description “labyrinthine” is perhaps difficult to explain, except perhaps that it refers to a complex set of interconnected buildings. The “four towered court” is interesting because, as we shall see below it has some corroboration from a map from 1600 depicting Elagh Castle.

3.4 *Elagh Castle in the Post-Medieval period.*

The standing structure of Elagh Castle is frequently referred to today as Docherty's tower and in the early 15th century the O'Docherty family seem to have established themselves as the Lords of Inishowen, holding it as lieges of the O'Donnells. The Annals of the Four Masters for 1413 record

“Conor O'Doherty, Chief of Ardmire, and Lord of Inishowen, a man full of generosity and general hospitality to the wretched and the poor, died” (O'Donovan 1854, 815) .

Interestingly the title “Lord of Inishowen” is not repeated in the Annals of the Four Masters for another century when in the entry for 1526 it is noted

“O'Doherty (Eachmarcach), Lord of Inishowen, died; and a great contention arose among his tribe concerning the lordship, and continued until Gerald, the son of Donnell, son of Felim O'Doherty, was at last styled Lord”. (*ibid*, 1387-8)

None of the Chiefs of Ardmire who die in the intervening years are mentioned as Lords of Inishowen. Whether this is because the 1413 entry is a mistake or simply that the authors did not think it necessary to repeat the epithet is uncertain. What is certain however is that by the close of the middle ages this area, and Elagh Castle, is held by the O'Dochertys.

References in English sources to Elagh Castle in the 16th and 17th Centuries

There are several references to Elagh Castle in 16th century and 17th century English sources. An early reference in an English document is in 1588 when Richard and Henry Hoveden sent a letter to the Lord Deputy of Ireland detailing their encounter with shipwrecked mariners from the Spanish Armada.

“Shortly after having written our last letter to you, we set out for the place where it was reported the Spaniards were, and we came up with them in a village of Sir John O'Dogherty, called Illagh. We sent an emissary to learn who they were, and what was their intentions in thus invading a part of the dominions of H. M. the Queen. They made answer that they had come with the intention of invading England and formed part of the Armada which had been beaten by the English fleet, and that they had been obliged by stress of weather to land in this place.” (O'Reilly and de Cuellar 1896).

This letter is interesting for it describes a village at Elagh. It is not the only reference

In 1600 Docwra was engaged in a campaign in Derry and in the Lough Foyle area. He built a fort upon the medieval town of Derry and occupied a number of the Gaelic castles in its vicinity. He has left a number of references to Elagh in both his Narration (O'Donovan 2003) and also in various correspondences preserved in the Calendars of State Papers relating to Ireland.

From the Calendar of State Papers of Ireland:

“At ten of the clock there was sent abroad to look into the country 1000 foot and 100 horse. We marched to the castle of Ellaughe, O'Dogherty's chief house and there finding it broken in some part, and there finding it broken in some part, all the town burnt, and by them quitted, it was determined that a ward should be left in it; but that resolution was held not” - 16th May 1600 (Russell and Prendergast 1872, 201)

“In the middle way, where they make a neck of land is Ellagh, his chief house, held by a garrison of the Queen's”- November to December 1600 (*ibid*, 92-5)

From Docwra's Narration:

“Sixe days wee spent in labour about it, in which meane space, making upp into the Countrie with some troupes (onely with intent to discover) we came to Ellagh a castle of the O'Dogherty's, which had yet newlie abandoned and begunne to pull down, Butt seeing it yett Tennable and of good vse to be held, I put Captaine Ellis ffloudd into it and his companie of 150 men” (O'Donovan 2003, 237).

Docwra also had two maps of Derry and it's surroundings made in 1600, one of which shows Elagh, this will be discussed further below.

These entries mention not only the castle at Elagh, but also a town, corroborating Hovedens mention of a “village at Ellagh”. There are few details of the castle. More information is available in a letter from Sir Thomas Ridgeway to Salisbury in July 1608, preserved in the Calendar of State Papers relating to Ireland, remarking on a visit to Elagh Castle in the aftermath of Sir Cahir O'Docherty's rebellion:

“Hence they went to the traitor's castle and town of Elough which, though strong by situation and by extraordinary thickness of wall and bawn about it, they found (contrary to their expectations) evacuated...” (Russell and Prendergast 1874, 600)

This is the earliest English record affording any verbal description, albeit brief, of the physical form of the castle.

The Irish Patent Rolls of King James contain several references to both the granting by the crown and subsequent forfeiture of Elagh Castle and its associated lands. The grant of Elagh Castle to Sir Cahir O'Docherty is noted in King James 1 Patent Roll 2,

“Grant from the King to Sir Cahir O'Dogherty...the manors and lordships, castles (except the castle of Culmore with 300 acres of land adjoining and the fishing thereof) messuages, lands, presentations advowsons and all other hereditaments whatever in Ilagh, Coulemore, Newcastle, Insie, Burt and Fame in the country called Incheoen” (Griffith 1966, 59)

The forfeiture of Elagh Castle and lands by Sir John and later Sir Cahir O'Docherty are noted in the Irish Patent Roll 16 along with the subsequent re-grant of these lands to Sir Arthur Chichester.

“... that sir John O'Dogherty, Knt, was about ten years since, siesed by letters patent of the following lands; Mastimellan, Costquoyne, and Bonemaine, ½ qr each, Elaghmore with its castle...which came into the possession of the crown by reason of Sir John's entering into rebellion...that about 19th April 1608, Sir Cahir O'Dogherty, knt, was siesed of the said castle and lands... that Sir Cahir's grant also became void by his rebellion” (*ibid* 1966, 379).

This account of the forfeiture of Sir Cahir O'Docherty continues by describing the lands forfeited. One sentence is of particular interest,

“to the causey under Ellogh and through the bog to Lough Swilly” (*ibid*).

“Causey” according to the Oxford English Dictionary, is a word, used in English at least from the 16th century to mean a cobbled or paved surface and in this context probably refers to a road running up to Elagh Castle and beyond towards Lough Swilly. It is still used in the contemporary Ulster Scots dialect to mean a cobbled area.

Patent Roll 19 notes the grant of Elagh Castle and associated lands to sir Arthur Chichester,

“Grant to Arthur Lord Chichester....the manor or lordship of Ellagh and the castle and town of Ellaghmore” (Griffith 1966, 522).

Map evidence

There are a number of late 16th and early 17th century maps which show Elagh Castle. One of the earliest, and potentially the most useful, is the map made for Docwra's Lough Foyle expedition of 1600/1 and attributed to Ashby (Fig 4) which shows a structure with a central two story building, surrounded by a bawn and four towers attached to it (Hayes McCoy 1964). There are indications of a ditch or earthwork just outside the bawn wall. Running north from the castle is a roadway which skirts a wood (or could it be a tree lined avenue) and then turns southeast heading in the general direction of Derry but apparently stopping in the bog land located roughly where the Pennyburn depression is today.

A map by John Speed, dating to 1610 (Ewart B, 24) (Figure 5) shows the location of Elagh Castle but provides no further information as it shows Elagh as a simple convention, similar to other castles in the vicinity.

The 1603, General Description of Ulster by Bartlett (Fig 6), (Ewart B, 1603) depicts a small red pile with the legend “Elow h” inscribed below it. This is different from the way most of the other castles are depicted on the map. Most have a larger, obviously more castellated tower and have a “ca” (presumably castle), as opposed to a “h” (house ?) after their name.

The Map of the Escheated Counties of Ulster by Josias Bodley of 1609-10 (Fig 7) (Ewart B, Drawer 7 No. 3) shows “Elagh”, as a simple rectangular pile like other Gaelic castles from the area, presumably the map makers convention for recording such structures.

Discussion of the Post-Medieval evidence for Elagh Castle.

There are a number of important facts which can be gleaned from an examination of these texts and maps . Firstly the description of a “four towered court” by the poet O’Huiginn is corroborated by Ashby's map of 1600 (Fig 4) which shows a two storey building surrounded by a bawn and four towers. That the bawn was significant and worthy of comment is shown by the letter of Sir Thomas Ridgeway preserved in the Calendar of State Papers which notes the “ extraordinary thickness of wall and bawn” around Elagh Castle. Ashby's map also shows a road running from the general direction of Derry right up to Elagh Castle, which is also mentioned in the description of lands forfeited by Sir Cahir O’Docherty mentioned in the Irish Patent Rolls.

Of interest is the ways in which map makers treat Elagh Castle. The way that Elagh is depicted as a very significant pile by Ashby is in contrast to the way it is depicted, relative to other Gaelic castles, in Bartlett's map of 1603. It is possible that by this date there may have been significant demolition of Elagh, allowing Bartlett to depict it as a house, rather than a castle. Alternatively the map may simply be inaccurate in this respect.

3.5 Previous Archaeological Investigations at Elagh Castle

Aileach has not been the subject of intensive archaeological investigations until recently. Some limited survey work was carried out by Davies and Swann for their summary article (1939) on the castles of Inishowen. No further direct archaeological investigation was undertaken until McNeill's 1980 survey of the site which concentrated more on the mound than the castle and, usefully, included two transepts of the mound (1980). In 1999, Pauline Marks, a student of the then School of Archaeology at Queen's University Belfast, carried out resistivity survey, phosphate and magnetic susceptibility tests on Elagh Castle. The resistivity survey was the most productive and Marks found a large, ditch-like, anomaly in the field immediately to the southeast of the rocky outcrop and a large anomaly 10m by 16m shaped "like a dog's hind leg" to the south of the outcrop (Marks 1999, 32).

A geophysical survey (Fig 8) was carried out by Ronan McHugh and Sapphire Mussen, of the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork. The survey identified a low resistance anomaly running around the base of the rock outcrop which may be a ditch or may simply be because of damp soil conditions caused by rain water run off from the outcrop (pers comm Ronan McHugh). A high resistance anomaly was also detected beyond this possible ditch to the east of the outcrop, which was thought might indicate a wall. It was suggested that this anomaly, which was approximately in line with the current field boundary just beyond the south and west of the site might indicate that the field boundary was built on an earlier, Medieval, wall (*ibid*).

In early 2013 an evaluation excavation was carried out by the CAF at Elagh Castle (McSparron, Donnelly and Logue 2013). Two trenches were excavated on the top of the outcrop, informed by the geophysics. In one trench, Trench 1 occupation material including bones and pottery were found. The pottery types included Medieval Ulster Coarse pottery and 17th century North Devon Gravel Tempered pottery. The second trench Trench 2 contained no archaeological features, the geophysical anomaly being explained by the presence of bedrock close to the surface (Figure 9).

4.0 Description of the Excavation

Three trenches numbered Trench 3, Trench 4 and Trench 5 were excavated during the Summer 2013 season (Figure 9). (for Trenches 1 and 2 please see earlier CAF evaluation excavation report (REF)) The three trenches were located using the geophysical information obtained from the survey conducted by McHugh and Mussen (Fig 8).

4.1 Excavation of Trench 3 (Figures 8 & 9) and (Photo 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5)

This trench was located on the south side of the rock, sited to encounter the high resistance geophysical anomaly, discussed above, which appeared to coincide with the revetted field boundary apparently making an enclosure around the south-west of the site. The trench initially measured 6m by 1m and was orientated north-south, it was later extended to measure 8m by 1m.

The topsoil in this trench was a brown and slightly greyish stony loam (302), which was covered by a layer of sod (301). Upon removal of this upper most loam layer a second lighter brown, silty, loam layer (304) was revealed to the north end of the trench and a layer of, generally quite flat, stones (303), was encountered to the south end of the trench. Also encountered at this level was the top of the earthen bank (305), which will be further discussed below.

To the south of the trench, the layer of flattened stones (303) was removed revealing the clayey loam (306), the uppermost fill of the ditch (311). In the north of the trench with the removal of the loam 304, a layer of quite large (up to 0.4m) sub-angular stones was found (312) set into a grey brown loam (307). These stones were possibly derived from revetting to the bank deposit which will be discussed below.

The upper ditch fill (306) sat above a firmer brownish grey silty clay ditch fill (310) which itself sat above a more gritty brown clay loam ditch fill (313). Excavation of this deposit was not completed as the trench deepened beneath the 1.5m level from the modern ground surface. Depths of layers.

The ditch cut revealed by the excavation (311), was initially quite shallow, making approximately a 45° angle but it became steeper, taking a step downwards at an angle of roughly 70°. Although the south side of the excavation was not encountered the ditch must have had a width of at least 4m.

Material from the ditch was cast up to make the bank (305). The bank was composed of firm orange clay, clearly similar to the subsoil (345) into which the ditch was cut. The bank was revetted by a stone wall (308). It is uncertain if this revetment was placed before the excavation of the ditch and deposition of the bank material, after the deposition of the bank or gradually course by course during the excavation.

The bank and revetment were set on an ancient ground surface (309), which itself sat on the subsoil (345). To the north of the Bank and revetment there was a layer of flattish stones (319). It may have been a paved area on the bank interior. There was a greyish brown clay loam around the stones of (319). The paved area appeared to be set upon the old ground surface but it was left in-situ.

