

Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork Evaluation Report No. 290



Dunboe Old Church
Downhill
Co. Londonderry / Derry

AE/14/184E

Philip Macdonald, Queen's University Belfast

Site Specific Information

Site Name: (field adjacent to) Dunboe Old Church.

Townland: Downhill.

SMR No (if applicable): (field adjacent to) LDY 002:001.

Grid Ref.: C75863541

County: Londonderry / Derry.

Excavation Licence No.: AE/14/184E.

Planning Ref. No.: N/A.

Other NIEA Refs.: Bexc 184/14 and B331/04

Dates of Excavation: 11/11/14 to 14/11/14 and 24/11/14 to 25/11/14.

Archaeologists Present: Philip Macdonald (director), Sapphire Mussen (11/11/14 to 14/11/14 only) and Mal Conway (National Trust; 11/11/14 to 13/11/14 and 24/11/14 to 25/11/14).

Brief Summary: Archaeological excavation consisting of four manually excavated, small, test trenches followed by the mechanical excavation of three longer trenches. The excavations were undertaken as part of an evaluation of the archaeological potential of part of a field located immediately to the east of Dunboe Old Church. No deposits, features or artefacts of archaeological significance were observed during the course of the excavations.

Type of excavation: Manual excavation of four small test trenches (all 1.0 metre by 3.0 metres; Trench Nos.1, 2, 3 and 4), followed by the mechanical excavation of three longer trenches (11.75, 12.40 and 24.20 metres long, all 1.2 metres wide; Trench Nos.5, 6 and 7 respectively). The excavation took place within a scheduled area as part of a wider field evaluation that included a resistivity geophysical survey and which was undertaken in order to inform a decision about the proposed expansion of the adjacent Castlerock Presbyterian Church Burying Ground. The excavations were conducted under the supervision of the licensee (Philip Macdonald) and the stratigraphic sequence was documented using the standard context recording method.

Size of area opened: Four manually excavated test trenches each 3.0 by 1.0 metres in size (Trench Nos.1, 2, 3 and 4); three mechanically excavated trenches variously 11.75, 12.40 and 24.20 metres long by 1.2 metres wide (Trench Nos.5, 6 and 7 respectively).

Current Land Use: The site is currently used for grazing sheep, but has been under cultivation in living memory.

Proposed Land Use: Cemetery.

Account of the Excavation

The aim of the project is to evaluate the archaeological potential of an area located immediately to the east of Dunboe Old Church and graveyard (Sites and Monuments Record LDY 002:001) in order to inform a decision by the landowner (National Trust) regarding a proposed extension of the Castlerock Presbyterian Burying Ground, which is located immediately to the north of the trapezoidal graveyard surrounding Dunboe Old Church.¹ The excavations reported upon here follow on from an evaluative geophysical survey conducted in May 2014 (McDermott and McAlister 2014).

Background

The old church at Dunboe is set upon the northern edge of a near-circular mound located centrally within a trapezoidal-shaped graveyard. Today, the church consists of a near east-west aligned ruin of simple, rectangular plan (external dimensions 19.2 metres by 8.4 metres). The highest surviving part of the ruin is the eastern gable (maximum estimated height 4.3 metres), although sections of the southern and northern walls also remain standing to an estimated height of 3.2 metres. Where visible the walling consists of roughly carved, local basalt boulders. There is no evidence to suggest where the original entrance to the church was located. A view of the church ‘from the southeast’, along with a plan showing its simple rectangular form and a sketch of the masonry of the eastern gable form part of the *Ordnance Survey Memoirs* (Day and McWilliams 1991, 48). These illustrations indicate relatively little change to the condition and extent of the ruin since the 1830s. No architectural features survive. A contributor to the Northern Ireland Sites and Monuments Record noted that the walling looks post-medieval in date (Northern Ireland Environment Agency SM7 File LDY 2:1), although based solely upon the character of the ruin’s fabric a late medieval date for the church is equally plausible. The near-circular mound upon which the ruined church is located forms a localised height that has seemingly been added to, if not entirely formed, as a result of long-term burial activity. The near circularity of the mound suggests its edge may represent the collapsed and denuded remains of an early enclosure around the medieval church. That the ruined church is located on the northern edge of the mound’s summit suggests that an earlier church may have been located on the centre of the mound and that the earlier church continued in use whilst its successor was built on its northern side where burial activity is traditionally not favoured (cf. Silvester 2012). The trapezoidal-shaped boundary wall of the graveyard which encloses the near-circular mound is of uncertain date. It is reasonable to assume that it predates 1810 as this is the date of the Bruce family vault (Girvan 1975, 58; Reeves-Smyth 1982, 180-181, no.123), which is located within the southwestern corner of the trapezoidal-shaped boundary and is unlikely to have been built outside the defined bounds of the graveyard. It is a distinct possibility that the boundary wall dates to the 1770s when the Downhill demesne was being created (see below), although it has been plausibly suggested that the wall may date to the seventeenth century or slightly earlier (Reeves-Smyth 1992b, 178, no.20). The most recent gravestone within the churchyard dates to the 1980s and the maintained appearance of a number of the more recent graves indicates that the site is still actively used as a place of mourning.

The earliest reference to the church at Dunboe is apparently that contained within the 1302-1306 Ecclesiastical Taxation of Ireland (Sweetman and Handcock 1886, 215), although it has been claimed, on uncertain authority, that the original parish church was built in 1291 (i.e. May 1940; Girvan 1975, 58; Curl 1986, 378). The medieval parish church is also recorded in a 1397 *Rental of the See Estates* (Reeves 1850, 77, 84) and had a periodically eventful history. For example, according to the *Annals of the Four Masters*, in 1532 one ‘Walter MacQuillin’ was slain and a ‘Conor O’Kane’ burned in the church (O’Donovan 1854b, 1410-1411). Study of the

¹ To avoid any potential confusion, the trapezoidal churchyard within which the site of Dunboe Old Church is located is referred to as ‘the graveyard’, whilst the adjacent Castlerock Presbyterian Burying Ground whose proposed expansion has prompted the excavation is referred to as ‘the burying ground’ throughout the report.

extensive records held in the archives of the Clothworkers' Company by James Stevens Curl suggests that the church was in a ruined state by the beginning of the seventeenth century. Evidence preserved in the Clothworkers' Court Orders indicates that the Committee for the Plantation decided that the Clothworkers' Company would meet a 'reasonable proportion of the cost of the repair' to the church (Curl 1986, 378). The repairs, which consisted of a new roof of timber and slate, the construction of a new floor and the insertion of two new windows, were undertaken in 1621 by George Robinson, an Alderman of Coleraine and Freeman of the Clothworkers' Company (Curl 1986, 378). By 1622 the church was apparently 'well repaired' – as represented in Thomas Raven's map of 'The Clothworkers' Proporcion' (May 1640, 186; see also Anon. 1928, pl.15; Curl 1986, fig.290; reproduced here as Figure One).² The church repaired by Robinson is undoubtedly that whose ruins are extant today. It is uncertain from the surviving records



Figure One: Thomas Raven's 1622 map showing 'The Clothworkers' Proporcion'.

whether Robinson built an entirely new structure or undertook extensive repairs of a pre-existing church, although the character of the works involved suggest that a pre-existing structure was probably heavily refurbished rather than replaced entirely. By the end of the seventeenth century the church had become ruined again, possibly as a consequence of being slighted during the Williamite Wars, and

² Some caution must be exercised in using the cartographic evidence of Raven's maps, which were commissioned in 1622 by Sir Thomas Phillips, as his drawings have a tendency to be both impressionistic and schematic (Curl 1986, 75). This latter point is demonstrated by his 'A Platt of the Lands Belonging to the Right Worshipfull Company of Clothworkers in Ulster in the Realm of Ireland, 1616', which shows Dunboe church as a roofed structure with an attached tower (Curl 1986, fig.191) at a date when the historical evidence indicates the church building was ruined and when there is no evidence to suggest that the church was ever furnished with either a steeple or a tower.

was replaced by a new church built in the village of Articlave in 1691 (Leslie 1937, 214; Rankin 1972, 28; Girvan 1975, 61, pl.84; Curl 1986, 378). Despite the construction of the new church at Articlave, as noted above, the graveyard surrounding the old church at Dunboe has continued in use for burial up to the modern period.

The old church and its graveyard, along with the field in which the evaluative excavation was conducted, are located towards the edge of the demesne, associated with the now ruined Downhill House, which was created by Frederick Augustus Hervey, Bishop of Derry and Earl of Bristol in the 1770s (for various accounts of this property see Anon. 1968; Rankin 1972, 12-36; Gallagher and Rogers 1986, 42-45; Reeves-Smyth 1992a; the surviving buildings and structures of note within the demesne are described by Girvan (1975, 53-58) and Reeves-Smyth (1992b); for a discussion of the Downhill Estate during the nineteenth century see Proudfoot 1999). The outline of the field in which the evaluation was conducted has not changed since the eighteenth century and the field has plausibly been identified as being the 'ghost meadow' recorded in eighteenth-century documents (Reeves-Smyth 1992b, 181, no.124). By the 1770s, the church at Dunboe was 'old and suitably ruinous' enough to form a fit addition to the 'idyllic landscape' being created within the Downhill Demesne (Rankin 1972, 28). It is recorded that the Earl Bishop intended that a folly spire be built beside the church (Girvan 1975, 58; Reeves-Smyth 1992b, 179, no.121) and it is possible that the trapezoidal-shaped boundary wall of the graveyard around the old church also dates to the initial creation of the demesne. The planting of the screening or shelter belt of trees, represented on the first edition Ordnance survey 6" map (1831-32) as surrounding the old church site, presumably also dated to the creation of the demesne's landscape park – probably during the first half of the 1780s cf. Rankin 1972, 27. A perimeter belt of trees was a common feature in landscape parks of later eighteenth and earlier nineteenth-century date (McErlean 2007, 279). The modern planting in the area south of the road is currently the responsibility of the Forest Service.

