



ULSTER
ARCHÆOLOGICAL
SOCIETY

Survey Report

Reference: **Survey Report No. 28**

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Location:

**Anne's Point Bridge
Mount Stewart
County Down**

In association with:

 **THE NATIONAL TRUST**



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Cover illustration: Anne's Point Bridge, Mount Stewart, north-east facing elevation

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1. Summary

A site survey was undertaken at the Anne's Point Bridge in the National Trust's Mount Stewart Estate, Portaferry Road, Newtownards, County Down. The bridge is between Patterson's Hill and the A20 road linking Greyabbey and Newtownards. The site is approximately 300m south-east of the Temple of the Winds. The bridge structure is to carry a single track and is of rough cut stone with a segmented arch. The date of construction is unknown but is probably early nineteenth century.

1.1 Location



Figure 01: Location map for Mount Stewart. *Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland*

1.2 Aims

In order to enhance the archaeological record of this site, the aim of this survey was to produce a survey and photographic record. This information was compiled into a report and copies submitted to the National Trust and to the archives of the Ulster Archaeological Society. The Survey Group had been asked by the National Trust to record the present state of the bridge, as it is in poor condition and in imminent danger of collapse. This has probably been caused by being used for carrying loads beyond its capacity, combined with the ingress of large roots from adjacent trees.



Figure 02: Members of the Survey Group at work

2. Introduction

2.1 Background

The survey of the bridge was undertaken on 26 March 2011. It was carried out by members of the Ulster Archaeological Society, in response to a decision taken by the committee of the society to extend an opportunity to members to participate in practical surveys of archaeological monuments that had not previously been recorded. This followed a bequest to the society from the late Dr Ann Hamlin, from which the items of survey equipment were purchased. During discussions with Malachy Conway, Archaeologist of the National Trust in Northern Ireland, it was noted that many archaeological sites on National Trust property had not been subject to a detailed archaeological survey. It was therefore agreed that members of the society would commence a programme to survey these sites and the bridge was subsequently chosen to be the first of these in 2011.

2.2 Previous archaeological surveys

As far as it is known, there has been no previous archaeological survey at this site.

2.3 Cartographic Evidence.



Figure 03: 1834 County Series Sheet 11 (part of). Site marked by Circle *Ordnance Survey*