Although the possible paving (319) and the bank reveting (308) were left in-situ during the excavation the bank (305) and the old soil layer (309) beneath it were removed revealing three post-holes and a number of stake-holes. Two post-holes (314 and 315) were located at the west side of the trench. Dimensions. When first encountered they were believed to be one large feature and the upper fill of both post-holes was removed and sampled together as if it was one context charcoal rich dark brown loam (316), the upper fill of (315) although in actuality it was two separate contexts

(324) the slightly cindery upper fill of (314) and (316). The primary fill of (314) was a light grey gritty clay with orange mottling (320) and the primary fill of (315) was a light grey silty clay (321). A third large post-hole (322) was found at the east section of the trench and was filled by (323) a soft mid-grey loamy clay. Scattered in an irregular pattern around these post-holes were a series of 10 subsoil cutting stake-holes. There is no indication of any of the stake-holes cutting, or being cut by, the post-holes, such as a stake-hole cut into the edge of a post-hole (although 335 is close to the edge of (315), which may indicate that these are contemporary and part of the same structure. The stake-holes, (325), (327), (329), (331), (333), (335), (337), (339), (341) and (343) were filled by identical soft, brown, silty clays (326), (328), (330), (332), (334), (336), (338), (340), (342) and (344). For dimensions of the stake-holes see Table ?.

Artefacts from Trench 3

There were relatively few artefacts from this trench. The topsoil layer (302) contained a number of fragments of quite modern, probably 19th century, pottery as well as some fragments of corroded iron, cinder, red brick, animal bone and 19th century glass. The layers immediately beneath this topsoil layer the loam layer (304), to the north of the bank (305) and the stony layer (303) to the south of the trench both contained 19th century pottery, the loam (304) containing animal bone and the stony (303) layer containing bottle glass and cinder. The upper fill of the ditch contained 18th or 19th century pottery, cinder, relatively modern glass, animal bone and brick. The loam (307) around the stones (312) contained one fragment of animal bone and a single piece of struck quartz was found in (309) in the ancient ground surface layer (309).

4.2 Description of the excavation of Trench 4 (Figures 9 & 10) and (Photo 6, 7, and 8)

This trench initially measured 6m by 1m but was extended to be 8m long with a step out of 2m to the south from the 2m point to the 4m point on the east-west axis of the trench (measured from the east). The topsoil in the trench was composed of a sod layer (401) which was immediately above a dark brown loamy topsoil (402 also recorded as 404). To the west of the trench there was a visible hump, standing approximately 0.3m above the surrounding ground surface, one of the reasons the trench was situated at this location. Removal of the topsoil revealed this hump to be composed of earth, and not masonry as had initially been suspected. This earthen bank was composed of three layers of stony earth, an uppermost layer of grey stony clay (442), up to 0.10m thick, which sat above a more orange grey stony clay (443), up to 0.10m thick, and beneath this, the most substantial bank layer, the light grey to brown gravel rich loamy clay (403) which was up to 0.25m thick. These bank layers were derived from a cut (455), which had cut into the fills of an earlier gully (415) cut into bedrock (439). This recut (455) was filled by a mixed loose loam layer (410) which contained large numbers of artefacts of late 19th to mid 20th century date, presumably redeposited from a nearby domestic dump. The recut (455) cut the lowermost grey brown silty clay fill (413) of the earlier cut (415) and the material (446) which had been cast up during the excavation of the original cut (415). To the east it cut a deposit of stoney loamy clay (405), probably cast up during the digging of the original cut and probably the same as (446). It also cut the grey brown compact clay and stone, 0.15M thick, "platform" layer (411) which had within it a number of patches of charcoal rich earth. This "platform" layer was cut by the gully (415) and was possibly stratigraphically equivalent to (429). To the east of the site (411) was also situated beneath a grey brown loam (407) and a thin gravel layer (444) which sat under the loam topsoil layer (402).

To the south east of the platform material (411), and butted by it, was a stone setting (419), which was bonded to an upper, and somewhat larger setting of stones (408), by a mortar layer (450), both running east-northeast to west-southwest. They seem likely to have been the remnants of a wall, now robbed out. The two settings measured approximately 4m long between them and at their widest were approximately 0.6m wide. To their south they were cut by a large gully (433), 0.40m deep, over 2m long and 0.55m wide, possibly connected with the robbing of stone from the wall. The gully also cut the dark grey brown compact silty loam old ground surface layer (441/421) which was probably the same as (411) and (429). This gully had a number of fills, the primary fill (426) was a soft grey silty clay. There were some sherds of green bottle glass in this layer. It was beneath a dark brown, soft but compact, slightly silty clay, loam (440). Within this layer were the skeletal remains of two dogs (424 and 425) and a, very small, early 17th century, clay pipe bowl. Covering the animal remains was an orange brown silty compact loam (453) which contained bottle glass. It was itself covered by a coarse gravel and stone layer (422). A layer of stoney gravelly material (418) appears to have been cast up during the digging of (433) and sat above (441), the pre gully ground surface to the south of the gully. The gravelly layer (418) resembles, and has a similar stratigraphic situation, to the layer (405) cast up by the digging of the other gully (415).

Upon removal of the "old ground surface" layers (411), (429) and (441) that were cut by the two gullies, a number of new layers and features were exposed. In the central north area of the trench, to the east of gully (415) beneath (411), there was a mottled bright orange to brown clay subsoil layer (427) which had become slightly leached, possibly caused by heat, giving it a lighter coloured upper

margin, initially distinguished by a separate context number (428). Several possible postholes and stakeholes were cut into (427). A small stake hole (437), with a diameter of 0.13m and a depth of 0.08m, cut the clay subsoil (427) close to the west side of gully (415). It was filled by (438) a dark grey brown, silty clay similar to the material of the platform (411), possibly indicating the removal of the stake and its backfilling with (411) derived material. A small possible post-hole (434) measuring 0.2m in diameter and 0.10m deep was located in the approximate centre of the trench. It was filled by (428) the leached variant of the natural (427) and it seems more likely that this is a natural subsoil variation possibly caused by contact with smouldering material, which may be indicated by a number of patches of burning within (411). A similar possible feature, which is more likely to be natural is (435) an apparent circular cut of diameter 0.25 and depth 0.20, which is filled by a pale yellow to grey silty clay (430), which had similarity to the leached natural (428). A more likely post-hole candidate is (436) which has a diameter of 0.26m and a depth of 0.2m. It is situated running slightly under the wall footing (408 / 450 / 419). It was filled by (432) the dark grey brown silty clay loam. Against the north section there was a probable post-hole (448) which measured 0.15m in diameter and 0.15m in depth. It was filled by (449), a dark grey brown silty clay, similar to (411).

Artefacts from Trench 4

There was a large number of artefacts from the excavations in Trench 4. The topsoil (402) contained fairly modern glass, corroded iron objects and 19th / 20th century pottery and fragments of plastic. A dark grey-brown, stoney loam layer (409), just beneath the topsoil at the east end of the trench contained animal bone, pottery, cinder, corroded iron and burnt flint. A similar dark grey brown silty loam, just below the topsoil in the south of the trench contained flint, glass, corroded iron, a whetstone and plastic. The fill (410) of the re-cut (455) contained a huge number of late 19th to mid 20th century artefacts, including, bone, brick bullet casings, cinder, copper alloy objects, a chrome car door handle, glass, leather, mortar, pottery, shell, slag and tile fragments. It appeared to have been deposited in a small number of deposits rather than to have accumulated gradually and the implication of the density and dating of the artefacts is that this material was derived from a farmhouse dump which was taken and redeposited in the open cut to prevent grazing animals falling into it. The old ground surface (406/444) at the time of the recut (455) contained within it 19th century pottery and fragments of brick. The patchy grey brown silt layer (407) immediately beneath it contained glass, corroded iron, pottery and a handle of some sort of copper alloy, probably brass.

The primary fill (413) of the rock cut gully (415) contained no artefacts, apart from a few mortar fragments. The bank (405) probably cast up by the digging of (415) contained a number of fragments of pottery. The platform (411) which was apparently cut by (415) contained animal bone, brick, flint, glass, corroded iron and mortar.

The fill of the gully (433), the possible robbed out foundation, contained a clay pipe bowl, corroded iron, and bottle glass. Similar bottle glass was found in the base of the primary fill (426) of this feature, it probably dropped from the section however. Two dog skeletons (424 and 425) were found in the middle fill of this gully (440)

A number of artefacts were found in the strata beneath the rock cut gully (415) in the west of the trench. The charcoal rich, apparently burnt layer (423) contained burnt bone. It was stratified above a second charcoal rich layer (429) which contained a thumbnail scraper, a typically bronze age artefact and a whetstone of probable medieval date. A mid grey-brown clay (431), the earliest stratum in this trench, which sat directly upon the bedrock, contained several stone artefacts including two possible rubbing stones and a fragment of quartz apparently bonded to some iron.

4.3 Description of the excavation of Trench 5 (Figure 11 & 12 and Photo 9)

Trench 5 initially measured 6m by 1m but was extended to make an "L" shaped trench where the southern section of the trench was 6m by 1m with a 2m by 2m square at the north end. The topsoil mid to dark brown loam (501), was separated from the more gravelly loam (504) situated beneath it by two spreads, a dark silt rich loam located in the north central area of the trench (502) and a stone rich layer (503), located approximately 1m from the southern end of the trench. The gravelly loam layer (504) sat above an old ground surface (509), a grey brown compact silty clay layer. This old ground surface was cut by three features. To the north end of the trench was a post-hole (513), 0.3m deep and 0.4m in diameter, filled by a light orange brown silty clay (512) and a construction slot (511) 0.9m long 0.13m wide and 0.04m deep, which was filled by a mid brown silty loam (510). Beside the construction slot and sandwiched between the old ground surface and the gravelly loam (504) was a small patch of charcoal rich ash (508).

To the south end of the trench there was a large cut (529) apparently cut into the old ground surface (509), although given the small scale of the excavation and the presence of a very large rock outcrop this could not certainly be ascertained. This cut was not fully excavated but may have been a foundation cut for a very large structure. Excavation of this cut was halted when a horizon of very large, set, stones (519) was uncovered. Above this horizon of large stones, filling the upper part of cut (529) was a layer of light orange to grey sandy clay, which was up to 0.3m thick in places, a layer of brown friable loam (515) which was up to 0.18m thick, a thin layer of grey brown clay running down the side of the cut but resting above (515). Above this sat a layer of brown loamy earth (506) which was itself beneath a layer of quite large stones, some up to 0.3m.

Upon removal of the earth layer (509) in the north of the trench a number of features were visible. At the extreme north of the trench, running into the section was a spread of material (510b) similar to (510) but stratigraphically separate from it. It covered the orange brown silty loam fill (516) of a large shallow depression (517), with a diameter of 0.40m and a depth of 0.08m, which may have been a truncated post-hole. A second possible post-hole (521) had a diameter of 0.20m and a depth of 0.14m and was filled by a light orange brown friable loam (520). Clustered around this post-hole were three small stake-holes (523), (525) and (527) which were filled by identical orange brown sandy loam fills numbered respectively (522), (524) and (526).

Artefacts from Trench 5

The topsoil contained brick, a 19th century clay pipe bowl, cinder, iron, 19th and 20th century pottery, stoneware and plastic. The mid to dark brown silty loam (502) just beneath the upper topsoil layer (501) in the north of the trench contained brick, cinder, iron and pottery. The similar layer (503) located at the south end of the trench contained pottery and slate. Beneath these layers, and situated above the old ground surface (509) was a gravel loam (504). It contained brick, burnt flint, cinder, glass, corroded iron, slate and 19th century pottery. The old ground surface (509)

contained iron objects and quartz. The brown silty loam upper fill (506) of the possible foundation cut (529) contained relatively modern pottery and iron finds. The lower fills of this cut (515 and 518) contained bone and glass, and bone. The fill (516) of the depression (517) beneath the old sod layer (509) contained single fragment of struck flint.

5.0 Discussion

The excavations at Elagh castle have revealed a number of things which were previously unknown. Each of the excavated trenches have uncovered important structural features which extend our understanding of the site and which themselves beg new questions.

The excavations in Trench 3 have demonstrated that the site was at some stage surrounded by a ditch and a matching stone faced bank. Although no artefacts were found to directly date this bank and ditch their morphology is similar to what would be expected from an Early Medieval enclosure. The bank and ditch, although only exposed by a 1m wide trench, appear to align with the, apparently later, revetted field wall surrounding Elagh Castle. This would suggest that the bank and ditch are part of a very large enclosure, with a diameter of approximately 100m, surrounding the site. The presence of a possible paved area on the inside of this bank is also of potentially great significance. It may simply be a layer of stones laid down to improve ground conditions in the lee of the bank, however the possibility exists that it is the floor of a structure erected against the bank.

Evidence for an earlier enclosure than the ditch and bank may come from a series of pits or post-holes and associated stake-holes, found upon removal of the earthen bank. .