The location and orientation of the old church and the shape of its enclosing graveyard are depicted as having a markedly different arrangement on the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1831-32 than they have today. In particular, the ruined church is apparently shown as a massive, northeast-southwest aligned, structure surviving as two separate elements (Figure Two). That the 1831-32 map does not represent the Bruce family, octagonal vault, which was built in 1810 and forms a large structure with a dressed stone roof in the southern corner of the graveyard (Girvan 1975, 58), suggests that McDermott and McAlister are correct to attribute these cartographic inconsistencies to a tendency amongst Ordnance Survey staff to adopt a generic approach to mapping certain landscape features during the initial period of conducting of the 6" survey of Ireland (2014, 6).³ Confusingly, both the written description of the ruin and the sketch plan of the church undertaken by Charles W Ligar on the 26th September 1835 during the compilation of the *Ordnance Survey Memoirs* also record the ruined church as being aligned northeast-southwest (see Day and McWilliams 1991, 48, 49). It is considered likely, however, that Ligar simply wrote his account and aligned his plan with reference to the incorrect orientation shown on the first edition map and did not independently verify the correct alignment of the church. Certainly, Ligar's contemporary sketch of the monument 'from the southeast' (also reproduced by Day and McWilliams 1991, 48) shows the same ruin that survives today and is also detailed enough to demonstrate, particularly with reference to the depiction of the relative positions of the ruined church and the Bruce family vault, that he actually sketched the site from the east indicating that he was indeed confused about the true position of the cardinal points when he recorded the old church at Dunboe.

³ Londonderry was the first county to be surveyed by the Ordnance Survey whose initial objective was only to provide accurate acreage values for townlands. It was only later in the 1830s when valuation was based upon tenement holdings, as well as townlands, that it became necessary to accurately survey all topographic features (Reeves-Smyth 1982a, 14). Unfortunately, this means that the earliest maps surveyed in the 6" series, such as that covering Dunboe, do not contain the wealth of accurately surveyed detail that subsequently became the standard for the Ordnance Survey.

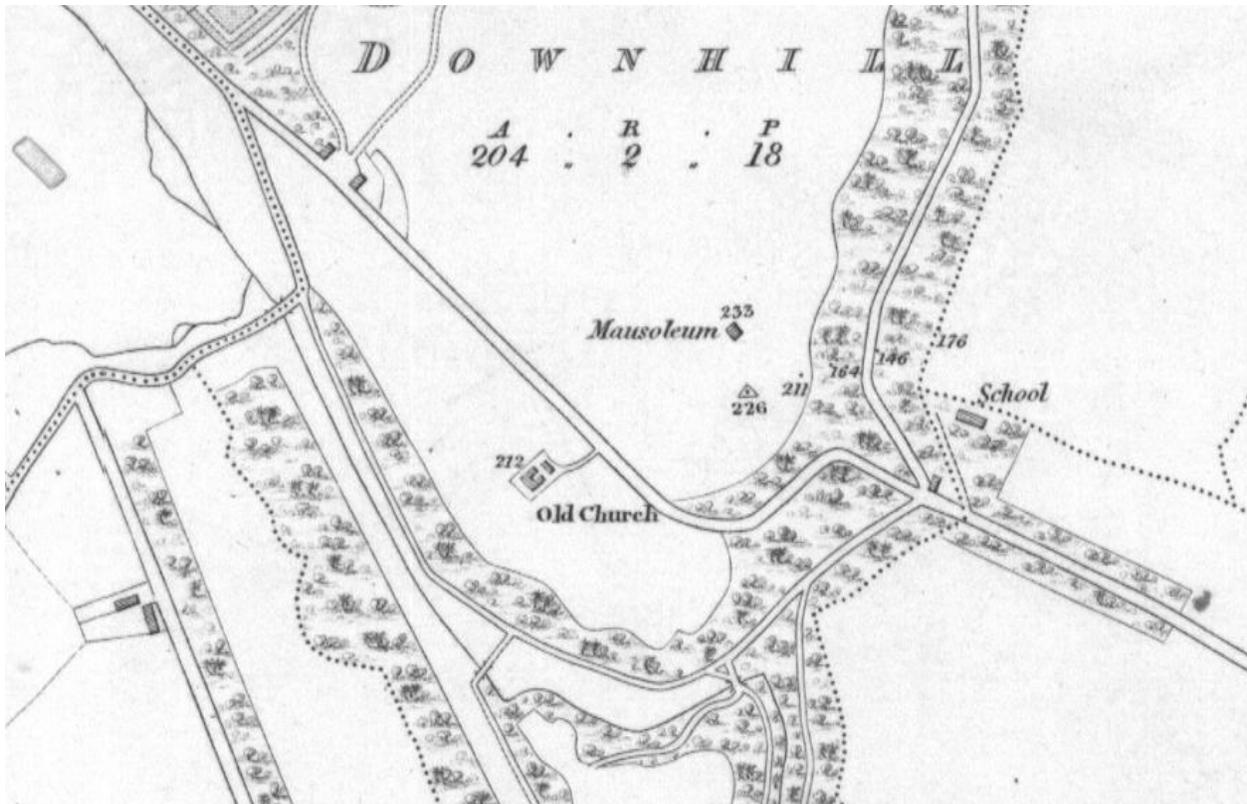


Figure Two: Detail taken from the first edition (surveyed 1831, engraved 1832) 6" Ordnance Survey 'C.Londonderry Sheet 2'.

A local tradition that the church was founded by St Patrick was recorded during the 1830s by the compilers of the *Ordnance Survey Memoirs* (Day and McWilliams 1991, 61) and in Lewis' *Topographic Dictionary of Ireland* (Lewis 1837, 67), however, the evidence for an Early Christian foundation for the church at Dunboe is questionable. Reeves suggested that an annalistic reference preserved in both the *Annals of Ulster* and the *Annals of the Four Masters* indicated that a manuscript of the Gospels, known as 'the Gospel of Martin' which was traditionally believed to have been brought to Ireland by St Patrick, was preserved at Dunboe until 1182 (1850, 83). This is an uncharacteristically questionable reading of the annalistic sources by Reeves, which unfortunately was uncritically accepted by Hamlin (2008, 568) and subsequently incorporated into the Sites and Monuments Record (NIEA SM7 File LDY 2:1). The annalistic references refer to a defeat inflicted by the Anglo-Normans on a hosting led by Domnall Ua Lochlainn at a battle fought at 'Dun-mbó' following which 'the Gospel of [St] Martin was carried off with them by the Foreigners' (MacCarthy 1893, 200-201; see also O'Donovan 1854a, 60-61). As MacCarthy noted, it is most probable that the Gospel was borne into battle as a talisman intended to ensure victory to the Cenél nEógain in much the same way that the *Cathach*, a late sixth- or early seventh-century copy of the Psalms, was also used (MacCarthy 1893, 200, fn.1; see also Lacey 2013, 69). O'Donovan plausibly suggested that previous to the battle, the Gospel in question had most probably been kept in Derry where there was a graveyard and a holy well dedicated to the fourth-century St Martin of Tours (1854a, 60, fn.d). Consistent with O'Donovan's suggestion is Lacey's identification of 'the Gospel of Martin' as being the *Soiscél Martain* recorded in the mid-twelfth-century *Homily or Life of Colum Cille* as being brought to Derry from the city of Tours by Colum Cille (2013, 69). Consequently, there are no grounds to suggest that this early manuscript was ever housed at Dunboe or that, by extension, there must have been an early ecclesiastical centre at Dunboe for it to be held at. Furthermore, it is reasonable to suggest that the local, nineteenth-century tradition, recorded in the *Ordnance Survey Memoirs* and Lewis' *Topographic Dictionary of Ireland*, that St Patrick founded a church at Dunboe is also derived from a flawed reading of these

annalistic references. There is no place-name or architectural evidence to suggest that Dunboe old church was the site of an early ecclesiastical centre cf. Hamlin 2008, 568. Nor was there, prior to the geophysical survey carried out in May 2014 (McDermott and McAlister 2014), any archaeological evidence to suggest the presence of an early ecclesiastical centre at the site, although the *Ordnance Survey Memoirs* note the presence of a well, known as Jacob's Well (*Tobar Jacob*), located an uncertain distance to the north of the church. The *Memoirs* also report that the stations were formerly held at the well, which was esteemed for its healing properties and was arched over and enclosed by the Earl Bishop during the late eighteenth century (Day and McWilliams 1991, 49). A receipt preserved in the Hervey-Bruce Papers records a part payment to a Samuel Brewster in 1783 for paving a road around the well and forming a walk to it, as well as digging drains (Reeves-Smyth 1992b, 178, no.118). Unfortunately, the position of the well was not recorded on the first edition 6" Ordnance Survey map and its precise location is now unknown. If it was located to the north of the old church then the well was presumably either positioned in the small field currently used as the Castlerock Presbyterian Church Burying Ground or within that part of the Downhill Demesne located to the north of the road.



Figure Three: Detail from aerial photograph (Ordnance Survey 93381) of the site dating to 1963. The photograph shows the construction works associated with the straightening of the adjacent Mussenden Road in progress. The area being evaluated appears to contain the southern and northwestern element of a curvilinear bank. The features within this 'enclosed' area are presumably the product of plant using the northern part of the field to turn as they emanate from the field entrance. (*Image kindly supplied by the National Trust*).

Although it has not been possible to undertake a comprehensive study of all of the available aerial photographs of the site, a small number of images have been consulted. The most significant dates to 1963 and shows construction work of the new line of the adjacent Mussenden Road, the adjoining Castlerock Presbyterian Burying Ground laid out but with relatively few interments and what appears to be the remains of curvilinear feature enclosing the area within which the evaluation took place (Figure Three). The curvilinear feature consists of two separate elements – that is, what appears to be southern and northwestern curving banks. No topographic expression of these apparent banks survives today, nor is the ‘enclosure’ represented upon any of the consulted nineteenth- and twentieth-century cartographic sources. The features that show as white marks on the aerial photograph within this ‘enclosed’ area all seem to emanate from the entrance to the field in its northern corner. Presumably, they are the product of plant associated with the road building using the northern part of the field in which to turn. The enclosure itself is less easy to dismiss as being a modern feature, although it is possible that it represents a temporary structure thrown up during the course of the road building. If, however, the line of the two elements are projected so that they join up then the enclosure appears to be oval in shape (diameter 36 to 40 metres) and is cut by both the eastern wall of the trapezoidal-shaped graveyard surrounding the Dunboe Old Church and the original line of the Mussenden Road (now used as a layby that provides access to a picnic area). This suggests that, if not a feature created during the road building works in 1963, then the enclosure at least predates the early nineteenth century and may be of considerable antiquity. That no topographic expression of the apparent enclosure represented in the 1963 photograph survives is presumably a consequence of its destruction during the course of subsequent mechanised cultivation within the field. Excavation of Trench No.5, which was positioned across the position of the apparent southern bank, failed to find any sub-surface trace of the enclosure (see below) suggesting that the bank represented in the 1963 photograph was not augmented by a ditch.

