



Geophysical Survey Report 26

'Seview Allotments'
Site of Enclosure and Souterrain
ANT 061:003
Skegoneill
Co. Antrim
CAF GSR 26

Ronan McHugh and Emily Murray

1.1 Site Specific Information

Site Name: 'Seaview Allotments' reported site of enclosure and souterrain adjacent to Fort William, North Belfast.

Townland: Skegoneill.

SMR No (if applicable): Ant 061:003.

State Care: Recorded in NISMR.

Grid Ref: J 33650 77350.

County: Antrim.

Planning Ref / No.: Not applicable.

Dates of Survey: 17th - 28^h June 2013.

Surveyor(s) Present: Ronan McHugh and Emily Murray, Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, Queen's University Belfast, assisted by students from Queen's University Belfast undergraduate Archaeological Excavation Module.

Brief Summary:

Electrical resistance survey of a green parkland area in North Belfast, immediately to the south of a Late Medieval artillery fort, detected possible remains of an earlier settlement on the hillside. An enclosure and souterrain were recorded in the NISMR in this area but are no longer visible. The survey revealed the possible remains of a rath, close to an upstanding earthen mound. The rath has a large subcircular annex conjoined on its north-western side. Less definite traces of the souterrain were also detected, but it is likely that any surviving traces are buried beneath the mound. Other anomalies recorded related to the 20th century use of the site for public allotments.

Size of area surveyed: Approximately 1.2ha.

Weather conditions: Sunny and hot.

Solid Geology: Mudstone, sandstone and shale with overlying diamicton deposits.

Current Land Use: Unmaintained parkland.

Intended Land Use: Public allotments and heritage trail.

1.2 Technical information summary

Survey Type	Electrical Resistance
<i>Instrumentation:</i>	Geoscan RM 15 resistance metre and MPX15 Multiplexer
<i>Probe configuration:</i>	Twin probe
<i>Probe spacing:</i>	0.5m
<i>Grid size:</i>	20m x 20m
<i>Traverse interval:</i>	0.5
<i>Sample Interval:</i>	0.5
<i>Traverse Pattern:</i>	Zig-zag
<i>Spatial Accuracy:</i>	Grids set out using Leica TCR 705 series Total Station

2. Introduction

It is proposed to develop an area of hillside parkland known as 'Seaview Allotments' in Skegoneill townland, North Belfast into community allotments. The park contains the recorded site of an enclosure and souterrain (NISMR ANT 061:003), and is immediately to the south of the enclosed site of a well preserved late medieval artillery fort (NISR ANT 061:002). The development project aims to include the promotion of the archaeological heritage of the area, so to inform this objective, a programme of survey work was undertaken in summer 2013 to investigate the remains, both within the Seaview Allotments parkland area and at the site of the artillery fort. A topographical survey of the fort was undertaken, and processing of this survey was ongoing at the time of this report and will be the subject of a separate report. This document presents the results of a geophysical investigation of the parkland site which intended to detect the remains of the enclosure and souterrain, as well as any other previously undiscovered archaeological remains. The work was carried by surveyors from the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork (CAF) at the request of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA).

3. History and Background

The mound and souterrain at Fort William are poorly recorded in spite of their location close to the artillery fort. The earliest literary reference is contained in an unattributed article from 1852. In the course of describing the artillery fort, the account relates that

“on the same hill (called the Trench Hill) fronting towards Belfast is another earthwork, seemingly very ancient, covering one of the ‘caves’ so frequently met with throughout the north of Ireland, but which is not included in the regular intrenchment”(Anon 1852, 132).

There is no comment in this account on the form or nature of the earthwork. The site was then described by Biggar in 1894: -

“A very small portion now remains, planted with large sallagh trees. Under this rath is a souterrain into which many people have told me they have entered. It stands upon a drum or knoll of gently rising ground, its situation being a rather commanding one, overlooking the sloping ground to the sea, including the now obscured promontory called Ringan’s Point at the bottom of Fortwilliam Park.