The results from Trench 4 have been equally interesting but more difficult to interpret. What can be said is that the curving bank, once thought to be the footing of a tower or similar masonry structure, is in fact the upcast from a relatively recent, probably early 20th century, excavation, possibly a treasure hunting exercise. This re-excavated a rock cut gully which was running approximately north-south. During the excavation it was initially tempting to interpret this as a fragment of a larger rock cut souterrain, no evidence was found to substantiate this however and its function remains uncertain. To the east of this gully there were traces of an ancient wall and a possible platform butting it to the north. The ancient wall was running approximately east-northeast-west-southwest. It was cut by a deep gully, filled by a series of earthen fills containing two dog skeletons and a portion of a 17th century clay pipe and some probable 19th century glass.

The excavation of Trench 5 uncovered at it's south end a substantial cut filled by large, quite square stones, sitting in a manner which looked deliberately set. Because of the narrowness of the trench and the size of the stones, which would have required a much larger trench for their excavation, the excavation was paused at this stage although it was clear that we had uncovered the footing of a large and probably Medieval structure. Tom McNeill, who saw the exposed feature during a site visit, thought the scale and location of the feature to be likely to indicate part of the bawn wall or a similar element of defensive architecture associated with it.

The finding of what seems to be a very large early Medieval enclosure around Elagh Castle matches well the "the hero's rath...rath of goodly devices,... the best in erin" mentioned in the Metrical Dindshenchas as discussed above. Indeed the apparent absence of an enclosure around Elagh Castle, was one of the reasons that the Grianan was thought a better match for the historical Aileach by Colby (1837, 223). The possibility of an earlier enclosure under the rath bank, which could push the date of the site far back towards the beginning of the Early Medieval period would seem to agree with annalistic evidence which suggests an already well established site in the seventh century, or if you accept the, possibly inserted, 489AD mention in the Annals of Tigernach of a member of the Cenél nEógain, Erc (the grandson of Eoghan), as King of Aileach, into the fifth century.

Trench 4 showed the presence of robbed walls and gullies but it was not possible to better interpret them due to the small size of the excavation trench.

The large scale of the masonry setting from Trench 5 to the north of the rock, also appears to confirm historical accounts of Elagh Castle. Elagh Castle as we have seen above was remarked on for the “extraordinary thickness of wall and bawn” in an early 17th century letter. Also the map evidence for very large walls (and towers) at Elagh Castle seems to match well with the scale of footings uncovered in Trench 5.

6.0 Conclusions

The excavations at Elagh Castle have been an enormous success. The project was a Community Archaeological Excavation and at all stages of the excavation there was active participation by members of the Derry / Londonderry community and a small number of individuals from farther afield. The excavation revealed a most interesting set of archaeological features including the large enclosing ditch and bank which may well have encircled the entire site, the footings of the large masonry structure to the north of the outcrop and, while difficult to interpret at this stage, the first evidence, apart from the still standing tower, for ancient structures on the actual rock itself.

The scale of what we were able to find out on the excavation as limited only by the timescale of the project and the size of the excavation trenches which we were able to dig. Therefore, because of the small size of Trench 3, which was only 1m wide, we were unable, because of the risk of trench collapse, from excavating beyond a depth of 1.5m. Consequently we were incapable of fully excavating the ditch, partnering the bank, making the, probably early Medieval, enclosure around the site. Similarly we had to pause excavation of the large masonry footings in Trench 5 because we had not sufficient time and personnel to extend our trench enough to fully excavate the features. In Trench 4, while we were able to excavate to subsoil parts of all the exposed features, fully interpreting these features would necessitate a much more wide scale excavation of the summit of the rocky outcrop.

7.0 Recommendations for Further Work

There are four areas or recommendation for further work.

- 1) Completion of soil sample processing
- 2) A programme of radiocarbon dating
- 3) An examination and analysis of the animal bone assemblages from the excavation
- 4) An examination of plant macro-fossils obtained from the soil samples taken during the excavation.

1) Fifteen soil samples (see Appendix 5) were taken for analysis. These samples must be processed, using wet sieving and flotation. It is likely that a significant environmental and dating evidence may be obtained from these contexts. It is suggested that this is carried out by the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, Queen's University Belfast.

2) It is suggested that a programme of radiocarbon dating should be undertaken to attempt to date the charcoal rich pits and post-holes which are beneath the revetted bank in Trench 3. Their stratigraphic situation suggests that they may well be the earliest features found during the excavation. It is suggested that two dates from, if possible, short lived single entity samples is obtained to date this horizon. It is suggested that these dates are obtained from the Radiocarbon Laboratory, Chrono Centre, School of Geography, Archaeology and Palaeoecology, Queen's University Belfast.

3) There were some animal bone remains, including two dog skeletons, found during the excavation. It is suggested that these are examined by Dr Emily Murray of the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, Queen's University Belfast.

4) It is possible that plant macro-fossil remains will be found during the processing of the soil samples from Elagh Castle. These remains may be very important for building a picture of the environmental and human history of the site. It is suggested that these remains are examined by Dr Gill Plunkett of the School of Geography, Archaeology and Palaeoecology, Queen's University Belfast.

It is also recommended, although this would strictly be considered another excavation, that at the very least the excavation of the ditch at Trench 3 and the associated bank and stone paving behind it, which had to be discontinued because of the depth of the stratigraphy relative to the width of the trench, are completed by widening the trench and continuing the excavation until the ditch is fully excavated. In addition completion of Trench 5, which had to be abandoned for the same reasons as Trench 3, would allow confirmation if this is, as suspected, the footing of a large medieval Bawn.

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Appendices Appendix 1: Context Log

| Context No. | Description |
|--------------------|--|
| 301 | Sods and upper topsoil |
| 302 | Plough soil, quite stony |
| 303 | Stone layer in south of trench, metalling? |
| 304 | Light brown silty loam, north of trench |
| 305 | Earthen bank composed of redeposited subsoil |
| 306 | Grey brown loam, under 303, butting 305 |
| 307 | Grey clay / loam butting 308. Contains stones probably disturbed from 319 |
| 308 | Stone revetment / facing on north side of bank 305 |
| 309 | Old ground surface cut by ditch 311, beneath bank 305 and revetment 308 |
| 310 | Upper fill of ditch, mid grey brown loam |
| 311 | Context No. |
| 312 | Several stones, possibly collapse from revetment of north of earthen bank, sitting above 307 |
| 313 | Slightly orange brown sandy clay fill of ditch 311, below 310. |
| 314 | Post-hole beneath old ground surface 309, filled by 316, 324, and 320 |
| 315 | Post-hole beneath old ground surface 309, filled by 316 and 321 |
| 316 | Dark grey charcoal rich loam from upper regions of post-holes 314 and 315 before their separate character was recognised |
| 317 | Duplicate of 322 |
| 318 | Duplicate of 323 |
| 319 | Stoney area north of earthen bank 305 and its cladding 308. It may be a stone surface contemporary with the reveted bank. It sits on 309 the old ground surface. |
| 320 | Orange brown mottled lower fill of (314) |
| 321 | Light grey silty clay fill of (315) |

| | |
|-----|---|
| 322 | Post-hole (322) beneath bank. |
| 323 | Soft mid grey loamy clay fill of (322) |
| 324 | Central fill of (314) |
| 325 | Stake-hole beneath bank cutting subsoil |
| 326 | Brown loamy fill of (325) |
| 327 | Stake-hole beneath bank cutting subsoil |
| 328 | Brown loamy fill of (327) |
| 329 | Stake-hole beneath bank cutting subsoil |
| 330 | Brown loamy fill of (329) |
| 331 | Stake-hole beneath bank cutting subsoil |
| 332 | Brown loamy fill of (331) |
| 333 | Stake-hole beneath bank cutting subsoil |
| 334 | Brown loamy fill of (333) |
| 335 | Stake-hole beneath bank cutting subsoil |
| 336 | Brown loamy fill of (335) |
| 337 | Stake-hole beneath bank cutting subsoil |
| 338 | Brown loamy fill of (337) |
| 339 | Stake-hole beneath bank cutting subsoil |
| 340 | Brown loamy fill of (339) |
| 341 | Stake-hole beneath bank cutting subsoil |
| 342 | Brown loamy fill of (341) |
| 343 | Stake-hole beneath bank cutting subsoil |
| 344 | Brown loamy fill of (343) |

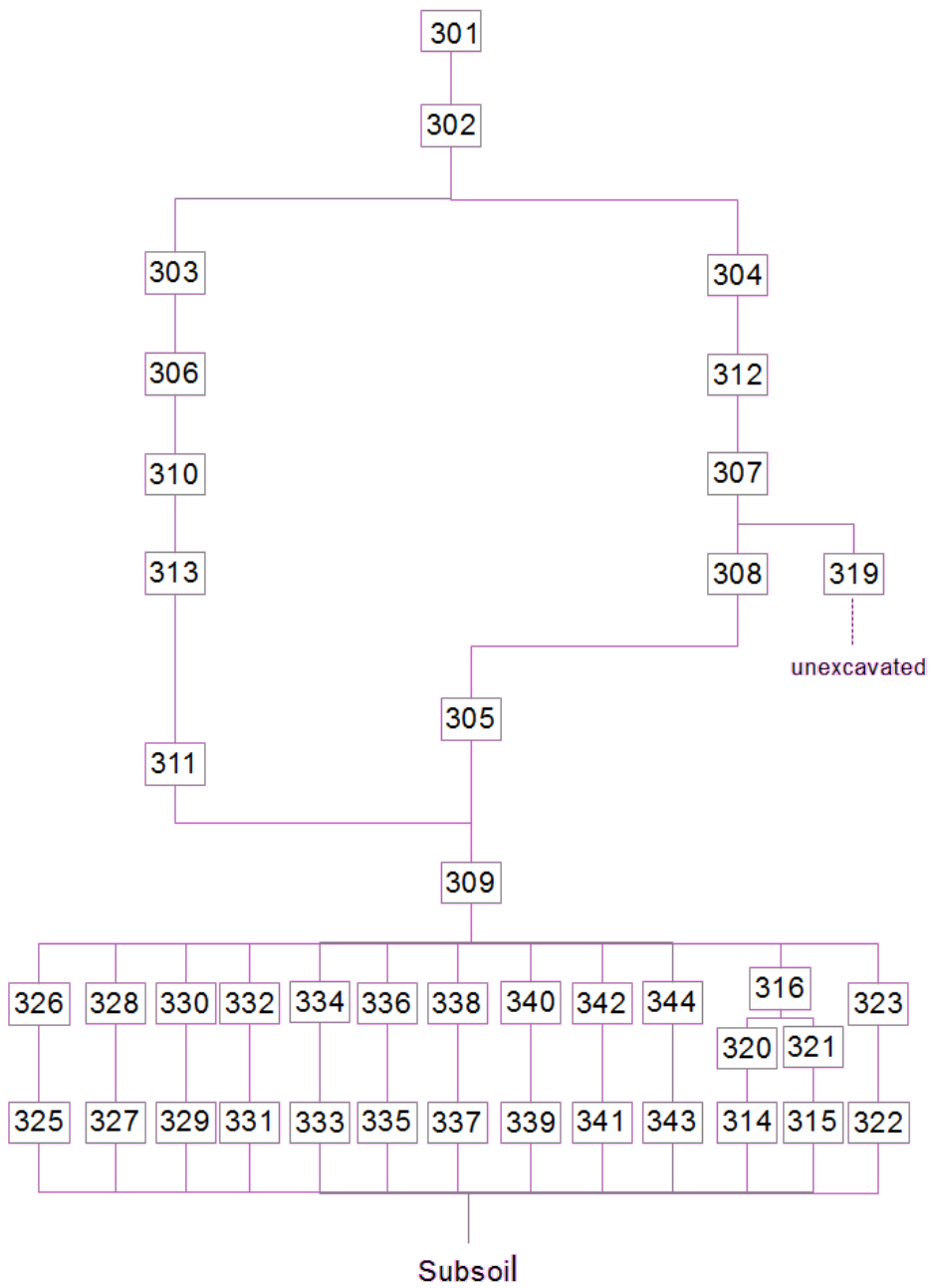
| Context No. | Description |
|--------------------|---|
| 401 | Sod |
| 402 | Topsoil |
| 403 | Uppermost bank material (first bank) |
| 404 | Loam remnant of (402) |
| 405 | Uppermost bank material (second bank) |
| 406 | Localised patch of stones |
| 407 | Rocky grey brown loam between (405) and (408) |
| 408 | Large line of sub-rounded boulders |
| 409 | Stone rich loam layer, 17th century stoneware |
| 410 | Gravelly loam layer willed with C19th and C20th rubbish |
| 411 | Stone layer under (407) running up to (408) |
| 412 | Mortar inclusions in grey brown loam up to (408) |
| 413 | Basal fill of rock cut feature (415) below (410) |
| 414 | Patch of dark material within (411) |
| 415 | Cut of rock cut gully |
| 416 | Stoney rubble layer within first bank |
| 417 | Dark brown loam in trench extension filling space between (418) and (419) |
| 418 | Compact silty bank material running E-W in extension, sloping north |
| 419 | Stone platform edge |
| 420 | Compact stoney material below (417) and between (418) and (419) |
| 421 | Charcoal features |
| 422 | Below 417 |
| 423 | Burnt clay bank material below (416) |
| 424 | Dog skeleton 1 |
| 425 | Dog skeleton 2 |
| 426 | Clay beneath dog skeletons |
| 427 | Burnt clay below (411) |
| 428 | Patch of ash within (427) |
| 429 | Lower layer of burnt material below (423) |