As part of the evaluation into the archaeological potential of the field located immediately to the east of the graveyard around the old church, a resistivity survey was undertaken in May 2014 (McDermott and McAlister 2014). A short trial demonstrated that the underlying basalt geology mitigated against the application of magnetic gradiometry at the site cf. McDermott and McAlister 2014, 2. Due to technical difficulties, the resistivity survey was ‘tied into’ the Ordnance Survey base map using an imprecise ‘best fit’ method (S.McDermott pers.comm.). A number of anomalies were detected during the course of the resistivity survey, which suggested that the area immediately to the east of the graveyard was possibly an area of archaeological potential. The anomalies identified by the surveyors included: two reportedly curvilinear high resistance features (r2 and r3); a large area of erratic, non-discernible high resistance readings (r7) apparently bounded by the innermost of the two ‘curvilinear’ anomalies (r2); and a clearly defined, high-resistance, U-shaped feature (r1) that was superimposed upon the outer ‘curvilinear’ anomaly (McDermott and McAlister 2014, 8-10; see Figures Four to Six). Re-examination of the resistivity results has augmented the original interpretation of these anomalies. For example, it can now be suggested that the two ‘curvilinear’ anomalies consists of two linear sections (r2) and a single linear section (r3) and that these are just the most prominent of a series of northnortheast to southsouthwest aligned trends within the resistivity data. Although they noted the distinct possibility that all of the defined anomalies were non-archaeological in origin (McDermott and McAlister 2014, 12), the surveyors also cautiously suggested that the two reportedly curvilinear high resistance features (r2 and r3) possibly reflected the presence of a double-ditched enclosure around the site of the old church and that this possible enclosure might be the remains of the *valla* of an Early Christian monastic centre. They also suggested that the large area of erratic, non-discernible high resistance readings (r7) could represent an area of upstanding bedrock that has been quarried and that the high-resistance, U-shaped feature (r1) might indicate the presence of a souterrain. On returning to the site to conduct the excavations reported upon below it was noted that both of the linear anomalies (r2 and r3) were aligned with the entrance into the field and that their position on the ground apparently coincided with linear depressions that appear to have been created by driving vehicles across the field. This suggests the possibility that either, or both, of these geophysical anomalies were created by compression of the

cultivation soil as a result of driving vehicles across the field. Regardless of the uncertainty over the interpretation of the anomalies, the most significant result of the geophysical survey was arguably a negative one – the survey did not produce evidence of an anomaly that coincided with the apparent curvilinear enclosure represented on the 1963 aerial photograph (Figure Three).

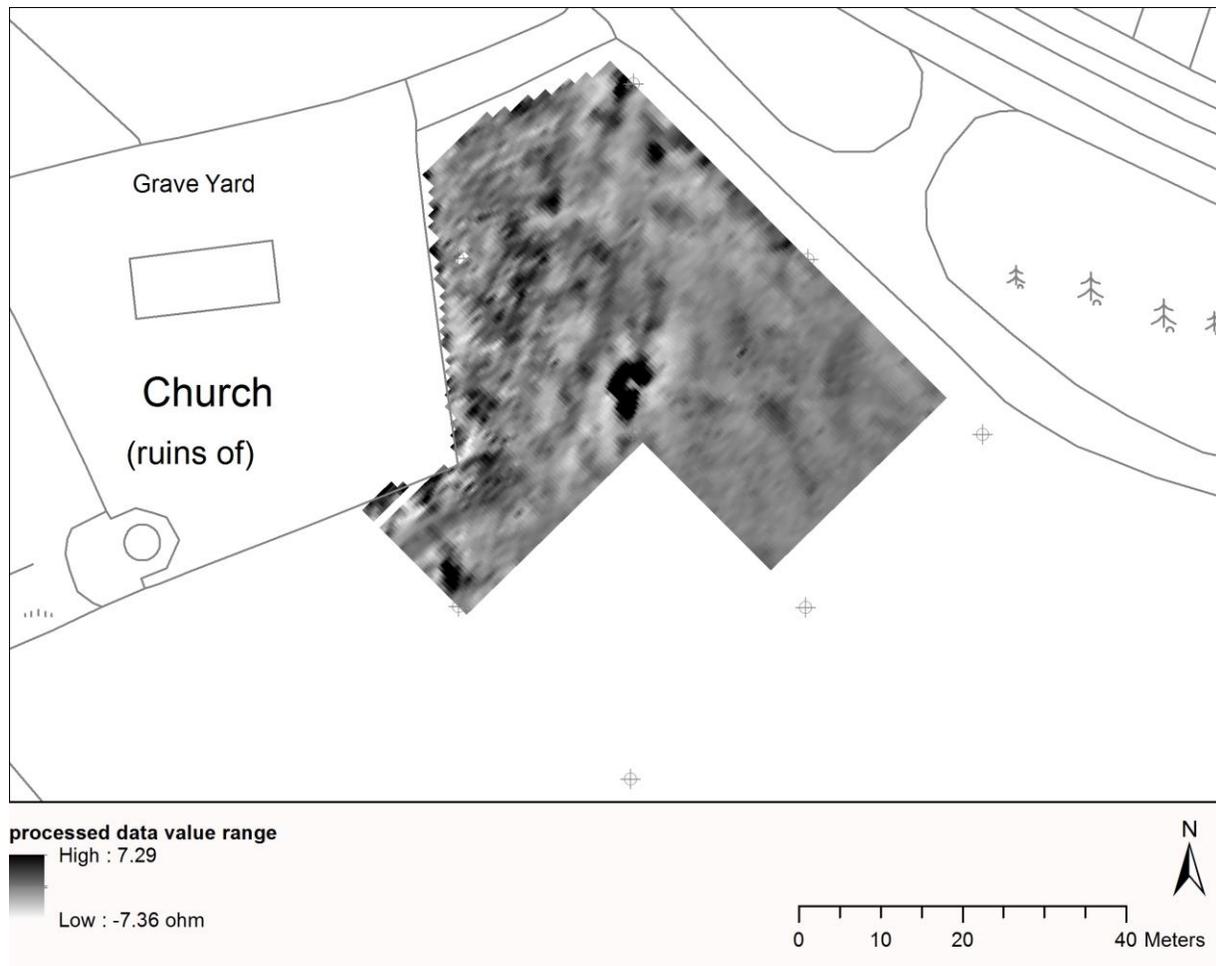


Figure Four: Greyscale plot of processed resistivity data, clipped 0/+100 ohm, despiked, HPF (Gaussian weighting applied on the x- and y-axis), LPF (Gaussian weighting applied on the x- and y-axis) and interpolated on the x- and y-axis (from McDermott and McAlister 2014, 18, fig.7).

Following the geophysical survey, it was requested that the field evaluation was continued with a phase of excavation that initially began with the manual excavation of four test trenches partly located to establish the cause of three of the geophysical anomalies discussed above (i.e. r1, r2 and r3). This initial phase of excavation was followed by the mechanical excavation of three longer trenches intended to investigate the southern element of the apparent enclosure represented on the 1963 aerial photograph and the principle high-resistance linear anomaly (r2) (Trench No.5), the area immediately adjacent to the eastern boundary wall of the churchyard (Trench No.6) and further investigate the area of erratic, non-discernible high resistance readings (r7), as well as the two linear anomalies (r2 and r3) (Trench No.7).

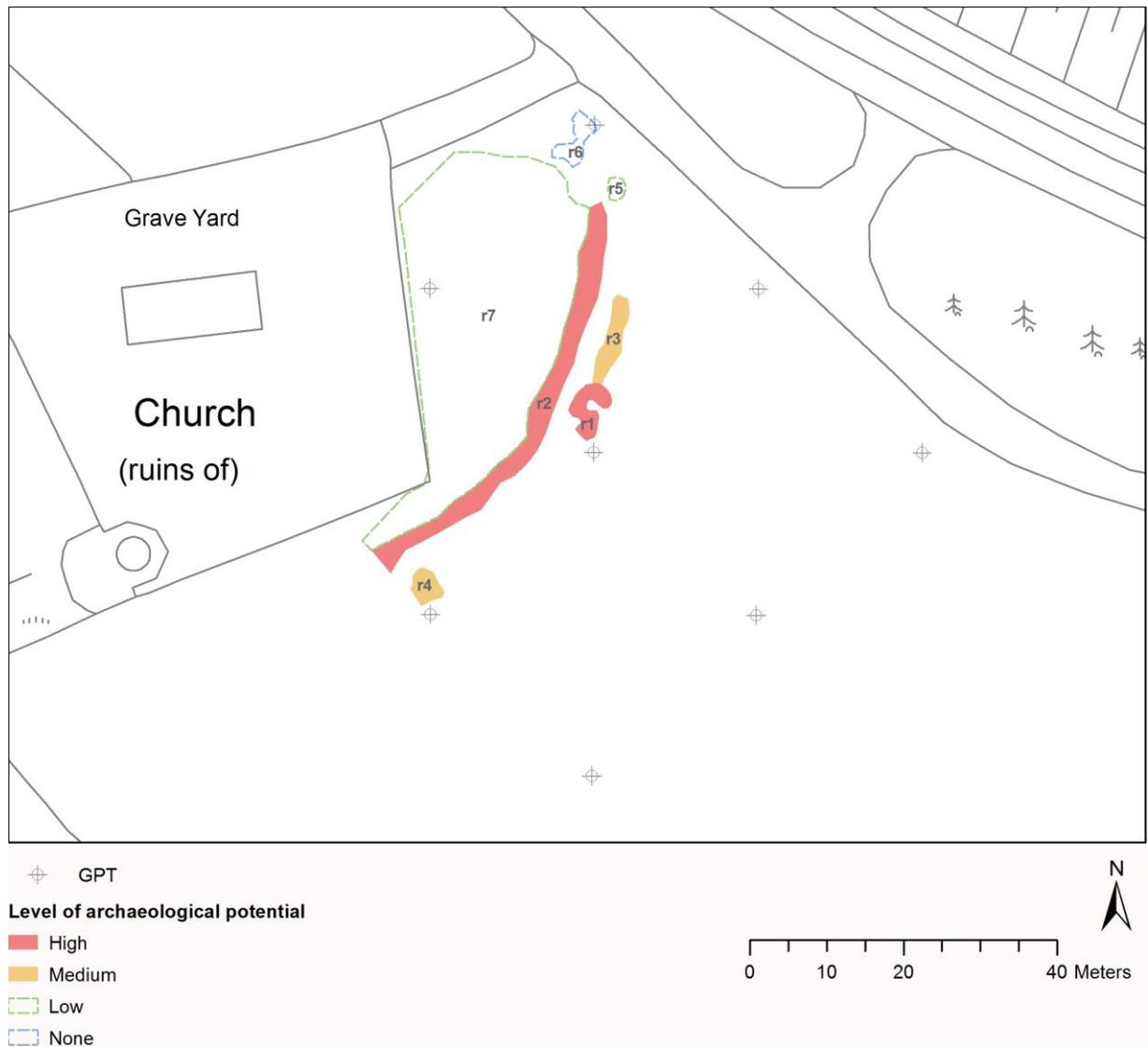


Figure Five: Interpretation of the resistivity survey with principle electrical resistance anomalies and levels of archaeological potential shown (from McDermott and McAlister 2014, 11, fig.4).