He adds some locational information, stating that the later artillery fort was “a few paces to the north of the ancient dwelling”. Biggar’s account indicates that the enclosure was a rath, but that it was poorly preserved even in the first third of the 19th century. This would appear to be borne out in the cartographic descriptions of the site by the Ordnance Survey (OS).

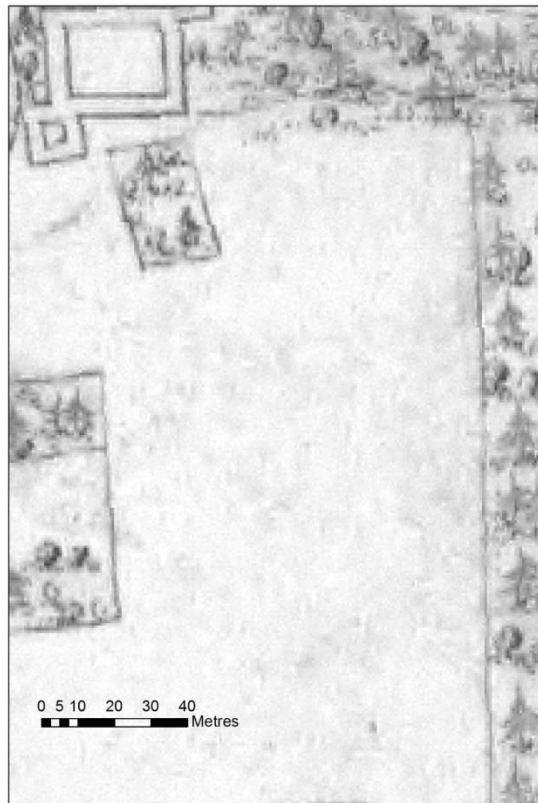
The first OS depiction of the area, on the 1832 6-inch map, shows an open field. There was no indication of an antiquity but a rectangular enclosure, measuring 32m north-south by 22m east-west and lined with trees was shown in a position coinciding with the north-west corner of the modern field. By the time of the second edition, an oval enclosure, again decorated with trees, is shown in this position and is marked ‘Cave’, clearly referring to the souterrain which had been described in the 1852 account. The enclosure shown is presumably the location of the rath, with the trees shown presumably being the Sallagh’s that were referred to in the 1894 account. It measured approximately 27m north-south by 23m east-west. However, the fact that this site is not formally marked as an antiquity or ‘Fort’ on the early OS maps probably signifies that it was too poorly preserved, even at that time, for confident identification.



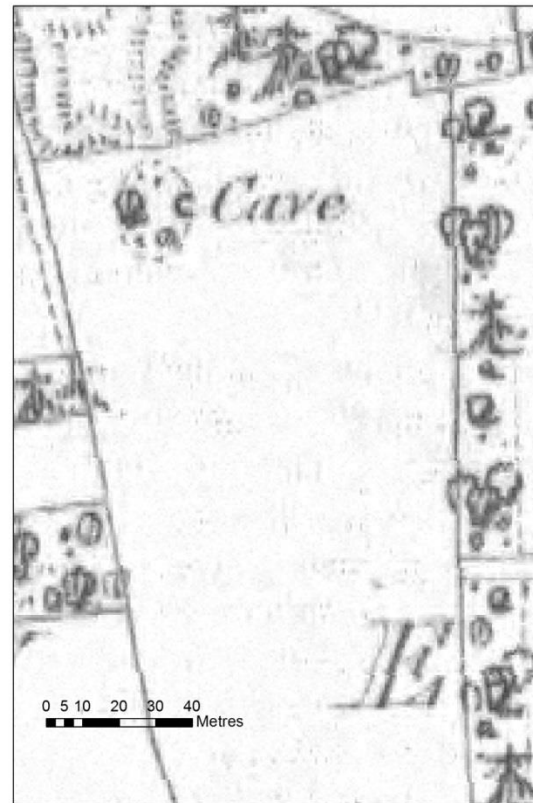
Figure 1. Location of Skegoneill townland, North Belfast (inset). The Seaview Allotment site, where the survey took place, is the triangular green area in the centre of the aerial photograph. The artillery fort is obscured by trees at the north of the site.