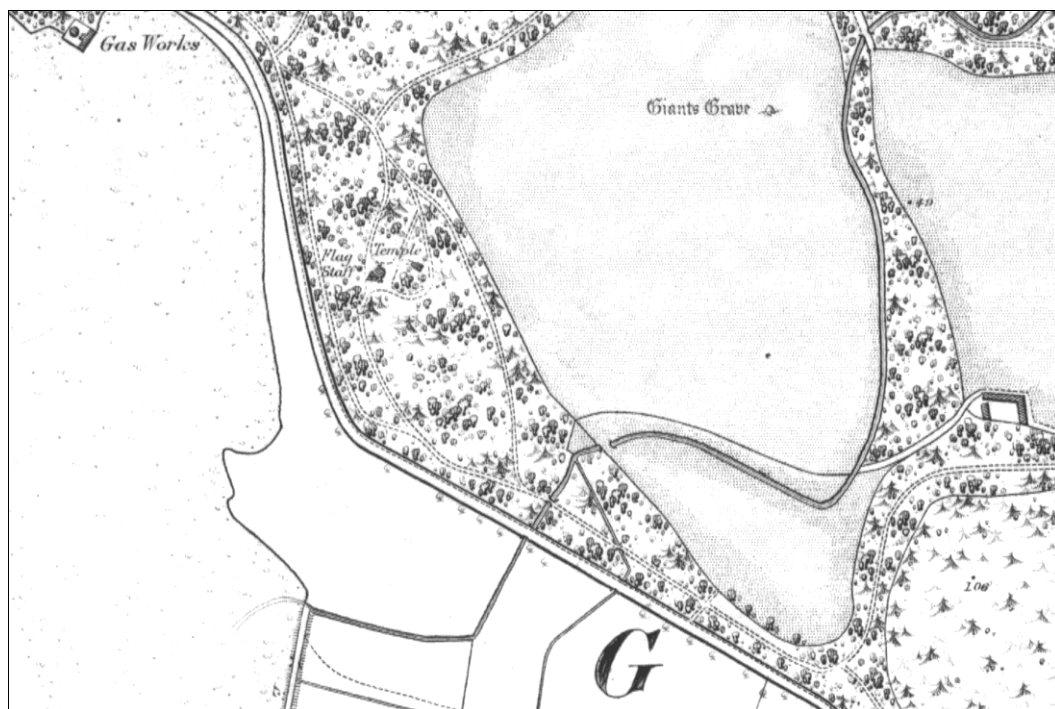


Figure 04: 1858 County Series, Sheet 11 (part of) *Ordnance Survey*

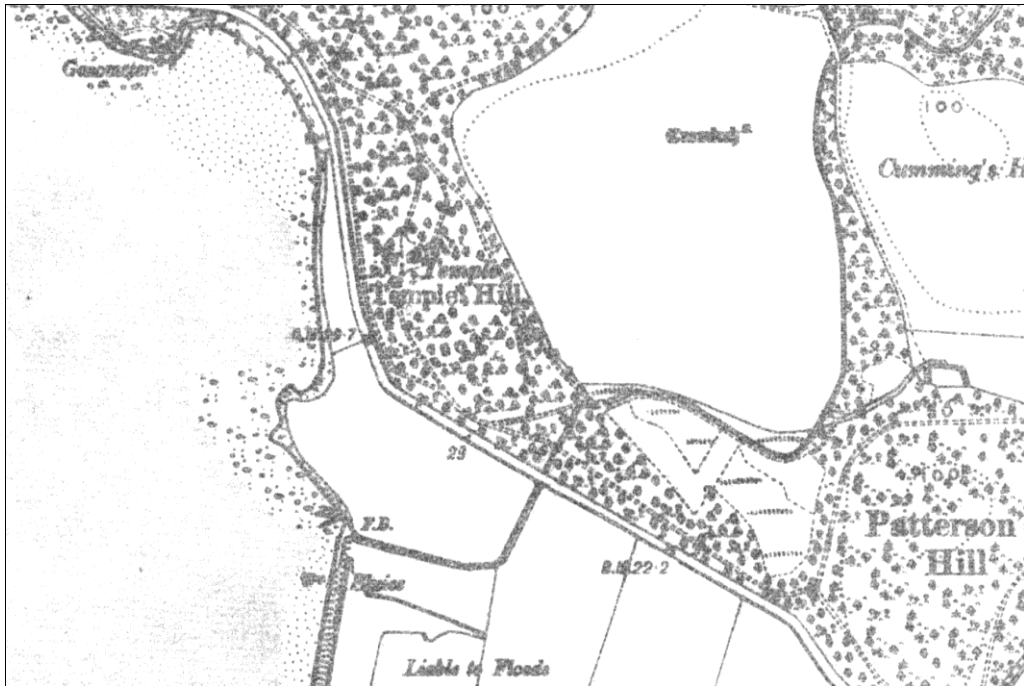


Figure 05: 1904 County Series Sheet 11 (part of) *Ordnance Survey*

The Ordnance Survey County Series maps for the area (Sheet 11) show that the system of trackways was in place by 1834, including the point at which the river and track crossed. The existence of the bridge is implied but not marked and there is a possibility that a ford was in place instead (Figure 03). In the 1858 revision, the bridge is clearly shown, as is a realignment of the river (figure 04).

2.4 Archiving

Copies of this report have been deposited with the National Trust and the Ulster Archaeological Society. All site records have been archived by the National Trust at Rowallane, Saintfield, County Down.

2.5 Credits and Acknowledgements

The survey was led by Duncan Berryman, assisted by, Janna McDonald, Michael Catney, Hilary Boyd and Colin Boyd. The Ulster Archaeological Society is particularly grateful to Malachy Conway, Archaeologist of the National Trust, who worked closely with the survey team in choosing the site and facilitating access.

3. UAS Survey, 26 March 2011

3.1 Methodology

It was decided that the survey would take the form of the production of a photographic record. This report was compiled using the information obtained from these sources.

3.2 Elevation drawings

Elevation drawings were supplied by the National Trust, following plans to repair and reinstate the bridge.