Excavation: Methodology (including statement of confidence)

The excavation was divided into two phases. Initially, four small test trenches (dimensions 3.0 metres by 1.0 metre) were manually excavated (Figure Six; Trench Nos. 1-4) between the 11th and 14th of November 2014. This initial phase of excavation was followed by the mechanical excavation of three longer trenches (Figure Six; Trench Nos. 5-7) between the 24th and 25th November 2014. Three of the initial test trenches (Trench Nos. 1, 2 and 3) were positioned in order to investigate three of the anomalies identified in the resistivity survey (r2, r1 and r3 respectively cf. McDermott and McAlister 2014, fig.4). The fourth hand-dug trench (i.e. Trench No.4) was located immediately adjacent to the trapezoidal boundary wall of the graveyard because it was assumed that if burial activity associated with the old church had once extended beyond the current boundary wall of the graveyard then this would be the most likely location for uncovering evidence of burials. The first of the mechanically excavated trenches (i.e. Trench No.5) was aligned approximately north-south and positioned to investigate the southern element of the apparent enclosure recorded on the 1963 aerial photograph. Trench No.6 was also aligned on a near north-south axis and positioned immediately adjacent to the eastern boundary

wall of the graveyard in order to investigate that part of the field that was closest to the old church. Finally, Trench No.7 was aligned on an approximately east-west alignment and intended to cross both the positions of the principle linear anomaly (r2) and the area of erratic, non-discernible high resistance readings (r7). The concerns about failing to successfully locate the first three test trenches directly over the geophysical anomalies that were intended to investigate as a consequence of the difficulties in precisely fixing the position of the resistivity survey, were mitigated by the mechanical excavation of Trench Nos.5 and 6 that were both positioned to cross the recorded line of the principle linear anomaly (r2). Consequently, the conclusion that there are no features or deposits of archaeological significance within that part of the field investigated during the course of the excavation can be forwarded with a high degree of confidence.

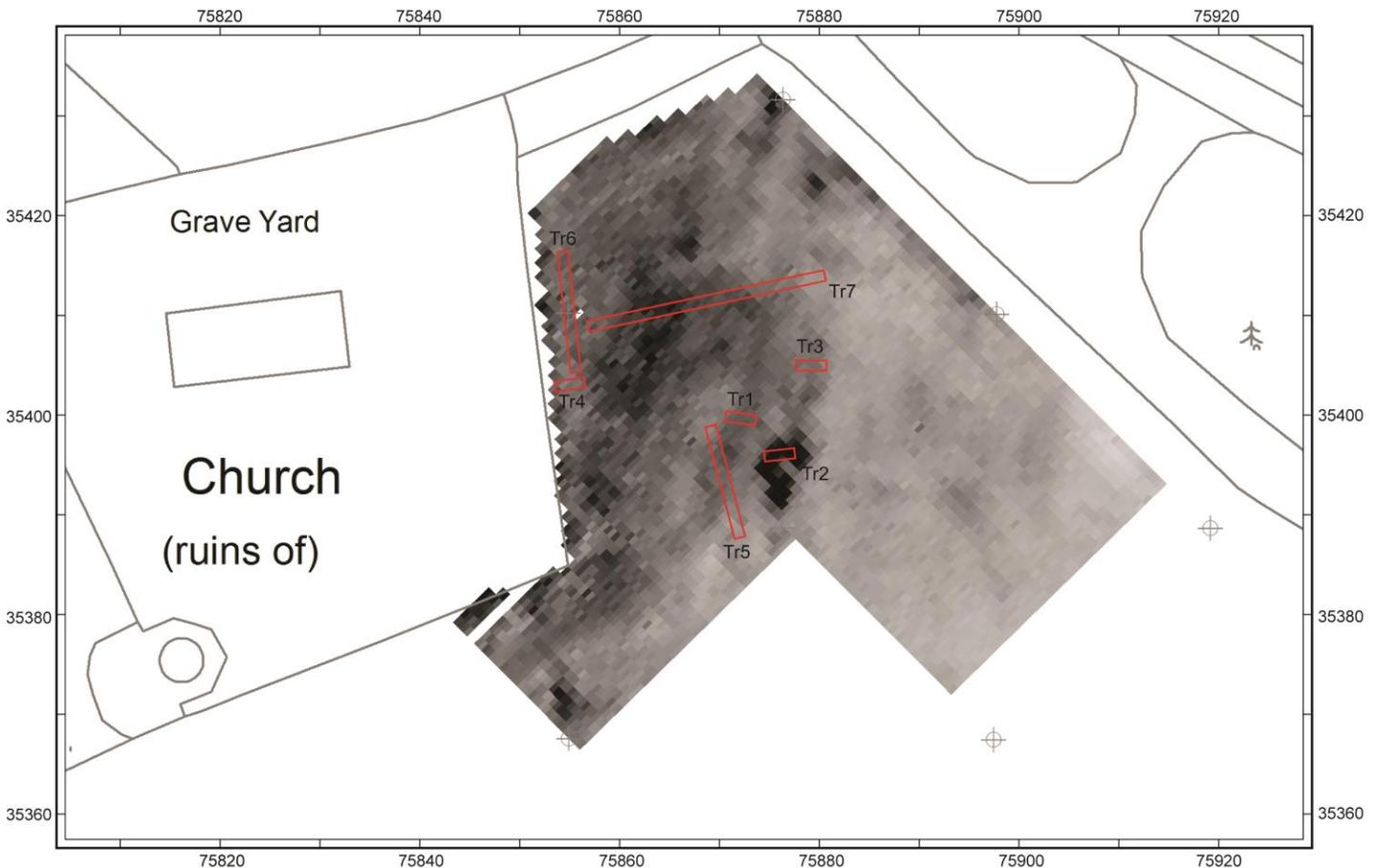


Figure Six: Trench location plan superimposed over greyscale plot of raw resistivity data clipped at 0/+100 ohm and despiked (after McDermott and McAlister 2014, 17, fig.6).

During the excavation of both the four test trenches and the three mechanically excavated trenches, the site's stratigraphic sequence was recorded using the standard context recording method. Following the removal of the cultivation soils (Context Nos. 102, 103, 202, 302, 303, 402, 403, 502, 503, 602, 603, 702 and 703), each trench was photographed and measured sketch plans and sections were prepared. In Trenches Nos.1, 6 and 7, where negative features variously interpreted as probably being a field drain (Context No. 106) or sockets created by the extraction of boulders (Context Nos. 608, 610, 612 and 708) were uncovered and excavated, a formal plan (scale 1:20) and/or sections (scale 1:10) were also drawn. In addition to photography and illustration, the principal site records

consisted of a site diary. Separate registers of small finds and samples were also maintained. The position of the excavation trenches was tied into the Irish Ordnance Survey Grid. Relevant members of the NIEA Inspectorate were kept informed of all significant developments during the course of the evaluation. To minimise risk to members of the public on an easily accessible site, following the completion of recording each trench was promptly backfilled. The excavations were directed by Philip Macdonald with the assistance of Sapphire Mussen (Queen's University Belfast), Malachy Conway (National Trust) and Geoff Warke (National Trust Volunteer).

Excavation: the Results

The stratigraphic sequences recorded in all seven trenches were remarkably similar. In general, a thin sod and humic topsoil (Context Nos. 101, 201, 301, 401, 501, 601 and 701) overlay an upper cultivation soil of dark, reddish-brown silty clay loam (Context Nos. 102, 202, 302, 402, 502, 602 and 702), which in turn overlay an earlier, lower cultivation soil of dark brown silty clay loam (Context Nos. 103, 303, 403, 503, 603 and 703). Only in Trench No.2 was the lower cultivation soil not present. The distinction between the two cultivation soils was easily recognised. In addition to the marked variation in their colour, the lower cultivation soil was more compacted and contained a large amount of small- to medium-sized, rounded- to subangular-shaped stone inclusions, whilst the upper cultivation soil only contained occasional small- to medium-sized, rounded- to subrounded stone inclusions. The surface between the two cultivation soils (Context Nos. 108, 305, 410, 505, 605 and 705) is interpreted as representing an episode of truncation associated with the more recent 'upper' phase of cultivation. The lower cultivation soil directly overlay the truncated surface (Context Nos. 107, 306, 405, 506, 606 and 706) of the natural subsoil of glacial till (Context Nos. 104, 304, 404, 504, 604 and 704) – this truncation being attributable to the earlier phase of cultivation. A number of negative features were identified as being cut into the natural subsoil. These were variously interpreted as being either plough-marks (Context Nos. 407, 409, 710, 714 and 716) or stone-removal holes (Context Nos. 608, 610, 612 and 708) associated with the earlier phase of cultivation, or the truncated bases of earlier field drains (Context Nos. 106 and 712). Fewer features associated with the later phase of cultivation were observed, however, in Trench No.5 an apparent field drain (Context No.508) was cut into the lower cultivation soil (Context No.503). The glacial till subsoil varied markedly in character across the site: in places being a stiff, orangey brown clay with frequent stone inclusions including numerous fragments of flint, whilst elsewhere it consisted of an inclusion-free orange clay. These variations within the subsoil appeared to form distinct north-northeast-south-southwest aligned bands – as was most easily observed within Trench No.5 (Figure Fourteen).