It was similarly depicted and labelled until the 1901 map, when the label accompanying the oval enclosure was changed simply to 'Fort William'. There was more development by the 1931 map. At this stage, the enclosure was shown only as a dotted circle with a diameter of approximately 21m, possibly suggesting further damage to the site in the intervening years. There is no labelling on this map. By 1931, the characteristic triangular shape of the survey area had been defined, with the area to the east shown as having been developed into the terraced holdings of Seaview Drive. On the 1938 map, an area corresponding with the south-eastern quadrant of the oval enclosure is shown as a hachured circular platform with the annotation 'Souterrain' marked beneath. With a diameter of 7m from its outer edges, the hachured feature is considerably smaller than the oval enclosure shown on the earlier maps. The 1938 map is of further interest as it shows subdivisions within the field; a small subrectangular area in the north-west corner is shown portioned from the body of the field, while much of the eastern edge is divided into rectangular plots, which were presumably associated with the use of the field as allotments. On subsequent maps, the depiction of the site with hachures is repeated, although it is consistently much larger, with a diameter of roughly 15m. The legend 'Souterrain' has also been retained but no subdivisions are shown within the field (See Fig. 2 for a selection of the OS depictions).

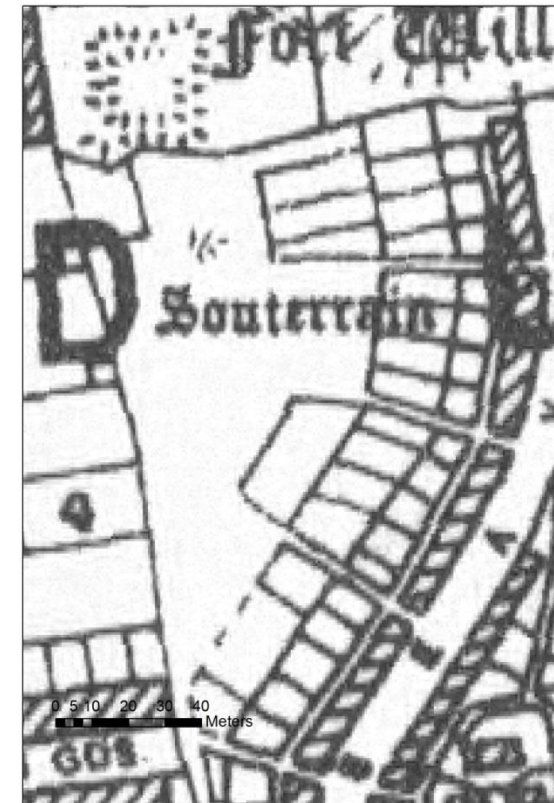
Aerial photography from the early 21st century shows a number of paths in the field (Fig. 3) which probably post-date a period of reorganisation of the allotment site in 1988 mentioned in the NIEA SM 7 file (Neill 1988 unpaginated). The main arterial path extends from the south of the site northwards before curving eastwards and then straightening as it proceeds to the northern boundary of the field. It is less distinct in its most northern section. Two clear paths extend from the eastern edge of the path to the eastern edge of the field. An overgrown circular mound was shown in a position corresponding with the location of the hachured platform on the OS maps. Immediately to the south of the mound, traces of a possible third path are visible extending west-east across the field, crossing the line of the arterial path.



(a)



(b)



(c)

Figure 2. Three contrasting depictions of the survey area. Figure 2 (a) is the first edition depiction from 1832, where no antiquity is shown. The 1858 depiction (b) shows an oval enclosure with the label 'Cave' added. By 1938 (c) the survey area was defined with the boundaries that are visible today. The enclosure is no longer visible but a hachured platform is shown at the south-east quadrant of where it was formerly depicted. The label is changed to 'Souterrain'. The field divisions shown within the area on this map do not exist today.