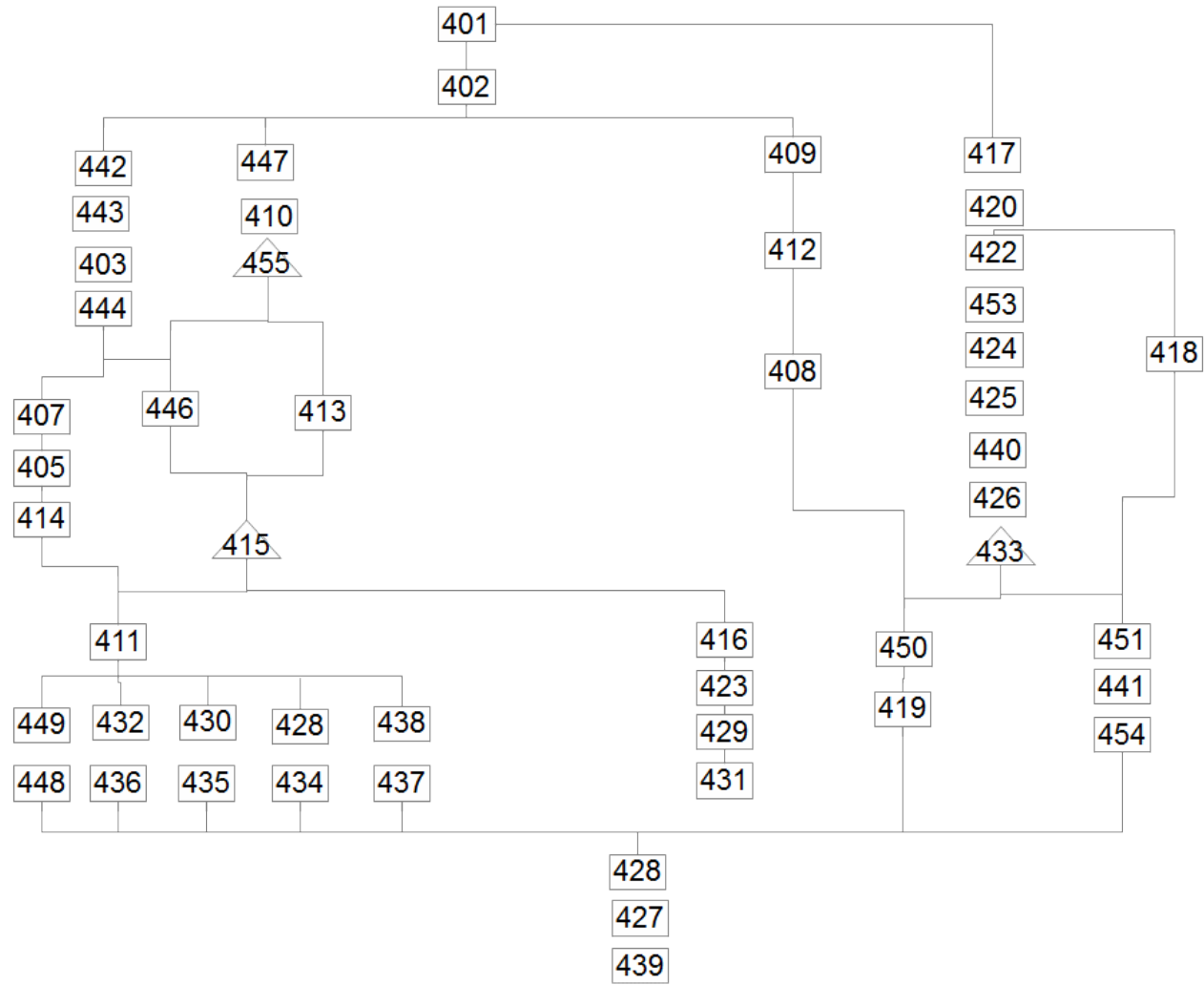
| | |
|-----|---|
| 430 | Second patch of ash within (427) |
| 431 | Burnt clay below (431) |
| 432 | Contents of potential post-hole cut into (427) |
| 433 | Cut for dogs |
| 434 | Cut for (428) |
| 435 | Cut for (430) |
| 436 | Cut for (432) |
| 437 | Cut below (405/411) |
| 438 | Fill of (437) |
| 439 | Stone layer below (412) |
| 440 | Material around dog skeletons |
| 441 | Burnt clay and stone below (418) |
| 442 | Bank material, first outer edge |
| 443 | Bank material, second outer edge |
| 444 | Stoney base of topsoil |
| 445 | Relic topsoil in bank |
| 446 | Compact stoney layer with glass and slate above (416) |
| 447 | Washed out stoney layer from topsoil (like 444) |
| 448 | Cut for possible post-hole (449) |
| 449 | Fill of (448) |
| 450 | Lime mortar below (408) |
| 451 | Relic topsoil beneath (418) |
| 452 | Relic topsoil below (422) |
| 453 | Below 452, above 440 |
| 454 | Below 441, above 427 |

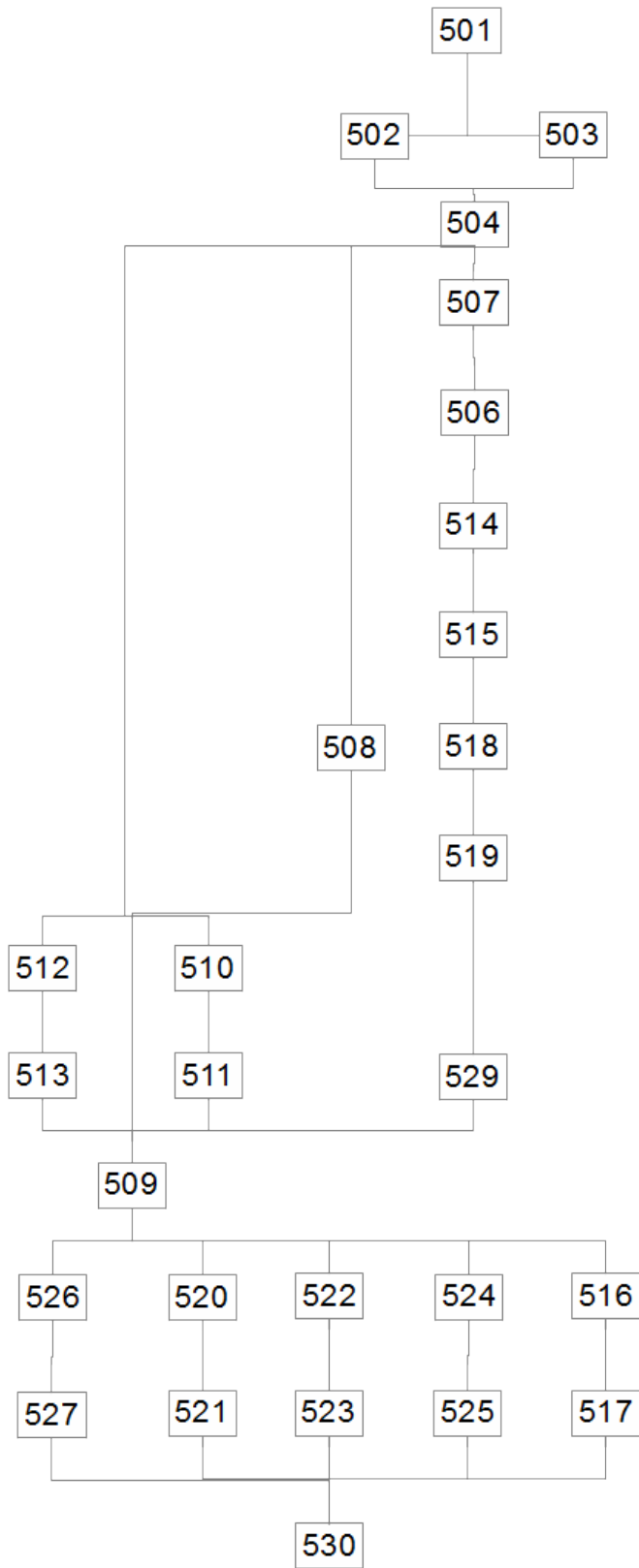
| Context No. | Description |
|--------------------|---|
| 501 | Sod |
| 502 | Silty loam topsoil |
| 503 | Stoney soil, base of ploughsoil? |
| 504 | Possible subsoil |
| 505 | Large stones with voids between them, south of trench |
| 506 | Mid brown silty loam similar to (504) |
| 507 | Stoney layer in middle of trench, very similar to (506) |
| 508 | Charcoal deposit, originally thought to be a hearth |
| 509 | Greyish clay layer, possibly a floor |
| 510 | Fill of a possible slot trench (511) |
| 511 | Possible slot trench |
| 512 | Fill of post-hole (513) |
| 513 | Post-hole |
| 514 | Layer of grey brown clay above (509) below (507) |
| 515 | Mid brown silty loam, charcoal flecks |
| 516 | Fill of post-hole (517) |
| 517 | Post-hole |
| 518 | Soft, fine textured, light orange-grey, sandy clay |
| 519 | Layer of large sub-angular stones, quite regular |
| 520 | Light orange brown sandy loam |
| 521 | Post-hole cut |
| 522 | Fill of stake-hole (523) |
| 523 | Stake-hole |

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|-----|---|
| 524 | Fill of stake-hole (525) |
| 525 | Stake-hole |
| 526 | Fill of stake-hole (527) |
| 527 | Stake-hole |
| 529 | Cut into old ground surface or subsoil at south of trench filled by (519) |

9.2 Appendix 2: Harris Matrices







9.3 Appendix 3: Photo Log

| Photo Number | Photo description |
|--------------|---|
| 1 | Tr 5 Pre-ex plan from west |
| 2 | Tr 5 Pre-ex plan from west, showing rock and masonry remains in background |
| 3 | View from east showing rock and masonry remains |
| 4 | View of location of Trench 4, before excavation from west, showing Pennyburn depression and Greenan to right background |
| 5 | Pre-ex view of Trench 4 from north |
| 6 | Pre-ex view of Trench 4 from north |
| 7 | General view of Trench 3 from northeast |
| 8 | View of Trench 3 from south after removal of sod. |
| 9 | View of Trench 3 from south after removal of sod. |
| 10 | View of Trench 3 from north after removal of sod. |
| 11 | View of Trench 4 from east after removal of sod. |
| 12 | View of Trench 4 showing damp earth (410) which contained modern dump material |
| 13 | View of Trench 4 showing stone setting (????) |
| 14 | General view of Trench 4 from west after removal of topsoil |
| 15 | General view of Trench 4 from west after removal of topsoil |
| 16 | View of Trench 4 showing damp earth (410) which contained modern dump material |
| 17 | View of Trench 4 showing damp earth (410) which contained modern dump material |
| 18 | View of Trench 4 stone setting (????) |
| 19 | View of Trench 4 stone setting (????) |
| 20 | View of Trench 4 stone setting (????) |
| 21 | View of Trench 4 stone setting (????) |
| 22 | View of Trench 4 stone setting ???? |
| 23 | |
| 24 | View of Trench 5 after removal of topsoil from west |

| | |
|----|--|
| 25 | View of Trench 5 after removal of topsoil from west |
| 26 | View of Trench 5 after removal of topsoil from east |
| 27 | View of Trench 5 after removal of topsoil from east |
| 28 | View of Trench 3 after removal of topsoil showing 302, 304 the loam layers and 342 the upper bank layer |
| 29 | View of Trench 3 from north after removal of topsoil showing 302, 304 the loam layers and 342 the upper bank layer |
| 30 | View of Trench 3 from south after removal of topsoil showing flat stone layer 303. |
| 31 | View of Trench 3 from south after removal of topsoil showing flat stone layer 303. |
| 32 | View of Trench 3 from east after removal of topsoil |
| 33 | View of Trench 3 from east after removal of topsoil |
| 34 | View of Trench 5 after removal of topsoil from west |
| 35 | View of Trench 5 after removal of topsoil from west |
| 36 | View of Trench 5 after removal of topsoil from east |
| 37 | View of Trench 5 after removal of topsoil from east |
| 38 | View of Trench 4 bank layer 442 from west. |
| 39 | View of Trench 4 bank layer 442 from west. |
| 40 | View of Trench 4 stone setting 408 / 419 and "platform" 411 |
| 41 | View of "platform" 411 from above |
| 42 | View of platform 411 and possible fill of feature 4?? cutting it. |
| 43 | Cut 4?? after removal of fill 4?? |
| 44 | Cut 4?? after removal of fill 4?? |
| 45 | Cut 4?? after removal of fill 4?? |
| 46 | Cut 4?? after removal of fill 4?? |
| 47 | Upper fill (306) of ditch (311) from north |
| 48 | Upper fill (306) of ditch (311) from north |
| 49 | Upper fill (306) of ditch (311) from north |
| 50 | View of removal of (304) from north |
| 51 | Rock cut gully (415) from east |
| 52 | Rock cut gully (415) from west |