Trench No.1 was 3.0 metres long, 1.0 metre wide, aligned east-west and positioned over the recorded position of the principle linear anomaly (r2) (Figure Six). Underlying the thin sod and topsoil (Context No.101; depth 0.10 metres) was a cultivation soil of dark, reddish-brown silty clay loam (Context No.102) that extended to a depth of 0.30 metres below the modern ground surface. This upper cultivation soil overlay the truncated surface (Context No.108) of a dark brown silty clay loam cultivation soil (Context No.103). The lower cultivation soil was only 0.06 metres thick and overlay the truncated surface (Context No.107) of the natural subsoil, which occurred at a depth of 0.36 metres below the modern ground surface. At the eastern end of the trench the northwestern edge of the truncated base of a cut feature (Context No.106) was exposed. The feature was filled with a deposit of medium-sized, rounded to subangular stones in a dark brown, silty clay loam soil matrix (105). Excavation revealed the presence of a number of lenses of redeposited glacial till but no artefacts within the fill of the feature, suggesting that it may have been rapidly backfilled. As exposed within Trench No.1, the feature had a minimum width of 0.61 metres and a maximum depth of 0.15 metres and appeared to be aligned

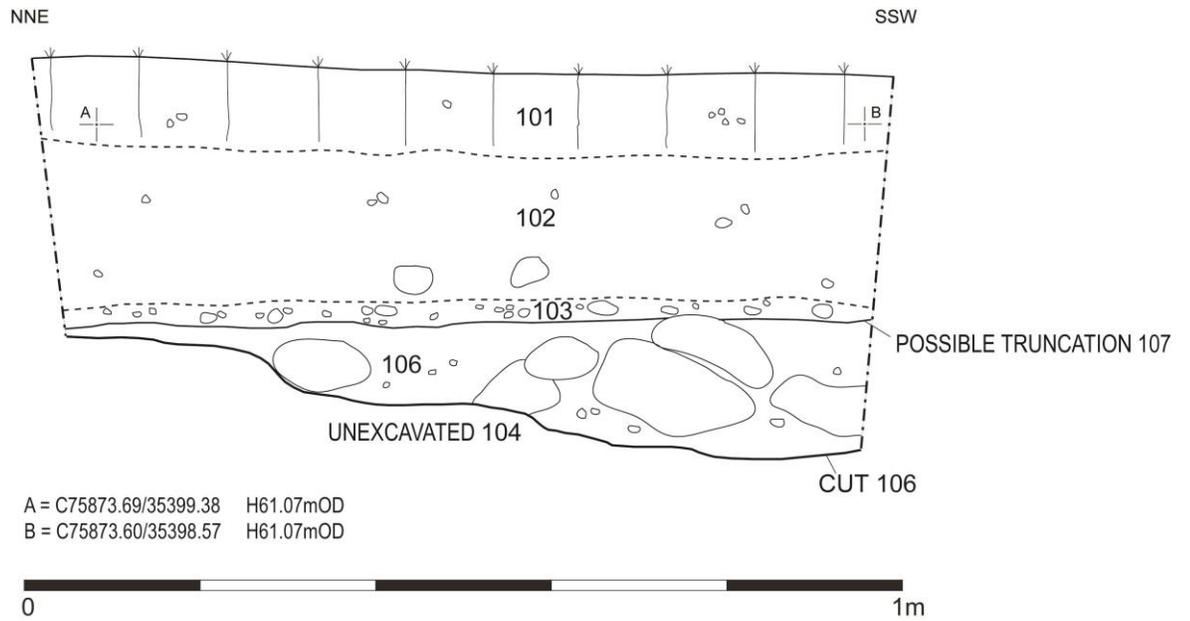


Figure Seven: Westnorthwest-facing section of Trench No.1.



Figure Eight: The eastern end of Trench No.1 following excavation of the fill (Context No.105) of the possible field drain (Context No.106), looking eastsoutheast. Scale 1.0 metre.



Figure Nine: Trench No.1 following excavation of the lower cultivation soil (Context No.103) and fill (Context No.105) of possible field drain (Context No.106), exposing the truncated surface (Context No.107) of the natural subsoil (Context No.104), looking east-southeast. Scale 2.0 metres.

southwest-northeast, although not enough of the feature was exposed to be certain of its orientation. The feature is cautiously identified as a field drain and certainly formed the medium by which ground water entered the trench during the course of the excavation. Whether this possible field drain represents the cause of the linear anomaly r2 is uncertain. The heavily truncated base of a negative feature also interpreted as being a possible field drain (Context No.508) was observed in Trench No.5 and both features

could be plausibly identified as being broadly in the right position and having approximately the correct alignment to be part of a single field drain that caused the resistivity anomaly. However, the two features were observed as variously being sealed by (i.e. Context No.106) and cut into (i.e. Context No.508) the lower cultivation soil suggesting that they are not related. Furthermore, where Trench No.7 crossed the line of this geophysical anomaly no evidence for the presence of a field drain, or any other archaeological feature, was observed. Setting aside these concerns, if the feature (Context No.106) within Trench No.1 is accepted as being the cause of the anomaly, then this suggests that, at least in this part of the field, the position of the geophysical survey has been positioned over the Ordnance Survey base map approximately two metres too far to the west. Even if this is the case, then the adjacent Trench No.2 should have still clipped the western edge of the resistivity anomaly (r1) it was intended to investigate.

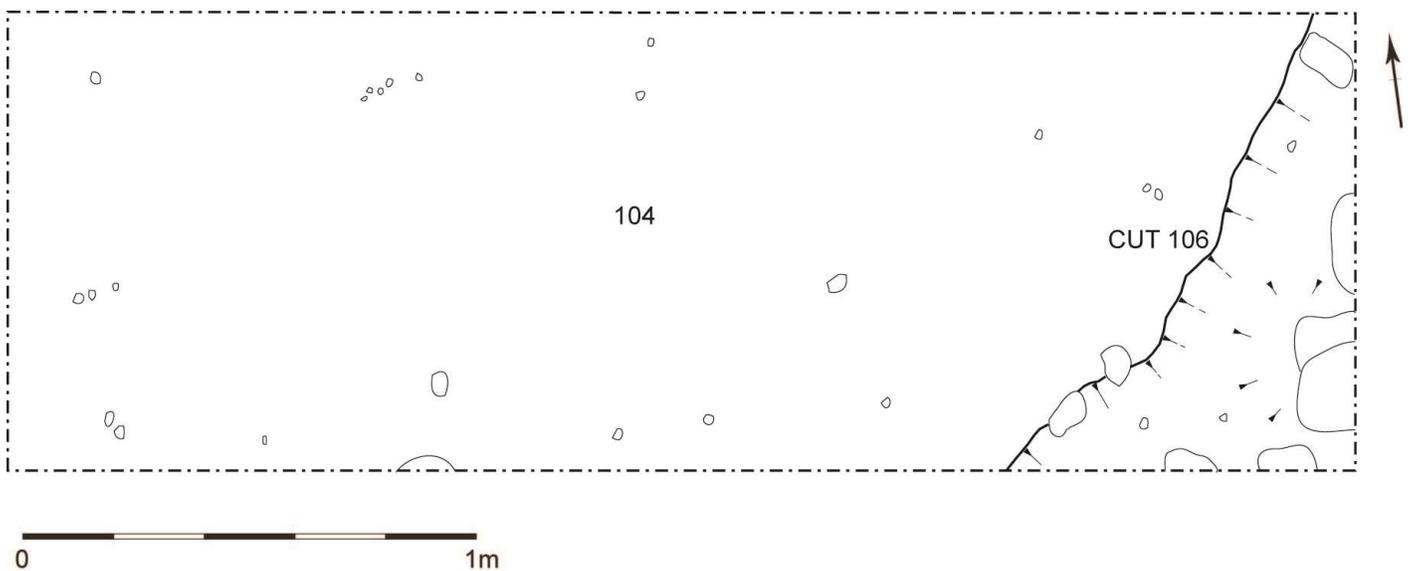


Figure Ten: Plan of Trench No.1 following excavation of the lower cultivation soil (Context No.103) and fill (Context No.105) of possible field drain (Context No.106), exposing the truncated surface (Context No.107) of the natural subsoil (Context No.104).

Trench No.2 was also 3.0 metres long, 1.0 metre wide and aligned approximately east-west. As noted above, it was positioned over the clearly defined, high-resistance, U-shaped feature (r1), which was interpreted as potentially representing the presence of a souterrain (Figure Six). As also noted above, Trench No.2 was the only trench excavated during the course of the evaluation in which the lower cultivation soil was not present. The thin sod and topsoil (Context No.201; depth 0.10 metres) overlay the dark, reddish-brown silty clay loam (Context No.202), which in turn directly overlay the truncated surface (Context No.204) of the natural subsoil (Context No.203) at a depth of only 0.25 metres below the modern ground surface. This was the shallowest depth at which the surface of the subsoil was encountered during the evaluation and is presumably the reason that the lower cultivation soil was not present within Trench No.2. The close proximity of the surface of the glacial till (Context No.203) to the ground surface within the footprint, and presumably immediate vicinity, of Trench No.2 is probably the cause of the U-shaped, high resistivity anomaly (r1), the glacial till containing less water, and hence having a higher electrical resistance, than the surrounding ‘deeper’ cultivation soils.



Figure Eleven: Trench No.2 following excavation of the (upper) cultivation soil (Context No.202), exposing the truncated surface (Context No.204) of the natural subsoil (Context No.203), looking east. Scale 2.0 metres.



Figure Twelve: Trench No.3 following excavation of the lower cultivation soil (Context No.303), exposing the truncated surface (Context No.306) of the natural subsoil (Context No.304), looking east. Scale 2.0 metres.