Figure 3. Aerial image of the survey area showing pathways which do not appear on any of the OS maps. Image courtesy of Google Earth and is dated 31/12/2001.

4. The Survey Area

The survey area comprises a field of open parkland that is surrounded on all sides by urban development (Fig. 4). To the north is Castle High School, the grounds of which contain the Fort William artillery fort. The body of the fort is fenced off from the survey area, but its outer ditch extends into the area and runs along the northern boundary of the field, appearing as a deep depression overgrown with briars immediately inside the fence. To the east is the residential terraced housing of Seaview Drive. The western edge of the allotment area borders the grounds of a care facility and retirement home. To prevent antisocial activity within the park, it is almost completely enclosed by an iron fence that is more than 2m high for most of the perimeter. The survey area is, in plan, a coarse triangular shape, broadest at the north where it borders the grounds of the artillery fort and measures approximately 110m but tapering to only 15m at its southern tip, where the access gate is located. It measures approximately 165m north-south.

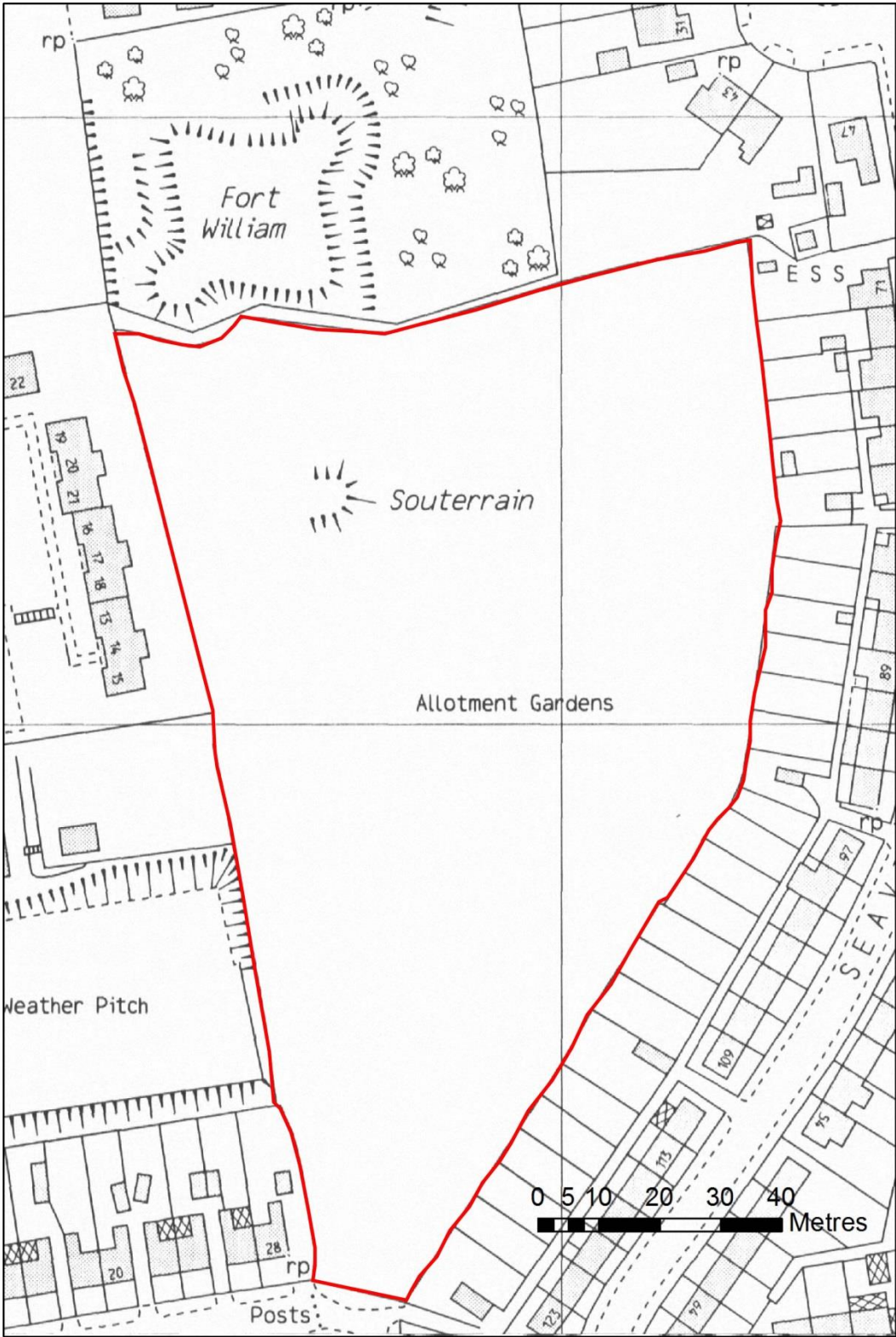


Figure 4. The survey area (outlined in red)

The survey area comprises the south-east quadrant of a rounded peak; the north-west corner of this area is completely flat, with the only feature of note being a prominent, sub-circular earthen mound. The mound was completely overgrown at the time of the survey, but had a diameter of approximately 16m and it stood roughly 2.5m above the modern ground level (Plate 1). The position of this mound broadly corresponds with the location of the hachured mound shown on all of the OS maps since 1938. However, it is unlikely that the visible earthwork is of significant antiquity. This mound is considerably larger than the dimensions of the mound according to the NIEA SM 7 record, which mentioned a reported diameter of only 15ft (4.5m)(Williams 1982 unpaginated), and it is likely that it has been augmented by the deposit of modern spoil over the years. An episode of clearance and groundworks within the park was recorded on the SM 7 file in 1988 (Neill 1988 unpaginated). There is no visible sign of the souterrain in the field today and it was not found during any of the NIEA inspectorate's visits to the site.



Plate 1. The earthen mound which stands on the level ground in the north-west of the survey area, taken facing north.