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| 53 | Rock cut gully (415) from above |
| 54 | Rock cut gully (415) from above |
| 55 | View of gravelly loam 504 in Trench 5 and patch of charcoal within it and above old ground surface 509 |
| 56 | View of gravelly loam 504 in Trench 5 and patch of charcoal (508) within it and above old ground surface 509 |
| 57 | View of gravelly loam 504 in Trench 5 and patch of charcoal (508) within it and above old ground surface 509 |
| 58 | View of Trench 5 showing old ground surface (509) and post-hole (513) cutting it |
| 59 | View of Trench 5 from north showing old ground surface (509) and post-hole (513) cutting it |
| 60 | View of Trench 5 from south showing stoney upper fill of cut (529) |
| 61 | View of Trench 5 from south showing stoney upper fill of cut (529) |
| 62 | View of Trench 4 from northwest showing platform (411) and stone line (419) and upper fill (422) of cut (429). |
| 63 | View of Trench 4 from southwest showing platform (411) and stone line (419) and upper fill (422) of cut (429). |
| 64 | View of upper fill (422) of gully (429) |
| 65 | View of Trench 4 from southeast showing platform (411) and stone line (419) and upper fill (422) of cut (429). |
| 66 | View of south end Trench 3 from west showing flat stoney layer (303). |
| 67 | View of south end Trench 3 from west showing flat stoney layer (303). |
| 68 | View of south end Trench 3 from north showing flat stoney layer (303). |
| 69 | View of south end Trench 3 from north showing flat stoney layer (303). |
| 70 | View of Trench 4 from north showing section through bank under excavation showing (442) and (443) |
| 71 | View of Trench 4 from west showing section through bank under excavation showing (443) |
| 72 | View of Trench 4 from west showing section through bank under excavation showing (443) |
| 73 | View of Trench 4 from east showing section through bank under excavation showing (443) |
| 74 | View of Trench 5 extension from east after removal of sod. |

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|----|--|
| | |
| 75 | View of Trench 5 extension from east after removal of sod. |
| 76 | View of Trench 3 showing bank material (305) and revetment (308) being uncovered |
| 77 | View of Trench 3 showing bank material (305) and revetment (308) being uncovered |
| 78 | View of Trench 3, from the southwest showing paved area (319)to the north of trench |
| 79 | View of Trench 3, from the southwest showing paved area (319)to the north of trench |
| 80 | View of upper fill (306) of ditch (311) from south |
| 81 | View of upper fill (306) of ditch (311) from south |
| 82 | View of upper fill (306) of ditch (311) from south |
| 83 | View of upper fill (306) of ditch (311) and disturbed stones (312) to the north of bank (305) from north |
| 84 | View of upper fill (306) of ditch (311) and disturbed stones (312) to the north of bank (305) from north |
| 85 | View of Trench 4 showing (452) in closeup. |
| 86 | View of Trench 4 showing (452) from southwest |
| 87 | View of a possible relic ground surface (446) beneath bank in Trench 4 from above |
| 88 | View of a possible relic ground surface (446) beneath bank in Trench 4 from east |
| 89 | View of Trench 5 extension showing |
| 90 | View of north end of Trench 5 showing old ground surface (509) and linear depression (511), from east. |
| 91 | View of north end of Trench 5 showing old ground surface (509) and linear depression (511), from east. |
| 92 | View of north end of Trench 5 showing old ground surface (509) and linear depression (511), from west. |
| 93 | View of north end of Trench 5 showing old ground surface (509) and linear depression (511), from west. |
| 94 | View of charcoal and burnt orange layer (423) beneath bank in Trench 4 from above. |
| 95 | View of charcoal and burnt orange layer (423) beneath bank in Trench 4 |

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| | from above. |
| 96 | View of charcoal and burnt orange layer (423) beneath bank in Trench 4 from west. |
| 97 | View of charcoal and burnt orange layer (423) beneath bank in Trench 4 from east. |
| 98 | View of dog skeleton (424) |
| 99 | View of dog skeleton (424) from south. |
| 100 | View of large stone at end of (408) and mortar bonding |
| 101 | Ditch (311) under excavation |
| 102 | Ditch (311) under excavation showing ditch fill (313) |
| 103 | Dog skeleton (425) under excavation |
| 104 | Dog skeleton (425) under excavation |
| 105 | Dog skeleton (425) under excavation |
| 106 | View of upper fill (306) of ditch (311) and paved area (319) to the north of bank (305) from north |
| 107 | View of upper fill (306) of ditch (311) and paved area (319) to the north of bank (305) from north |
| 108 | View of upper fill (306) of ditch (311) and paved area (319) to the north of bank (305) from south |
| 109 | View of upper fill (306) of ditch (311) and paved area (319) to the north of bank (305) from south |
| 110 | View of bank revetment 308 from north |
| 111 | View of bank revetment 308 from north |
| 112 | View of posthole (513) from above |
| 113 | View of posthole (513) from above |
| 114 | View of posthole (513) from above |
| 115 | View of posthole (513) from above |
| 116 | View of Trench 3 |
| 120 | View of Trench 3 |
| 121 | View of Trench 3 |
| 122 | View of Trench 3 |
| 123 | View of Trench 3 |

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| 124 | View of Trench 4 surface of (427), (428) and *430) looking southwest |
| 125 | View of Trench 4 surface of (427), (428) and *430) looking southwest |
| 126 | View of Trench 4 surface of (427), (428) and *430) looking southeast |
| 127 | Post-ex view of (430) looking northeast |
| 128 | Post-ex view of (430) looking northeast |
| 129 | Post-ex view of (428) looking northeast |
| 130 | Post-ex view of (428) looking northeast |
| 131 | Post-ex view of (428) looking northeast |
| 132 | Post-ex plan of 428 and 430 looking northeast |
| 133 | General view of Trench 4 looking southeast |
| 134 | View of Trench 3 showing (308) from west |
| 135 | View of Trench 3 showing (308) from south |
| 136 | View of Trench 3 showing (308) from north |
| 137 | View of Trench 3 after removal of (305) from north |
| 138 | View of Trench 3 after removal of (305) from north |
| 139 | View of Trench 3 after removal of (305) from south |
| 140 | View of Trench 3 after removal of (305) from south |
| 141 | View of Trench 3 showing (308) from north |
| 142 | View of Trench 3 showing (308) from north |
| 143 | View of Trench 3 showing (308) from south |
| 144 | View of Trench 3 showing (308) from south |
| 145 | View of Trench 3 showing (308) and old ground surface (309) from south |
| 146 | View of Trench 4 showing (431) from southeast |
| 147 | View of Trench 5 extension area after removal of (509) from northwest |
| 148 | View of Trench 5 extension area after removal of (509) from northwest |
| 149 | View of Trench 5 from northeast |
| 150 | View of Trench 5 from northeast |
| 151 | View of Trench 5 from southwest |
| 152 | View of Trench 5 from southwest |
| 153 | View of (519) from southwest |

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| 154 | View of (519) from southwest |
| 155 | General post-ex view of Trench 4 from northwest |
| 156 | General post-ex view of Trench 4 from southeast |
| 157 | View of (419/433) from east |
| 158 | View of (419/433) from northeast |
| 159 | View of (418, 419 and 427) from southwest |
| 160 | General view of Trench 4 from northwest |
| 161 | General view of Trench 4 extension from northeast |
| 162 | General view of rock cut gully (415) from northwest |
| 163 | General view of rock cut gully (415) from southeast |
| 164 | General view of rock cut gully (415) from southeast |
| 165 | General view of rock cut gully (415) from southeast |
| 166 | General view of rock cut gully (415) from southeast |
| 167 | Trench 4 bedrock below excavated bank |
| 168 | Post-ex view of Trench 4 bedrock and rock cut gully (415) |
| 169 | Post-ex view of (405) post removal of (411) from southwest |
| 170 | Trench 4 possible post-holes (435) and (436) |
| 171 | Trench 4 possible post-holes (435) and (436) |
| 172 | Trench 4 – view of (408) and stones beneath (412) from southwest |
| 173 | Trench 4 general view extension from southeast |
| 174 | Post-ex view of cut (436) from southwest |
| 175 | Post-ex view of cut (436) from southwest |
| 176 | Post-ex view of Trench 4 sondage showing possible post-holes |
| 177 | View of subsoil and leached clay beneath (408) from north |
| 178 | Trench 5 post-ex plan of extension from northwest |
| 179 | Trench 5 post-ex plan of extension from southeast |
| 180 | Trench 5 detail of post-hole and stake-hole clustered |
| 181 | Trench 5 post-ex view from north |
| 182 | Trench 5 post-ex view from north |
| 183 | Trench 5 post-ex view from south |

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| 184 | Trench 5 post-ex view from south |
| 185 | Trench 5 cut (529) and large stones (519) filling it from north |
| 186 | Trench 5 cut (529) and large stones (519) filling it from north |
| 187 | View of Trench 3 showing paved area (319) from northeast |
| 188 | View of Trench 3 showing paved area (319) from northeast |
| 189 | View of Trench 3 showing paved area (319) from northeast |
| 190 | View of Trench 3 showing paved area (319) from south |
| 191 | View of Trench 3 showing paved area (319) from above |
| 192 | Birds-eye view of south of Trench 5 |
| 193 | Birds-eye view of south of Trench 5 |
| 194 | Birds-eye view of north of Trench 5 |
| 195 | Birds-eye view of north of Trench 5 |
| 196 | Birds-eye view of south of Trench 3 |
| 197 | Birds-eye view of south of Trench 3 |
| 198 | Birds-eye view of Nouth of Trench 3 |
| 199 | Birds-eye view of centre of Trench 3 |
| 200 | Birds-eye view of South of Trench 3 |
| 201 | Birds-eye view of South of Trench 3 |
| 202 | Birds-eye view of South of Trench 3 |
| 203 | Birds-eye view of entirety of Trench 3 |
| 204 | Birds-eye view of entirety of Trench 5 |
| 205 | Birds-eye view of entirety of Trench 5 |
| 206 | Birds-eye view of entirety of Trench 5 |
| 207 | Birds-eye view of entirety of Trench 5 |
| 208 | Birds-eye view of entirety of Trench 3 |
| 209 | Birds-eye view of entirety of Trench 3 |
| 210 | Birds-eye view of south of Trench 3 |
| 211 | Birds-eye view of south of Trench 3 |
| 212 | Birds-eye view of south of Trench 3 |
| 213 | Birds-eye view of south of Trench 3 |

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| 214 | Birds-eye view of east of Trench 4 |
| 215 | Birds-eye view of east of Trench 4 |
| 216 | Birds-eye view of east and centre of Trench 4 |
| 217 | Birds-eye view of west and centre of Trench 4 |
| 218 | Birds-eye view of east of Trench 4 |
| 219 | Birds-eye view of east of Trench 4 |
| 220 | Birds-eye view of west of Trench 4 |
| 221 | Birds-eye view of west of Trench 4 |
| 222 | Birds-eye view of west of Trench 4 |
| 223 | Detail of Docherty's Tower |
| 224 | Detail of Docherty's Tower |
| 225 | Detail of Docherty's Tower |
| 226 | Detail of Docherty's Tower |
| 227 | Detail of Docherty's Tower |
| 228 | Detail of Docherty's Tower |
| 229 | Detail of Docherty's Tower |
| 230 | Detail of Docherty's Tower |
| 231 | Detail of Docherty's Tower |
| 232 | Detail of Docherty's Tower |
| 233 | Detail of Docherty's Tower |
| 234 | Detail of Docherty's Tower |
| 235 | East section of Trench 5 |
| 236 | East section of Trench 5 |
| 237 | East section of Trench 5 |
| 238 | North section Trench 4 |
| 239 | North section Trench 4 |
| 240 | North section Trench 4 |
| 241 | North section Trench 4 |
| 242 | North section Trench 4 |
| 243 | North section Trench 4 |

| | |
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| 244 | East Section Trench 4 extension |
| 245 | East Section Trench 4 extension |
| 246 | View of site from west |
| 247 | View of site from west |