The third, manually excavated test trench (**Trench No.3**) was also 3.0 metres long, 1.0 metre wide and aligned approximately east-west. Excavation demonstrated that again the topsoil and humic sod (Context No.301) was only 0.10 metres deep and overlay an upper cultivation soil of dark, reddish-brown silty clay loam (Context No.302), which extended to a depth of 0.25 metres below the ground surface. The underlying lower cultivation soil of dark brown silty clay loam cultivation soil (303) extended to a maximum depth of 0.33 metres below the ground surface and directly overlay the truncated surface (Context No.306) of the natural glacial till (Context No.304). No features were observed cut into either the truncated surface (Context No.305) of the lower cultivation soil (Context No.303) or the truncated surface (Context No.306) of the natural subsoil (Context No.304). There was no evidence uncovered to suggest the cause of the high resistance linear anomaly identified during the geophysical survey (r3) which Trench No.3 was intended to investigate.



Figure Thirteen: Trench No.4 following excavation of the lower cultivation soil (Context No.403), exposing the truncated surface (Context No.405) of two ploughmarks (Context Nos.407 and 409) cut into the natural subsoil (Context No.404), looking west. Scale 2.0 metres.

Trench No.4 was also 3.0 metres long, 1.0 metre wide and laid out on a near east-west axis. The trench ran perpendicular to the eastern boundary wall of the graveyard, which was located only 0.70 metres to the west of the trench's western edge of excavation. The thin sod and humic topsoil (Context No.401; depth 0.08 metres) overlay the upper cultivation soil of dark, reddish-brown silty clay loam (Context No.402) that extended to a depth of between 0.24 to 0.26 metres below the modern ground surface. The upper cultivation soil in turn truncated (Context No.410) a lower cultivation soil of dark brown silty clay loam (Context No.403). At the eastern end of the trench the lower cultivation soil extended to a depth of 0.42 metres below the ground surface, however, the surface of the natural subsoil rose to a depth of only 0.30 metres towards the western end of the trench, which was located immediately

adjacent to the graveyard boundary wall. This variation in the depth of the glacial till presumably reflects a practice of not cultivating right up to the edge of the graveyard wall and also suggests that the earlier phase of cultivation truncated the surface of the subsoil by a depth of 0.12 metres. Cut into the truncated surface of the natural subsoil were two north-south aligned ploughmarks (Context Nos.407 and 409) located approximately 1.25 metres and 0.40 metres from the eastern edge of the trench respectively. The ploughmarks, which were not excavated, were filled with dark brown silty clay loams that were indistinguishable from the lower cultivation soil and had maximum widths of 0.10 metres (Context No.407) and 0.08 metres (Context No.409). The ploughmarks were both parallel, not only with each other but also with the eastern boundary wall of the graveyard. Collectively, these observations suggest that the earlier phase of cultivation within the field respected, and therefore post-dated, the construction of the boundary wall of the graveyard.

The first of the mechanically excavated trenches (**Trench No.5**) was 11.75 metres long, 1.2 metres wide and aligned approximately north-south. The trench was positioned in order to investigate both the apparent southern bank of the enclosure represented on the 1963 aerial photograph and the southern part of the principle, linear, high-resistance anomaly (r2). Excavation demonstrated that the sod and topsoil (Context No.501; depth 0.12 metres) overlay a medium brown silty clay loam with occasional small- to medium-sized, rounded- to subrounded stone inclusions (Context No.502), which was identified as representing the upper cultivation soil and extended to a depth of 0.26 metres below the modern ground surface. This upper cultivation soil overlay the truncated surface (Context No.505) of the lower cultivation soil of compacted, dark, greyish-brown silty clay loam with a large amount of small- to medium-sized, rounded- to subangular-shaped stone inclusions (Context No.503). Recognised as being cut into the truncated surface of the lower cultivation soil was a field drain (Context No.508) filled with a deposit of small- to medium-sized, rounded- to subangular-shaped stones within a soil matrix of dark brown silty clay loam (Context No.507). The drain was aligned approximately southwest-northeast, was located between 6.0 metres and 7.2 metres from the northern end of the trench, was 0.70 metres wide, had a maximum depth of 0.18 metres and, given the amount of groundwater that discharged from its excavated edges, was still functional despite its truncation. Presumably, the drain was created during an episode of improvement that took place between the stratigraphically attested earlier and later phases of cultivation. Excavation demonstrated that the truncated lower cultivation soil was only 0.10 metres thick and overlay the truncated surface (Context No.506) of the natural glacial subsoil (Context No.504). The opportunity to excavate a large area within Trench No.5 also demonstrated that there was some marked variation in the concentration of stone inclusions within the lower cultivation soil. In places, the density of stone inclusions was so great that the deposit had the appearance of a metallised surface. No regular edges to these variations in stone inclusions was recognised. Consequently, it is uncertain whether they are the product of spade cultivation or variations in the underlying natural subsoil (Context No.504), however, given the evidence in other trenches for ploughmarks that are stratigraphically associated with the lower cultivation soil (i.e. Context Nos. 407, 409, 710, 714 and 716) it can be considered unlikely that the variations in stone density within the lower cultivation soil in Trench No.5 are the product of spade cultivation. The larger area excavated within the trench also revealed evidence of distinct banding within the glacial till between stiff, orangey brown clay with frequent stone inclusions and an inclusion-free orange clay (Context No.504). Upon the truncated surface (Context No.506) of the subsoil, this banding had a northnortheast-southsouthwest alignment. With the exception of the truncated field drain (Context No.508) described above, no features were identified throughout the length of Trench No.5. Although it is possible that the field drain was the cause of the linear high resistance geophysical anomaly (r2) this conclusion should be considered far from certain (see above). Significantly, although the footprint of the trench crossed the line of the southern element of the apparent enclosure represented on the 1963 aerial photograph, no sub-surface expression of this feature survived. This not only explains why no evidence for the presence of the enclosure was identified during the resistivity survey, but also indicates that the apparent enclosure was never augmented with a ditch and that, if correctly identified, the 'bank'

must have been removed in an episode of cultivation that post-dated 1963. This observation suggests a *terminus post quem* for, at least, the later phase of cultivation represented in the stratigraphic sequences recorded during the course of the evaluation and is consistent with the recollection of Jack Smith, the current tenant farmer, who during a site visit upon the 13th November 2014 recalled the field had been used for growing both potatoes and corn within his lifetime.



Figure Fourteen: The northern end of Trench No.5 following the excavation of the lower cultivation soil (Context No.503), exposing the truncated surface (Context No.506) of the natural subsoil (Context No.504), looking north. The distinctive northnortheast-southsouthwest banding within the glacial till is visible. Scale 2.0 metres.



Figure Fifteen: Trench No.6 following the excavation of the lower cultivation soil (Context No.603), exposing the truncated surface (Context No.606) of the three stone holes (Context Nos.608, 610 and 612) cut into the natural subsoil (Context No.604), looking south. Scale 2.0 metres.

Trench No.6 was 12.40 metres long, 1.2 metres wide and aligned approximately north-south. It was positioned immediately north of Trench No.4 and ran parallel to, and 2.2 metres from, the eastern boundary wall of the graveyard. Excavation demonstrated that the thin sod and humic topsoil (Context No.601; depth 0.08-0.10 metres) overlay the dark, reddish-brown silty clay loam, upper cultivation soil (Context No.602), which extended throughout the trench. In turn, the upper cultivation soil overlay the truncated

surface (Context No.605) of the lower cultivation soil of dark brown silty clay loam (Context No.603) at a depth of approximately 0.25 metres below the modern ground surface. The lower cultivation soil varied in thickness between 0.13 and 0.17 metres and overlay the truncated surface (Context No.606) of the glacial till (Context No.604). Three negative features (Context Nos.608, 610 and 612), all of which were interpreted as representing the empty sockets or holes created by extracting large stones that protruded from the glacial till into the overlying cultivation soil, were identified and excavated (Figures Sixteen to Eighteen). The northern most of these stone holes (Context No.610) was located 2.4 metres from the northern end of the trench, was oval in shape with a maximum diameter of 0.68 metres and was only 0.03 metres deep. The next stone hole (Context No.612) was located 3.4 metres from the northern end of the trench and extended beyond the eastern edge of excavation. It had a diameter of 0.76 metres, a maximum depth of 0.20 metres and a gently sloping northern edge and a relatively steep southern edge. The southernmost stone hole (Context No. 608) was located 7.5 metres from the northern end of the trench and it too extended beyond the eastern edge of excavation. It was 0.56 metres in diameter, had a maximum depth of 0.18 metres and also had a gently sloping northern edge and a steep southern edge. The close similarity in form between two of the stone holes (i.e. Context Nos. 608 and 612) suggests that the stones they once contained may have been extracted using the same method and, by extension, at the same time. The fills of all three stone holes were all identical. They were filled with a dark brown silty clay loam that was indistinguishable from the lower cultivation soil (although they awarded unique context numbers for the purposes of excavation). That the features were all apparently filled with the lower cultivation soil suggests that the stones they once contained were extracted during the earlier phase of cultivation. The recovery of a late eighteenth- or early nineteenth-century sherd of transfer-printed glazed creamware from the fill (Context No.611) of one of the stone holes (Context No.612) indicates a relatively recent date for the earlier, archaeologically attested, phase of cultivation.

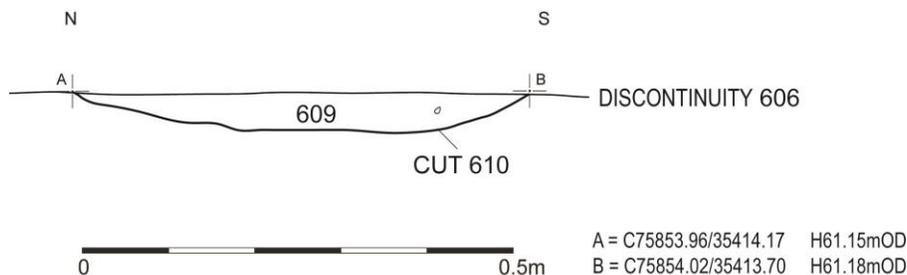


Figure Sixteen: West-facing section of stone hole (Context No.610).