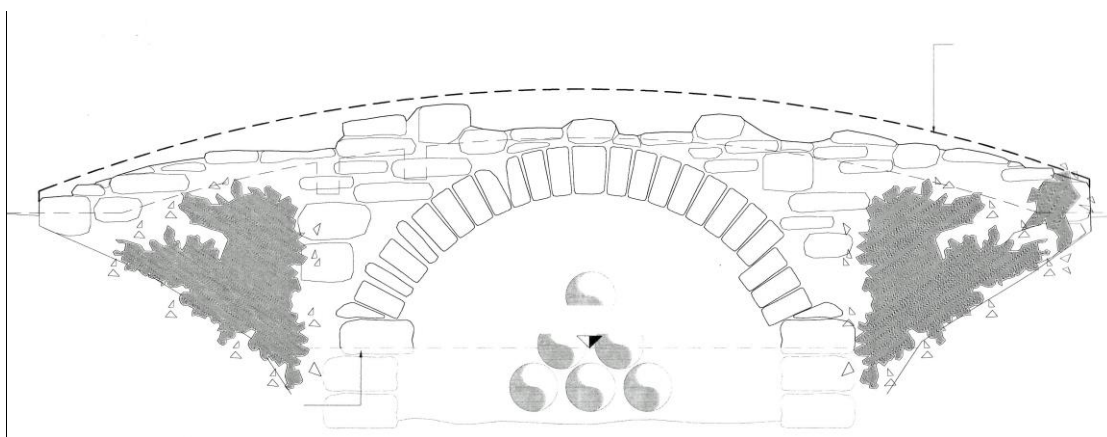


Figure 06: North-east facing elevation. *Mann Williams*

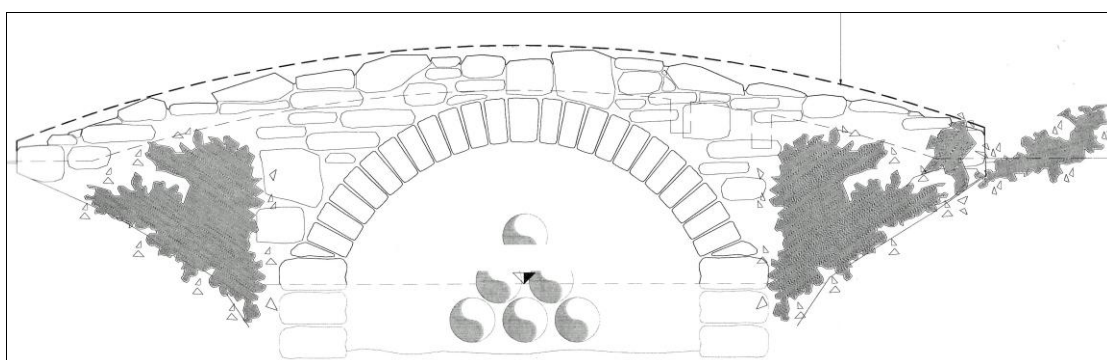


Figure 07: South-west facing elevation. *Mann Williams*

3.3 Photographic archive

A photographic record of the site was taken by using a Panasonic *DMC FZ18* 8 megapixel digital camera and others and a photographic record sheet was employed,

corresponding to photographs taken during the site survey on 26 March 2011. The archive has been compiled in jpeg format and saved to compact disc (see Appendix).



Figure 08: South-west facing elevation



Figure 09: Example of root damage to bridge deck.



Figure 10: North-eastern face showing parapet damage



Figure 11: Damage to north face western abutment



Figure 12: Detail of north-eastern face stonework



Figure 13: Damage to north-eastern face abutment



Figure 14: Damage to parapet on north-eastern face

4. Discussion

This bridge, now owned by the National Trust, is in a secluded part of Mount Stewart estate, only recently opened to the public. Since the National Trust has acquired control of the whole estate, the condition of this bridge has become a much more pressing issue. As can be seen from the Ordnance Survey maps (see Section 2.3 above), it appears that the bridge may not have been built until somewhere between 1834 and 1858, the date of the second map. The bridge may have become necessary after the realignment of the watercourse and pathways. It is also possible that there was a ford or a footbridge in place before the realignment.

The bridge, which is of a segmented arch construction, built of rough local cut stone, spans a stream approximately 2.25 metres wide. The deck is approximately 2.6 metres wide. The parapet walls are in poor condition, mainly due to root damage. In the centre of the span on the north-eastern face, the parapet has disintegrated down to the segmented arch, severely compromising the strength of the structure. Its strength is further compromised by the fact that there are at least two heavy roots growing along the deck of the bridge, close to the parapets and the north-eastern parapet has been pushed out from the segmented arch.

The bridge, probably built in the early nineteenth century, was clearly designed for no more than horse and cart traffic. It appears, from the tracks currently visible, that tractors and other farm vehicles have been using the bridge. Given the current state of the components, the bridge is not suitable for any type of traffic at present.

Note: Since the survey was carried out, the bridge has been put out of use, by blocking access for vehicles by the placing of a large tree trunk across the approach. There are also warning tapes and notices to prevent pedestrians gaining access. We understand that the National Trust has commissioned an engineer's survey, with the intention of reinstating the bridge.



Figure 15: View of bridge with restricted access (December 2015)

APPENDIX - PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD FORM

Site: Anne's Point Bridge, Mount Stewart, County Down

Date: 26 March, 2011

Make and model of camera: *Panasonic* DMC FZ18, *Ricoh* 600G and others

Frame No	From	Details
P1020328	North-east	Elevation of Bridge
P1020302	North	Members of the Survey Group at work
RIMG0008	North	South-west facing elevation
RIMG0025	South-east	Root damage to bridge deck
P1020310	North-east	North-eastern face showing parapet damage
P1020307	North	Damage to north face western abutment
P1020317	North	Detail of north-eastern face stonework
P1020311	North	Damage to north-eastern face abutment
P1020315	North	Damage to parapet on north-eastern face
CIMG0694	North-east	View of bridge with restricted access (December 2015)