Appendix 4: Drawing Log

| Drawing No. | Trench | Description |
|--------------------|---------------|---|
| 1 | 4 | Post removal (420) mid-ex |
| 2 | 5 | Surface of (502), (503) and (504) |
| 3 | 4 | Profile through NNE facing |
| 4 | 4 | Mid-ex plan showing extension past removal of (402), (407) and (410) |
| 5 | 5 | Plan showing Tr5 extension and 508 |
| 6 | 4 | Overlay plan |
| 7 | 3 | Following removal of (303) showing surface of (303), (304)and (305) |
| 8 | 3 | Following removal of (303) and (304) showing surface of (306) and (307) |
| 9 | 3 | Following removal of (306) and (307) showing surface (310) and (309) |
| 10 | 3 | Following excavation of ditch fills |
| 11 | 3 | Following excavation of (305) showing (308) and (309) |
| 12 | 5 | Overlay plan of Drawing 5 showing surface of (509) |
| 13 | 4 | Post-ex overlay for additions |
| 14 | 3 | SE facing section |
| 15 | 4 | SW facing section |
| 16 | 4 | NE facing section, extension |
| 17 | 4 | NW facing section, extension |
| 18 | 5 | NW facing section |
| 19 | 5 | SW facing section |
| 20 | 5 | Profile of cut (513) |
| 21 | 5 | Profile of cut (521) |
| 22 | 5 | Profile of cut (523) |
| 23 | 5 | Profile of cut (525) |

| Drawing No. | Trench | Description |
|--------------------|---------------|--|
| 24 | 5 | Profile of cut (527) |
| 25 | 5 | Plan of extent of (519) and excavated features |
| 26 | 3 | Profile of stake-holes (325) and (327) |
| 27 | 3 | Profile of stake-holes (329), (331) and (333) |
| 28 | 3 | Profile of stake-holes (335) and post-hole (315) |
| 29 | 3 | Profile of stake-holes (337) and (339) |
| 30 | 3 | Profile of stake-holes (341) and (343) |
| 31 | 3 | Section of post-hole (322) |
| 32 | 3 | SE facing trench section |
| 33 | 3 | Post-ex plan of trench. |

9.5 Appendix 5: Sample Log

| Sample No. | Trench | Context | Description |
|------------|--------|---------|---|
| 1 | 4 | 453 | 1 large sample bag |
| 2 | 5 | 508 | 1 large sample bag |
| 3 | 5 | 510 | 1 large sample bag |
| 4 | 5 | 512 | 1 large sample bag |
| 5 | 4 | 428 | 1 large sample bag |
| 6 | 4 | 429 | 1 large sample bag |
| 7 | 4 | 431 | 1 large sample bag |
| 8 | 3 | 309 | 4 large bags, old ground surface |
| 9 | 5 | 520 | 1 large sample bag |
| 10 | 5 | 516 | 1 large sample bag |
| 11 | 4 | 432 | 1 large sample bag |
| 12 | 3 | 316 | 3 large sample bags |
| 13 | 3 | 316 | 1 large sample bag from base of context |
| 14 | 3 | 320 | 1 large sample bag from post-hole |
| 15 | 3 | 321 | 1 large sample bag from post-hole |

Appendix 6: Finds Register List

| Trench | Context | Description | Quantity | Weight (g) |
|--------|---------|----------------|----------|------------|
| 1 | 102 | Clay pipe | 2 | 4.5 |
| | 102 | Glass | 1 | 2.1 |
| | 102 | Iron | 2 | 185.4 |
| | 102 | Pottery | 9 | 41.8 |
| | | | | |
| 2 | 202 | Corroded metal | 6 | 89.8 |
| | 202 | Glass | 30 | 601.4 |
| | 202 | Metalwork | 2 | 5.4 |
| | 202 | Pottery | 5 | 122.9 |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| 3 | 302 | Animal bone | 25 | 19.4 |
| | 302 | Brick | 15 | 98.9 |
| | 302 | Clay pipe | 4 | 5.4 |
| | 302 | Clinker | 76 | 141.2 |
| | 302 | Glass | 16 | 41.2 |
| | 302 | Iron | 10 | 184.4 |
| | 302 | Pottery | 46 | 120.1 |
| | 303 | Clinker | 2 | 4.8 |
| | 303 | Glass | 2 | 1.5 |
| | 303 | Pottery | 7 | 18 |
| | 304 | Animal bone | 3 | 3.5 |

| | | | | |
|---|--------------|-----------------|-----|--------|
| | 304 | Pottery | 4 | 6 |
| | 306 | Animal bone | 6 | 4 |
| | 306 | Brick | 2 | 7.6 |
| | 306 | Clay pipe | 1 | 2.3 |
| | 306 | Clinker | 4 | 12.9 |
| | 306 | Glass | 1 | 0.9 |
| | 306 | Pottery | 7 | 47.9 |
| | 306 | Animal bone | 9 | 7.5 |
| | 307 | Animal bone | 4 | 1.5 |
| | 309 | Quartz (struck) | 1 | 10.5 |
| | | | | |
| 4 | Unstratified | Glass | 3 | 55.7 |
| | 402 | Glass | 1 | 2.1 |
| | 402 | Iron | 4 | 56.4 |
| | 402 | Pottery | 6 | 19.3 |
| | 403 | Animal bone | 1 | 3.1 |
| | 403 | Brick | 4 | 37.4 |
| | 403 | Pottery | 8 | 49.4 |
| | 404/410 | Glass | 134 | 1249.3 |
| | 404/410 | Iron | 14 | 454.2 |
| | 404/410 | Plastic | 4 | 3.8 |
| | 404/410 | Pottery | 19 | 152.2 |
| | 405 | Pottery | 3 | 8.1 |
| | 406 | Brick | 1 | 91.4 |

| | | | | |
|--|-----|--------------------------|-----|---------|
| | 406 | Pottery | 6 | 7.6 |
| | 407 | Brass (handle) | 1 | 29.5 |
| | 407 | Glass | 1 | 67.1 |
| | 407 | Iron | 3 | 266 |
| | 407 | Pottery | 3 | 220 |
| | 409 | Animal bone | 3 | 23.9 |
| | 409 | Burnt flint | 1 | 8.7 |
| | 409 | Clinker | 2 | 5.8 |
| | 409 | Iron | 1 | 3 |
| | 409 | Pottery | 4 | 44.7 |
| | 410 | Animal bone | 3 | 24 |
| | 410 | Brick | 5 | 831.1 |
| | 410 | Bullet | 1 | 11 |
| | 410 | China | 14 | 63.4 |
| | 410 | Chrome (handle) | 1 | 147 |
| | 410 | Clinker | 8 | 98.4 |
| | 410 | Copper alloy | 3 | 79.5 |
| | 410 | Fabric | 13 | 40.2 |
| | 410 | Flint | 1 | 3.2 |
| | 410 | Glass | 314 | 8092.7 |
| | 410 | Glass bottles (complete) | 21 | |
| | 410 | Iron | 170 | 15714.2 |
| | 410 | Leather | 26 | 850.5 |
| | 410 | Mortar | 2 | 51 |

| | | | | | |
|--|---------|----------------------|-----------|-------|--------|
| | 410 | Non-ferrous material | vitrified | 169.9 | |
| | 410 | Plastic | | 1 | 0.6 |
| | 410 | Pottery | | 126 | 2175.8 |
| | 410 | Round stone | | | 161.2 |
| | 410 | Shell | | 2 | 10.6 |
| | 410 | Slag | | 2 | 130.3 |
| | 410 | Steel (spoon) | | | 13 |
| | 410 | Stone | | 1 | 303.9 |
| | 410 | Tile | | 3 | 2335.5 |
| | 411 | Animal bone | | | 1.7 |
| | 411 | Brick | | 3 | 132.6 |
| | 411 | Flint | | 1 | 1.7 |
| | 411 | Glass | | 2 | 8.9 |
| | 411 | Iron | | 1 | 337.4 |
| | 411 | Mortar | | 1 | 33.4 |
| | 411/427 | Animal bone | | | 0.6 |
| | 412 | Shell | | 1 | 1.8 |
| | 413 | Mortar | | 4 | 44.3 |
| | 417 | Flint | | 1 | 10.2 |
| | 417 | Glass | | 3 | 9.4 |
| | 417 | Iron | | 1 | 10.1 |
| | 417 | Plastic | | 1 | 1.8 |
| | 417 | Whetstone | | 1 | 100.9 |
| | 422 | Clay pipe bowl | | 1 | 8.7 |

| | | | | |
|---|------------|---------------------|----|--------|
| | 422 | Glass | 6 | 54.2 |
| | 422 | Iron | 6 | 149.1 |
| | 423 | Animal bone | 20 | 15.5 |
| | 424 | Animal bone | 73 | 326.6 |
| | Assoc. 424 | Animal bone | 83 | 343.9 |
| | 425 | Animal bone | 32 | 48.9 |
| | 426 | Animal bone | 3 | 10 |
| | 426 | Glass | 14 | 157.7 |
| | 426 | Quartz | 1 | 5.6 |
| | 429 | Flint | 1 | 0.2 |
| | 429 | Flint (end scraper) | 1 | 11.9 |
| | 429 | Whetstone | 1 | 37 |
| | 431 | Stone finds | 5 | 1296.2 |
| | | | | |
| 5 | 501 | Brick | 4 | 288.2 |
| | 501 | Button | 1 | 0.8 |
| | 501 | Clay pipe bowl | 1 | 2.3 |
| | 501 | Clinker | 5 | 65.2 |
| | 501 | Iron | 2 | 109.9 |
| | 501 | Plastic | 1 | 0.9 |
| | 501 | Pottery | 21 | 133.8 |
| | 501 | Stoneware bottle | 6 | 56.5 |
| | 502 | Brick | 2 | 262.7 |
| | 502 | Clinker | 4 | 53.4 |

| | | | | |
|--|-----|-----------------|----|-------|
| | 502 | Iron | 1 | 9.7 |
| | 502 | Pottery | 5 | 20.9 |
| | 503 | Pottery | 1 | 69.6 |
| | 503 | Slate | 1 | 69.4 |
| | 504 | Brick | 4 | 200.6 |
| | 504 | Burnt flint | 1 | 1.6 |
| | 504 | Clinker | 2 | 18.9 |
| | 504 | Glass | 9 | 60.1 |
| | 504 | Iron | 4 | 50.2 |
| | 504 | Pottery | 11 | 44.8 |
| | 504 | Slate | 1 | 284.1 |
| | 506 | Animal bone | 6 | 84.6 |
| | 506 | Iron | 1 | 24.1 |
| | 506 | Pottery | 1 | 37.9 |
| | 509 | Iron | 3 | 22.5 |
| | 509 | Quartz (struck) | 1 | 6.8 |
| | 514 | Animal bone | 1 | 1.7 |
| | 514 | Iron | 1 | 3 |
| | 515 | Animal bone | 2 | 43 |
| | 515 | Glass | 2 | 6.3 |
| | 516 | Flint | 1 | 2.3 |
| | 518 | Glass | 1 | 5.1 |



Figure 1: General Location map of Elagh Castle and surrounding area

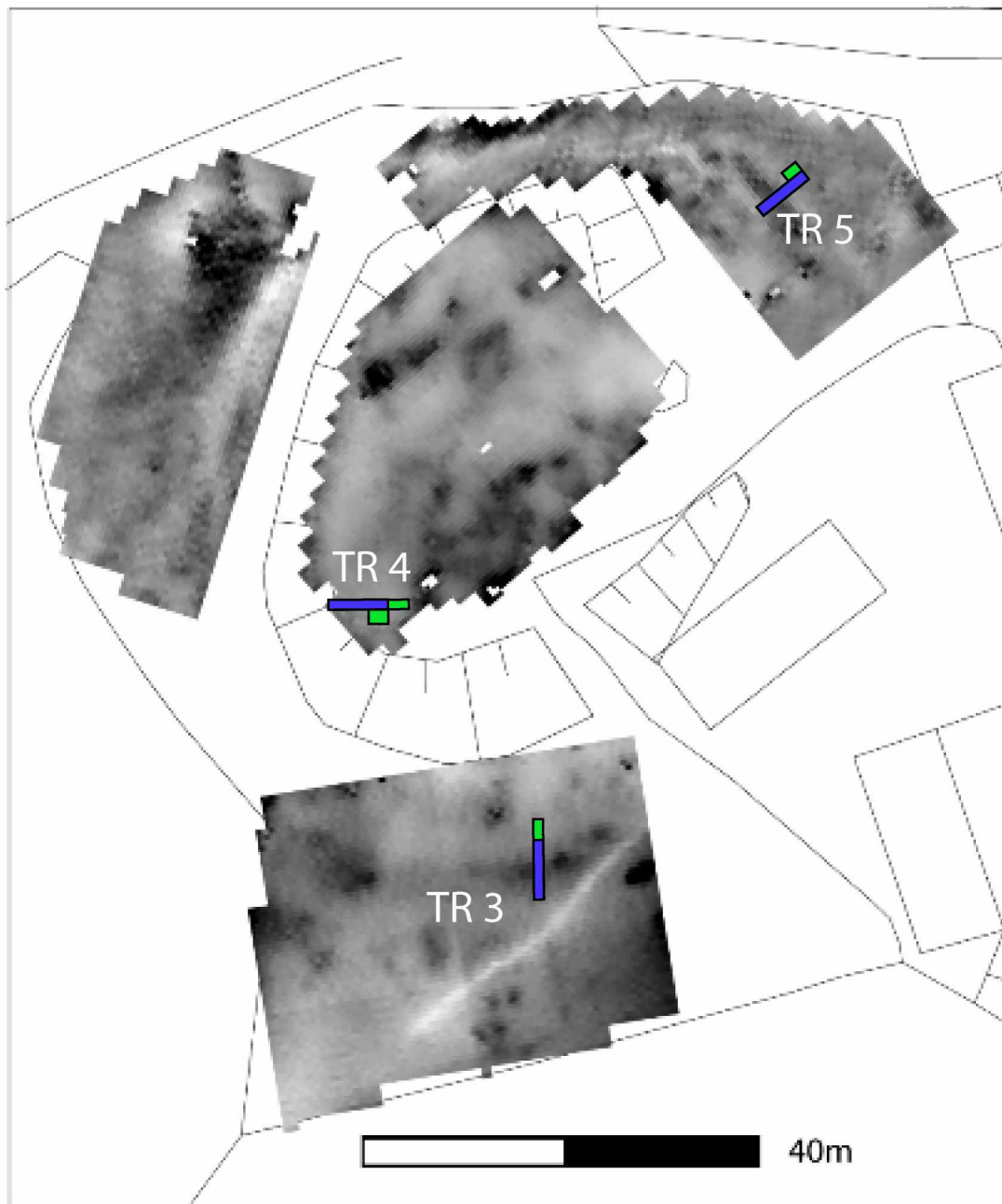


Figure 2: Detailed location map of Elagh Castle showing results of resistivity survey and location of Summer 2013 excavation trenches. Initial trenches in blue, trench extensions in green.