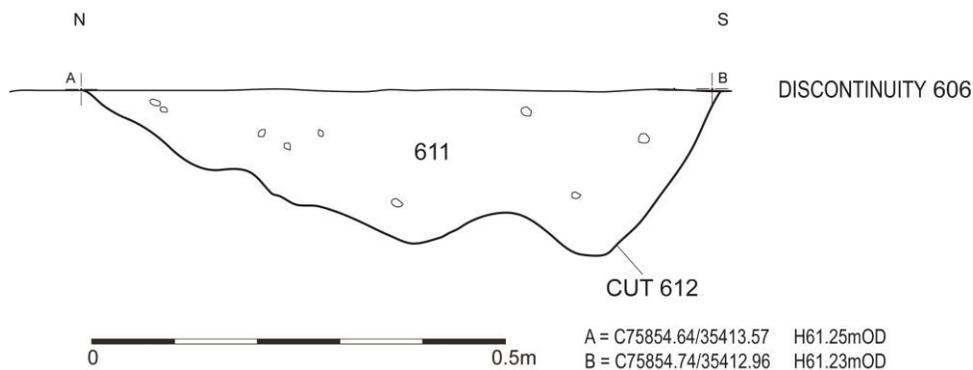


Figure Seventeen: West-facing section of stone hole (Context No.612).

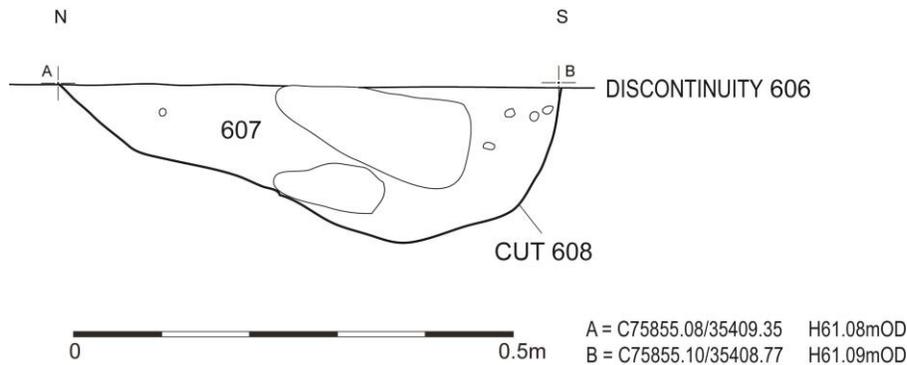


Figure Eighteen: West-facing section of stone hole (Context No.608).

The final trench to be excavated (**Trench No.7**) was aligned approximately east-west, 24.20 metres long and 1.2 metres wide. The trench extended eastwards from a position adjacent to Trench No.6 and crossed both the recorded positions of the area of erratic, non-discernible high resistance readings (r7) and the principle linear high-resistance anomaly (r2) identified during the geophysical survey, before terminating on the line of the second linear high-resistance anomaly (r3). Within Trench No.7 the thin sod and topsoil (Context No.701; depth 0.10-0.15 metres) overlay the upper cultivation soil of dark, reddish-brown silty clay loam (Context No.702). The depth of the upper cultivation soil varied across the length of the trench – at its western end it extended to a depth of 0.40 metres below the modern ground surface. This depth extended to 0.48 metres in the centre of the trench before rising up to only 0.29 metres below the present day ground surface at the eastern end of the trench. The upper cultivation soil (Context No.702) overlay the truncated surface (Context No.705) of the lower cultivation soil of dark brown silty clay loam (Context No.703). Again, the thickness and depth of the lower cultivation soil varied across the length of the trench and mirrored the variations in the depth of the upper cultivation soil. At the western end of the trench it extended from between 0.40 and 0.60 metres from the modern ground surface, in the centre of the trench its extent ranged between 0.48 and 0.91 metres below the ground surface, whilst at the eastern end of the trench it was a comparatively thin deposit being present only between 0.29 and 0.33 metres below the ground surface. It may be that the irregular-shaped area of erratic, non-discernible high resistance readings recorded during the geophysical survey (r7) is a product of the unparalleled depth of the cultivation soils in this part of the field. The lower cultivation soil (Context No.703) sealed the truncated surfaces (Context No.706) of a number of negative features (Context Nos.708, 710, 712, 714 and 716), which were cut into the natural subsoil of glacial till (Context No.704). The first of these features was a subrectangular-shaped, shallow hollow (Context No.708; width 0.56 metres, maximum depth 0.05 metres) that was filled with a dark brown silty clay loam (Context No.707) that was indistinguishable from the lower cultivation soil and was located 1.6 metres from the western end of the trench (Figure Nineteen). Comparable with the three features identified within Trench No.6 (i.e. Context Nos.608, 610 and 612), it is also interpreted as probably representing the truncated socket created by extracting a large stone that protruded from the glacial till into the overlying cultivation soil. Aligned approximately northwest-southeast and positioned between 2.0 and 2.3 metres from the western end of the trench, the next feature exposed was an unexcavated ploughmark (Context No.710; width 0.07-0.08 metres) which was also filled with a dark brown silty clay loam (Context No.709) that was identical to the lower cultivation soil. The next feature uncovered cut into the glacial till was a 0.28 metre-wide and 0.10 metres deep linear cutting (Context No.712) that was aligned approximately north-south, located 5.5 metres from the western end of the trench and contained a drain made up of conjoined ceramic pipes. The crudely manufactured ceramic pipes were unmarked examples of an all-in-one type that still retained the form of the early nineteenth-century tile-pipe drains that consisted of separate horseshoe and sole elements. A single pipe, with a length of 0.25 metres, a maximum width

of 0.08 metres and a depth of 0.095 metres, was retained. Typologically close dating is not possible, however, cylindrical drainage tiles were first commercially developed during the 1840s (Bell and Watson 1986, 20; 2008, 69) and the ceramic pipe is most likely to date to some point between the 1840s and the agricultural depression that begun in the 1880s and virtually ended all investment in deep drainage in Britain and Ireland cf. Harvey 1980, 72. This date range provides a *terminus post quem* for the earlier,



Figure Nineteen: Trench No.7 following the excavation of the lower cultivation soil (Context No.703), exposing the truncated surface (Context No.706) of the stone hole (Context No.708) and ploughmark (Context No.710) cut into the natural subsoil (Context No.704) in the foreground, looking east. The truncated field drain (Context No.712) and two additional ploughmarks (Context Nos.714 and 716) are barely visible in the background. Scale 2.0 metres.

stratigraphically attested, episode of cultivation within the field at Dunboe. The final two features uncovered within Trench No.7 were two, unexcavated ploughmarks (Context Nos.714 and 716) respectively located 11.8 metres and 12.4 metres from the western end of the trench and both filled with dark brown silty clay loams (Context Nos. 713 and 715 respectively) that were indistinguishable from the lower cultivation soil. One of these ploughmarks (Context No.714) was aligned approximately north-south on the same axis as the graveyard boundary wall and the two ploughmarks exposed within Trench No.4 (i.e. Context Nos. 407 and 409). The other ploughmark was aligned nearly northwest-southeast and presumably relates to a separate episode of ploughing during the earlier attested phase of cultivation.

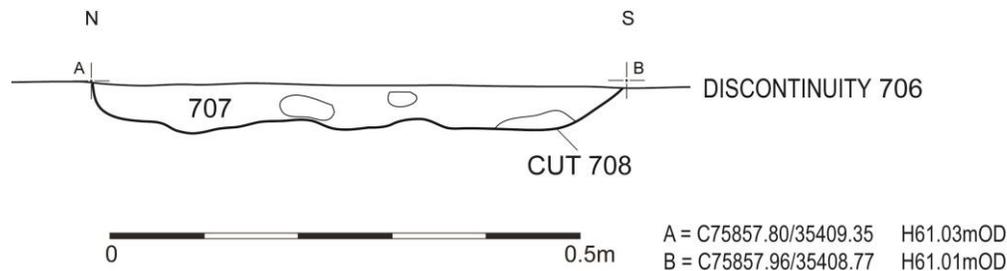


Figure: Twenty: West-facing section of stone hole (Context No.708).

A number of undiagnostic fragments of brick and pottery sherds of eighteenth- to twentieth-century date were recovered from both the upper and lower cultivation soils during the course of the excavations. The pottery assemblage mostly consisted of a range of creamwares and earthen wares, with the occasional sherd of blackware, suggestive of an eighteenth- to early twentieth-century *floruit* (R.Ó Baoill pers.comm.). With the exception of the single sherd of pottery recovered from the fill (Context No.611) of one of the stone-holes (Context No.612), all of the sherds were abraded. The occurrence of a number of abraded pottery sherds from a site located some remove from the nearest areas of habitation during the post-medieval period suggests the field was manured with domestic waste carted to the site during the eighteenth or nineteenth century. A small assemblage of worked flint was also recovered from both the upper and lower cultivation soils in all seven trenches. The majority of the worked flint was undiagnostic debitage, although two scrapers and a possible double ventral flake were recovered. Although not closely datable, the character of these finds is not Mesolithic, indicating that the flint is either of Neolithic or Bronze Age date. Given the large amount of naturally occurring flint within the glacial till subsoil at Dunboe, the small quantity of worked flint recovered during the course of the evaluation should not be considered to be anything other than 'background noise' typical for the region (B.Sloan pers.comm.). It does not signify the presence of a prehistoric site within the vicinity of the old church at Dunboe (B.Sloan pers.comm.). With the exception of the worked flint, none of the artefacts recovered during the course of the evaluation were of any antiquity.

Concluding Remarks

The excavations conducted at Dunboe in November 2014, combined with the light they shed upon the results of the geophysical survey conducted in May 2014, indicate that the investigated area of the field immediately to the east of the trapezoidal-shaped graveyard around the old church at Dunboe is not an area of significant archaeological potential. The thorough nature of both the resistivity survey and archaeological excavations means this is an assertion that can be made with a high degree of certainty. There is no evidence to suggest that activity associated with the medieval church at Dunboe encroached into the area immediately to the east of the graveyard – possibly because the current trapezoidal-shaped boundary of the graveyard already represents a relatively recent

extension around the site of the medieval church. Evidence was recovered during the excavation of Trench No.4 to suggest that cultivation had resulted in the truncation of the surface of the natural subsoil by a depth of 0.12 metres. Although this level of truncation might be responsible for the destruction of some ephemeral archaeological deposits and features, it would not completely remove any medieval burials that had once extended into that part of the field investigated in 2014.