Figure 3: A sketch by Captain Willerby Smith, dated 1802, reproduced in Colby (1837)



Figure 4a: Ashby's 1600 map of Derry and vicinity, reproduced in Hayes-McCoy (1964)

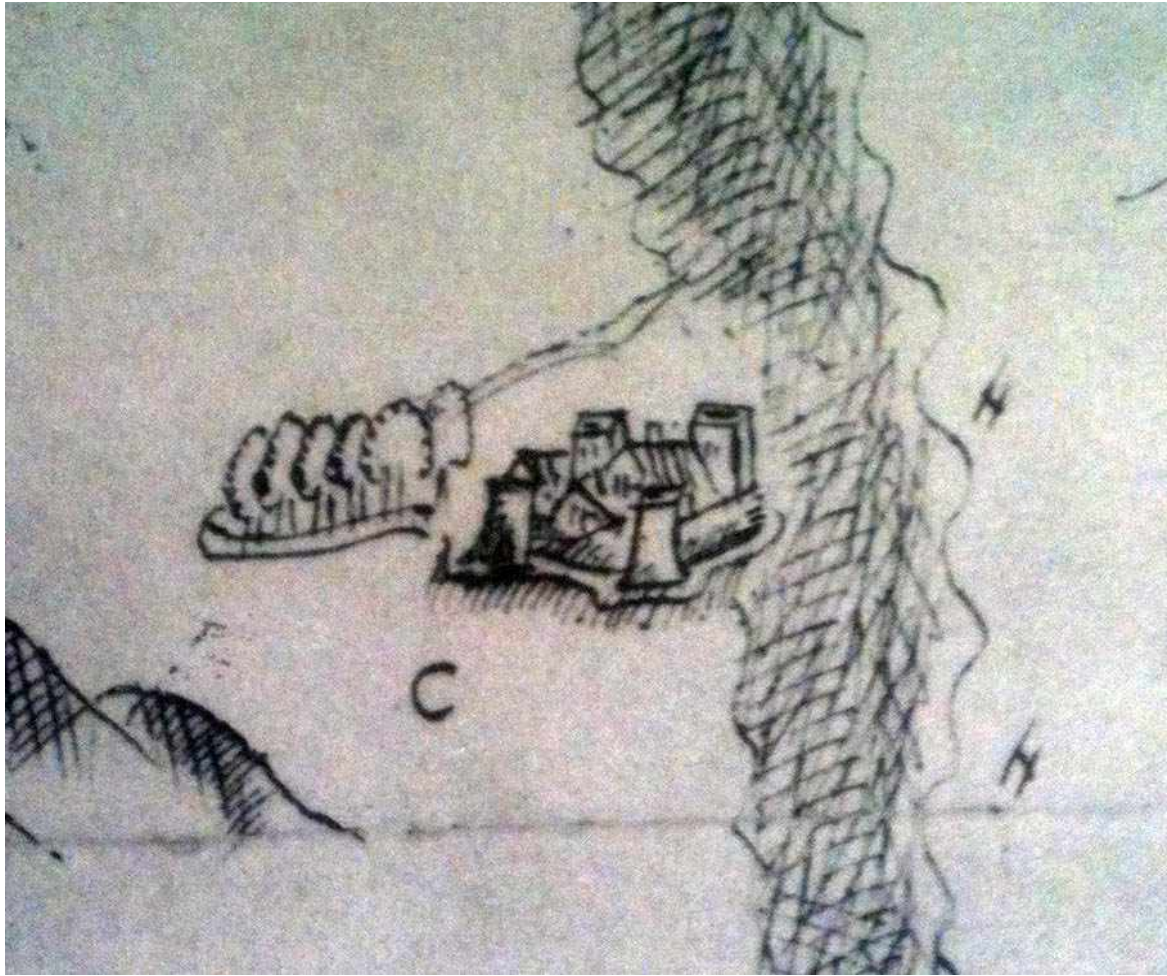


Figure 4b: Detail of Ashby's 1600 map showing Elagh Castle



Figure 5: Detail of John Speed's 1610 Map of Ulster (Ewart B, 24)



Figure 6: Detail of William Bartlett's 1603 General Description of Ulster Map (Ewart B, 1603)

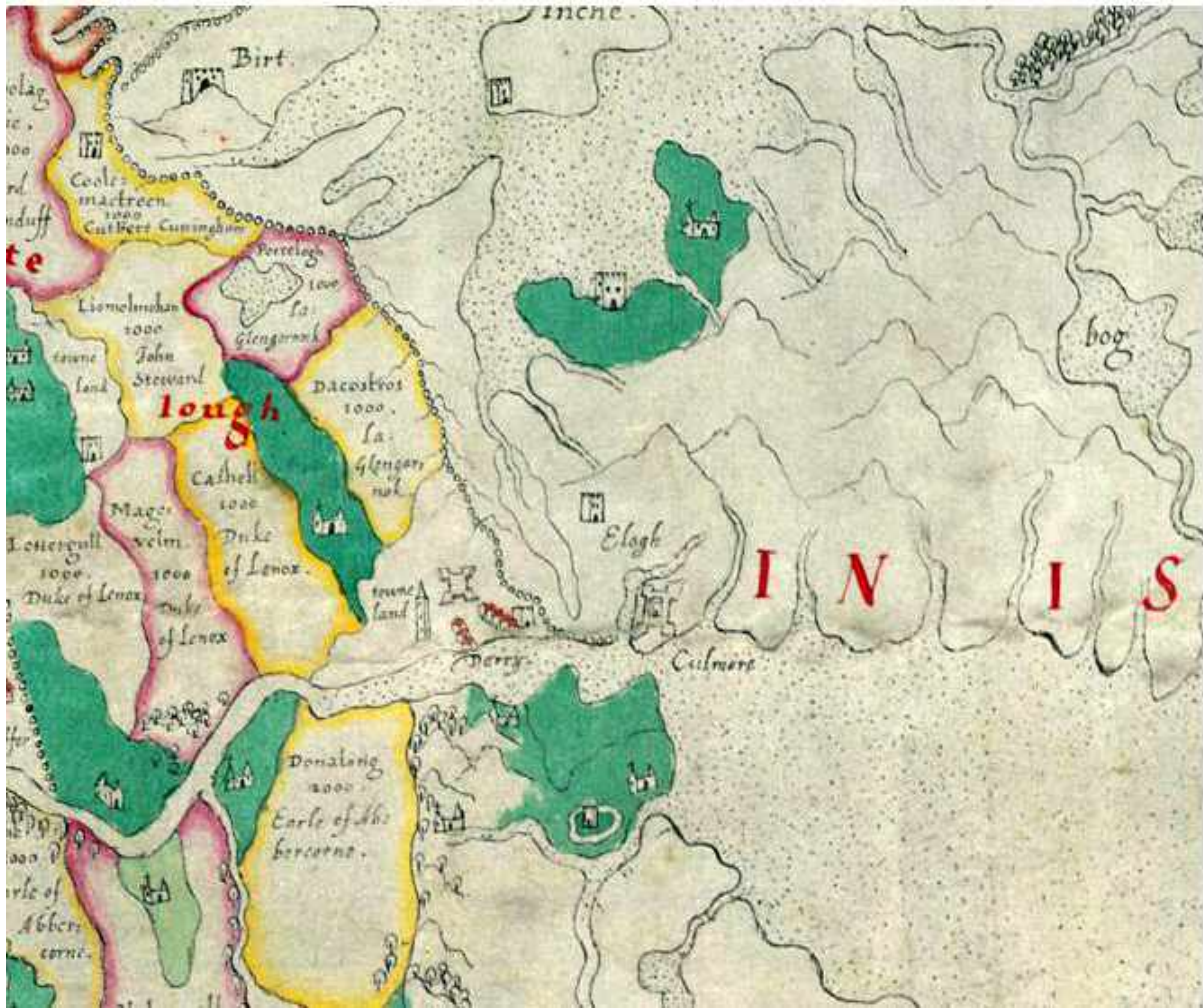


Figure 7: Detail of the “Map of the Escheated Counties” map of 1609-10 by Josiah Bodley (Ewart B, Drawer 7, No. 3)