Excavation demonstrated that the stratigraphic sequence of the investigated area primarily consisted of an upper (later) and lower (earlier) phase of cultivation. Closely dating these two phases of cultivation is difficult, however, the evaluative investigations conducted at Dunboe do not suggest that either phase is of any significant antiquity. The failure to identify any trace of the apparent enclosure represented on the 1963 aerial photograph in either the geophysical survey or the excavation of Trench No.5 strongly suggests that the later phase of cultivation, at least in part, post-dates 1963. This suggestion is consistent with the recollection of the tenant farmer, Jack Smith, who personally recalled that the field was used for growing potatoes and corn during his lifetime. That ploughmarks associated with the earlier phase of cultivation were aligned parallel to the eastern boundary wall of the graveyard indicate that the earlier phase of cultivation, at least in part, post-dates the creation of the trapezoidal-shaped boundary around the graveyard. Unfortunately, the precise date of the trapezoidal-shaped boundary is unknown, although that it incorporates the Bruce family vault (Girvan 1975, 58; Reeves-Smyth 1982, 180-181, no.123) within its southwestern corner indicates that it predates 1810. The recovery of a sherd of late eighteenth- or early nineteenth-century, transfer-printed, glazed creamware from the fill (Context No.611) of a stone extraction socket (Context No.612) associated with the earlier phase of cultivation and the recovery of an early nineteenth-century type of ceramic pipe from a field drain (Context No.712) that was truncated by the lower cultivation soil indicates an early nineteenth century *terminus post quem* for the earlier phase of cultivation is not inappropriate.

In large part, the excavation phase of the evaluation was an exercise in ‘ground truthing’ the anomalies identified during the earlier resistivity survey of the site. Excavation of the trenches (i.e. Trench Nos.1, 2, 3, 5 and 7) that were positioned in order to investigate the origin of various geophysical anomalies (i.e. r1, r2, r3, and r7) failed to find any definite proof of the origins of the anomalies. Rather than being caused by archaeological features and other human activity, it is considered more likely that the resistivity anomalies reflect variations in the depth of the cultivation soil and banding within the underlying, natural glacial subsoil at Dunboe. For example, excavation demonstrated that the principle linear high resistance anomalies (r2 and r3) do not reflect the presence of two ditches or any other archaeologically significant features. Although it was suggested possible that one of the linear anomalies (r2) might reflect the presence of a truncated field drain, this is considered unlikely. It is perhaps more significant that the two linear high-resistance features (r2 and r3) were just the most prominent of a series of northnortheast to southsouthwest aligned trends within the resistivity data. Exposure of the subsoil surface (Context No.506) within Trench No.5 revealed evidence of distinct banding, which had a northnortheast-southsouthwest alignment, within the glacial till between stiff, orangey brown clay with frequent stone inclusions and an inclusion-free orange clay (Context No.504). Given the comparatively shallow depth of the surface of the subsoil across most of the excavated trenches and the use of a probe spacing of 0.5 metres during the resistivity survey, it is reasonable to suggest that the linear anomalies within the resistivity data probably reflect this banding within the heterogeneous glacial till. It is significant that where the overlying cultivation soils were demonstrated to be deepest towards the centre of Trench No.7 (where they had a maximum depth of 0.91 metres), the pattern of northnortheast-southsouthwest banding within the resistivity data is weakest leading to the identification of a large area of erratic, non-discernible high resistance readings (r7). Similarly, the close proximity of the glacial till to the modern ground surface within Trench No.2 is arguably the cause of the U-shaped, high resistivity anomaly (r1) - the glacial till containing less water, and hence having a higher electrical resistance, than the surrounding ‘deeper’ cultivation soils.

References

- Anon. (ed.) 1928. *Londonderry and the London Companies 1609-1629, being a Survey and other Documents Submitted to King Charles I by Sir Thomas Phillips*, His Majesty's Stationery Office, Belfast.
- Anon. 1968. *Downhill and the Mussenden Temple, County Derry*, the National Trust Committee for Northern Ireland, Belfast.
- Bell, J. and Watson, M. 1986. *Irish Farming. Implements and Techniques 1750-1900*, John Donald, Edinburgh.
- Bell, J. and Watson, M. 2008. *A History of Irish Farming 1750-1950*, Four Courts Press, Dublin.
- Curl, J.S. 1986. *The Londonderry Plantation 1609-1914. The History, Architecture, and Planning of the Estates of the City of London and its Livery Companies in Ulster*, Phillimore, Chichester.
- Day, A. and McWilliams, P. (eds) 1991. *Ordnance Survey Memoirs of Ireland. Volume Eleven. Parishes of County Londonderry III, 1831-35. Roe Valley Lower*, The Institute of Irish Studies, Queen's University Belfast (in association with The Royal Irish Academy), Belfast.
- Gallagher, L. and Rogers, D. 1986. *Castle, Coast and Cottage. The National Trust in Northern Ireland*, The Blackstaff Press, Belfast.
- Girvan, W.D. 1975. *Buildings of North Derry including Limavady, Ballykelly, Castlerock, Downhill and Magilligan*, Ulster Architectural Heritage Society, Belfast.
- Harvey, N. 1980. *The Industrial Archaeology of Farming in England and Wales*, B.T.Batsford, London.
- Hamlin, A.E. 2008. *The Archaeology of Early Christianity in the North of Ireland*, (Brit. Archaeol. Rep. Brit. Ser. No. 460), Archaeopress, Oxford.
- Lacey, B. 2013. *Medieval and Monastic Derry: Sixth Century to 1600*, Four Courts Press, Dublin.
- Leslie, J.B. 1937. *Derry Clergy and Parishes, Being an Account of the Clergy of the Church of Ireland in the Diocese of Derry, from the Earliest Period, with Historical Notices of the Several Parishes, Churches, etc.*, R.H.Ritchie, Enniskillen
- Lewis 1837. *A Topographical Dictionary of Ireland, Vol.I*, S.Lewis & Co., London.
- MacCarthy, B. (ed.) 1895. *Annals of Ulster, otherwise Annala Senait, Annals of Senat; a Chronicle of Irish Affairs A.D. 431-1131 : 1155-1541. Vol.III. A.D. 1379-1541*, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Dublin.
- May, A. McL. 1940. Downhill td, Dunboe Church in ruins, in D.A.Chart (ed.), *A Preliminary Survey of the Ancient Monuments of Northern Ireland*, His Majesty's Stationery Office, Belfast. 186.
- McDermott, S. and McAlister, G. 2014. *Dunboe Church, Co. L'Derry*, (Geophysical Survey Rep. No.28) Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, Belfast.
- McErlean, T. 2007. The archaeology of parks and gardens 1600-1900: an introduction to Irish garden archaeology, in A.Horning, R. Ó Baoill, C.Donnolly and P.Logue (eds), *The Post-Medieval Archaeology of Ireland 1550-1850*, (Ir. Post-Med. Archaeol. Group Proc. No.1), Wordwell, Dublin. 274-288.
- O'Donovan, J. (ed.) 1854a. *Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland, by the Four Masters, from the Earliest Period to the Year 1616. Vol.III*, Hodges and Smith, Dublin.

- O'Donovan, J. (ed.) 1854b. *Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland, by the Four Masters, from the Earliest Period to the Year 1616. Vol. V*, Hodges and Smith, Dublin
- Proudfoot, L. 1999. 'After the Earl Bishop': the management of Downhill in the nineteenth century, in G.O'Brien (ed.), *Derry and Londonderry. History & Society. Interdisciplinary Essays on the History of an Irish County*, Geography Publications, Dublin. 415-448.
- Rankin, P. 1972. *Irish Building Ventures of the Earl Bishop of Derry*, Ulster Architectural Heritage Society, Belfast.
- Reeves, W. 1850. *Acts of Archbishop Colton in his Metropolitan Visitation of the Diocese of Derry, A.D. MCCCXCVII; with a Rental of the See Estates at that Time*, Irish Archaeological Society, Dublin.
- Reeves-Smyth, T. 1992a. *Downhill Demesne. Volume I: Text*, (Unpublished Report for the National Trust).
- Reeves-Smyth, T. 1992b. *Downhill Demesne. Volume II: Gazetteer*, (Unpublished Report for the National Trust).
- Silvester, B. 2012. The north side of the churchyard, in W.J.Britnell and R.J.Silvester (eds), *Reflections on the Past. Essays in Honour of Frances Lynch*, Cambrian Archaeological Association, Welshpool. 432-451.
- Sweetman, H.S. and Handcock, G.F. (eds) 1886. *Calendar of Documents Relating to Ireland, Preserved in Her Majesty's Public Record Office, London. 1302-1307*, Longmans & Co., London.

Acknowledgements

The assistance of Sapphire Mussen (Queen's University Belfast), Malachy Conway (National Trust) and Geoff Warke (National Trust Volunteer) during the course of the excavations is gratefully acknowledged. Barry Crawford and his colleagues from the National Trust kindly provided logistical support throughout the excavations. The mechanical excavator was skillfully operated by Malachy Conway, who also supplied the author with access to archival material both prior to and following the excavation. Advice on the artefact assemblage recovered during the course of the excavations was provided by Brian Sloan and Ruairí Ó Baoill (both Queen's University Belfast). The author is grateful to Jack Smith for his recollections on the past uses of the field and to Geoff Warke for bringing the relevance of the research of James Stevens Curl to the interpretation of the site to his attention. Sapphire Mussen (Queen's University Belfast) prepared the illustrations used in the report and provided much valuable insight into the site's interpretation.

Details of Archive

Finds: A small assemblage of, to date, uncatalogued finds was recovered during the course of the excavation. The assemblage mostly consists of pottery, bottle glass and worked flint. The finds are temporarily held by the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, Queen's University Belfast.

Photographs: A hundred and twenty-two digital images [P1040645-P1040726; P1040758-P1040772; SAM_1826-SAM_1852] of which 97 relate directly to the excavation, temporarily held by the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, Queen's University Belfast.

Plans / Drawings: A site plan (Scale 1:200) showing the location of the four evaluation trenches (partially reproduced here as Figure Six), a plan of Trench 1 following the excavation of cut feature (C106) (Scale 1:20) (reproduced here as Figure Ten), the westnorthwest-facing section of Trench 1 (Scale 1:10) (reproduced here as Figure Seven) and the west-facing sections of four cut

features (C608, C610, C612 and C708) (Scale 1:10) (reproduced here as Figures Sixteen to Eighteen and Figure Twenty), all temporarily held by the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, Queen's University Belfast.