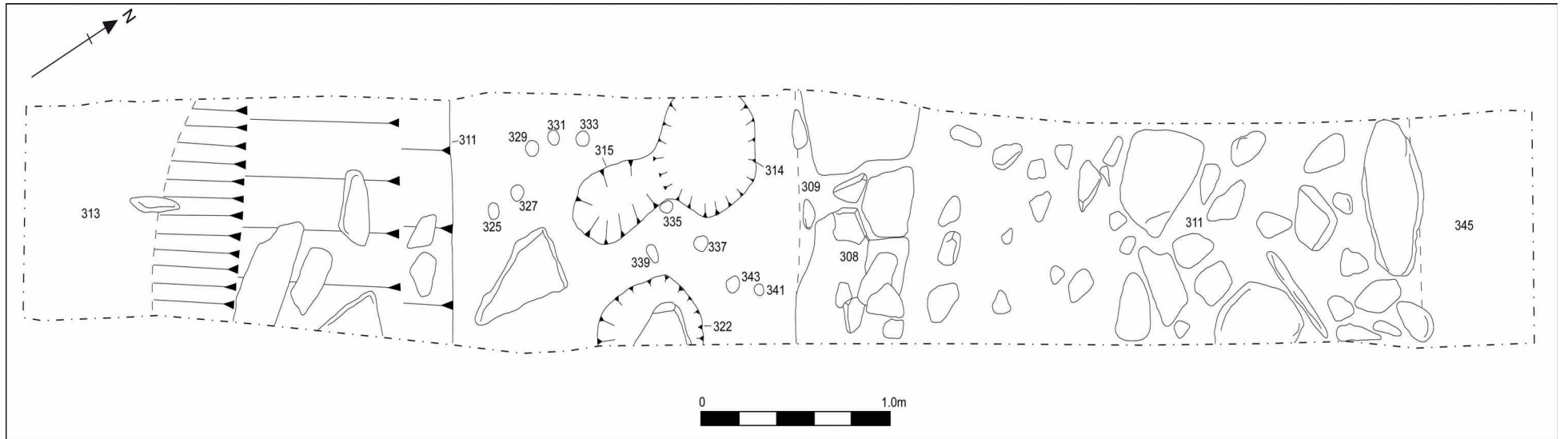


Figure 8: Plan of Trench 3

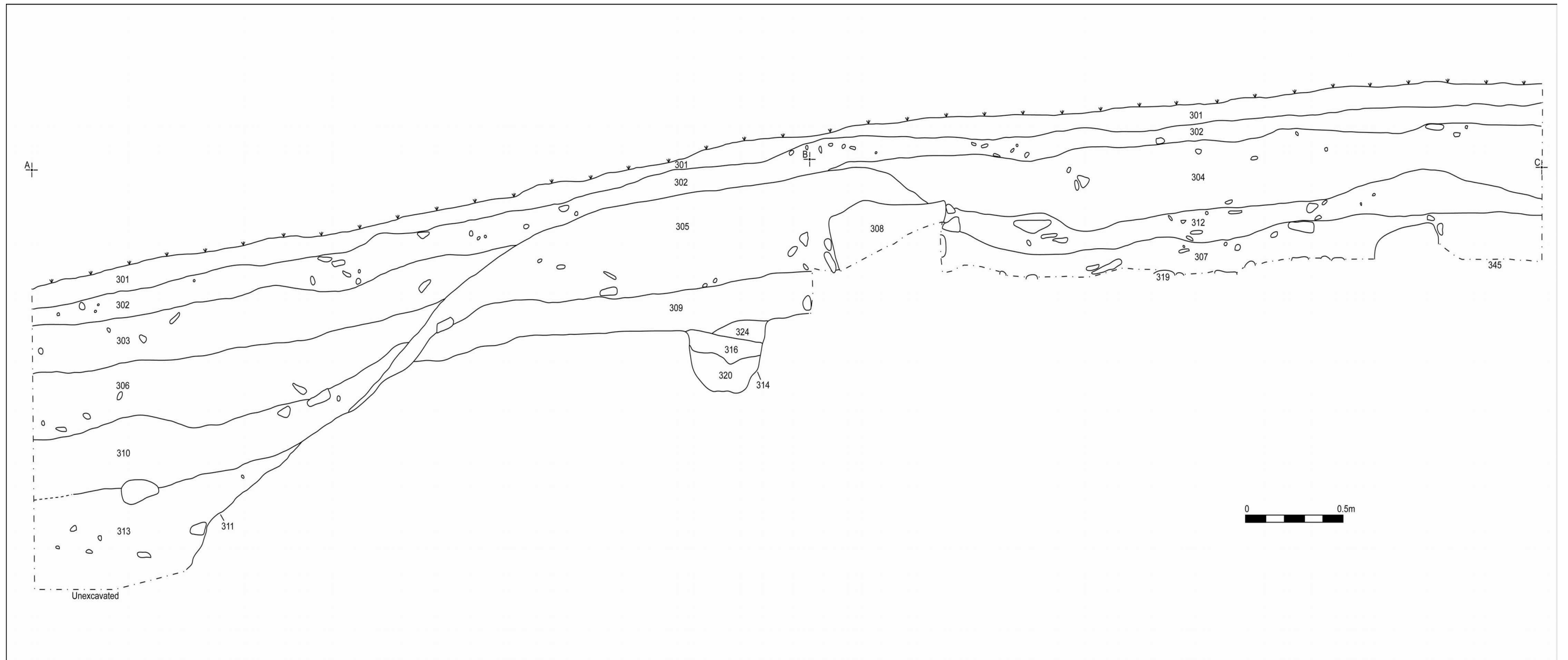


Figure 9: Section of Trench 3

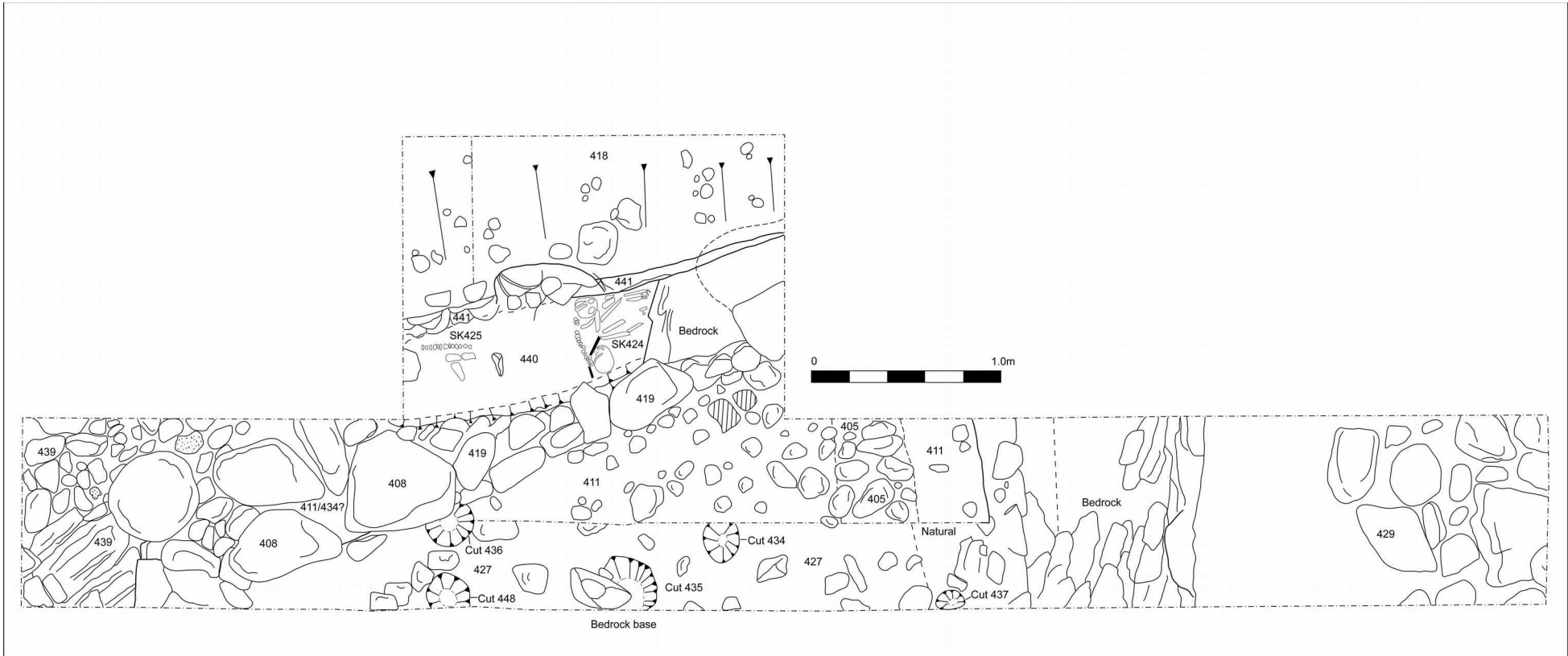


Figure 10: Plan of trench 4

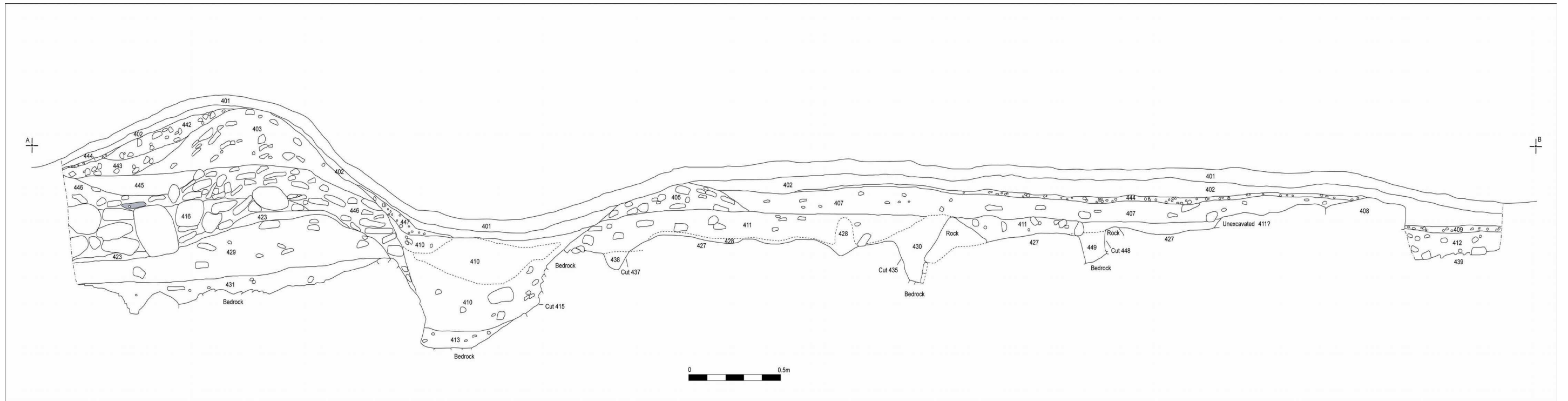


Figure 11: Section of Trench 4

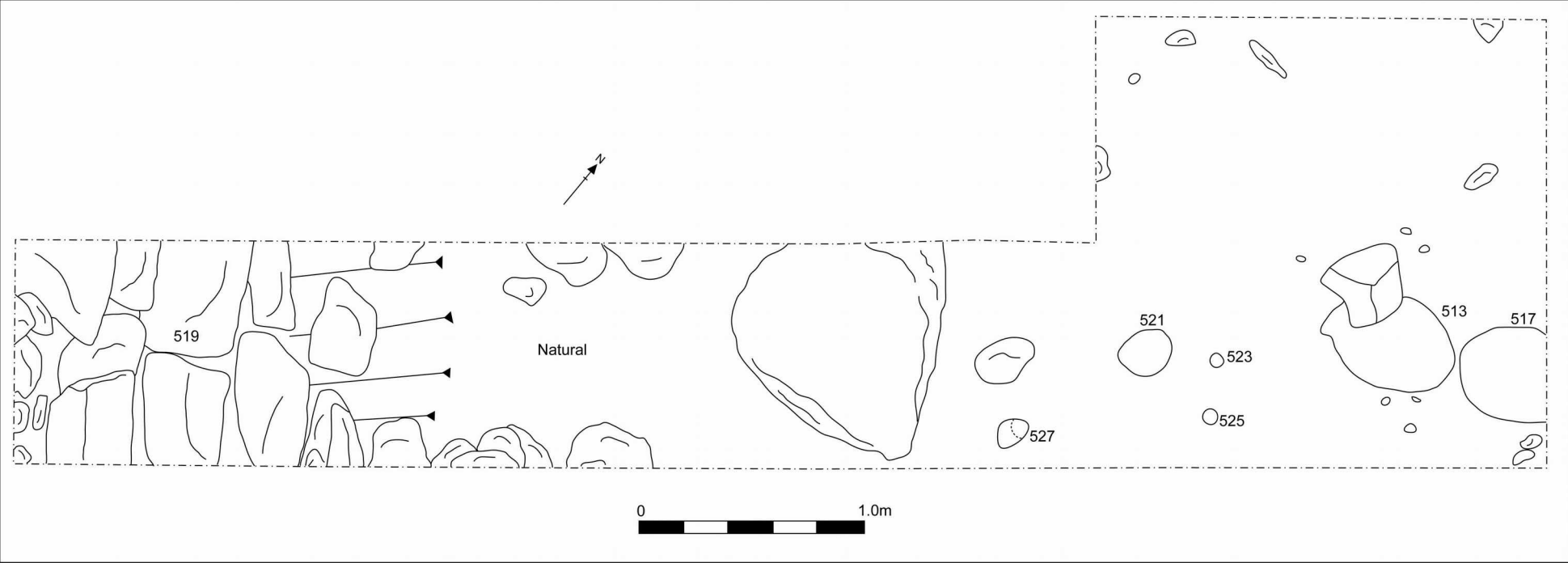


Figure 12: Plan of Trench 5

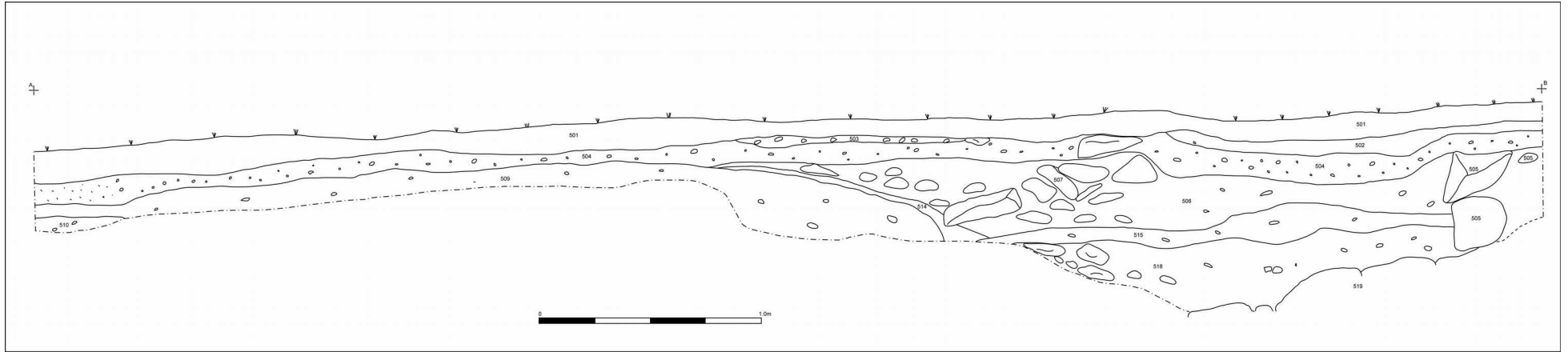


Figure 13: Section of Trench 5



Photo 1: Trench 3 under excavation showing view over Elagh Castle to the southeast



Photo 2: View of Trench 3 after removal of sod and topsoil showing in foreground flattened stone layer (303), in the background the loam layer (304) and the light band in the middle the top of the revetted earthen bank (305)



Photo 3: The cut of the ditch in Trench 3 (311)



Photo 4: Birds eye view of Trench 3 showing (at bottom) possible paved area (3), stone revetting (308) after removal of the bank, postholes beneath bank (305) and (at top) ditch cut (311)



Photo 5 Pits / post-holes and stake-holes beneath earthen bank (305) in Trench 3



Photo 6: Trench 4 in advance of excavation, from East, showing curving earthen bank initially believed to be masonry.



Photo 7: View through earthen bank (442, 443 and 403) cast up by digging of “treasure hunters” pit (455) with stones cast up from digging of rock cut gully (415) beneath earthen bank.



Photo 8: Bird's eye view of Trench 4 showing (at bottom



Photo 9: Bird's eye view of Trench 5