From the level north-western area where the mound stands, the topography of the field slopes in a rounded gradient to the south and more dramatically to the east and south-east, down towards the terraced housing of Seaview Drive. The path described in Section 3 above and shown in Figure 3 winds its way from the entrance at the south of the site around the crown of the hill and this creates a stepped profile on the hillside which is most pronounced on the eastern side (Plates 2 and 3). Field clearance prior to the survey removed dense scrub from much of the site, particularly from the eastern slopes. Nonetheless, much of the area at the base of the slope along the eastern and southern sides was inaccessible due to deposits of refuse along the edge of the field and thick growths of nettles. A thicket of trees and scrub encroaches into the survey area at the north-eastern base of the hill (Plate 4) limiting the survey of that area. In some areas on the hillslope, the ground surface has been disturbed by tyre tracks (Plate 5), while there are isolated patches of briars and scrub within the survey area.



Plate 2. The earth and gravel surface of the main arterial path.



Plate 3. View of the field facing north. The creation of the path (foreground on the left) has created a 'step' in the slope to the south-east and east.



Plate 4. View of the north-east corner of the survey area, taken facing north. Vegetation around the base of the slopes hampered survey of these areas.



Plate 5. Ground disturbance at the top of the hill, created by tractor traffic.

5. Survey Results

Electrical resistance was chosen as the principal method for the survey because of the likelihood of contamination from the surrounding fences and debris around the site if magnetic techniques were employed. Resistance survey is ideally suited for the recognition of a souterrain, where the constituent stone should provide a strong contrast with surrounding soils. It would also anticipate locating any significant relict banks or ditches from the enclosure. A relatively fine survey resolution of 0.5m x 0.5m was selected in order to provide clear definition of any archaeological remains. The survey was undertaken with a Geoscan RM15 Resistance Metre with MPX15 multiplexer. The field was subdivided into 20m grids with a Leica TCR 705 series total station, which was also used to spatially record the survey. The results of the survey are graphically presented in Figures 5 and 6, which present different representations of the survey data. A provisional interpretation of the most significant anomalies detected by the survey is presented in tabular form in Table 1, which should be read in association with Figure 7, which is a simplified interpretation diagramme of the results.

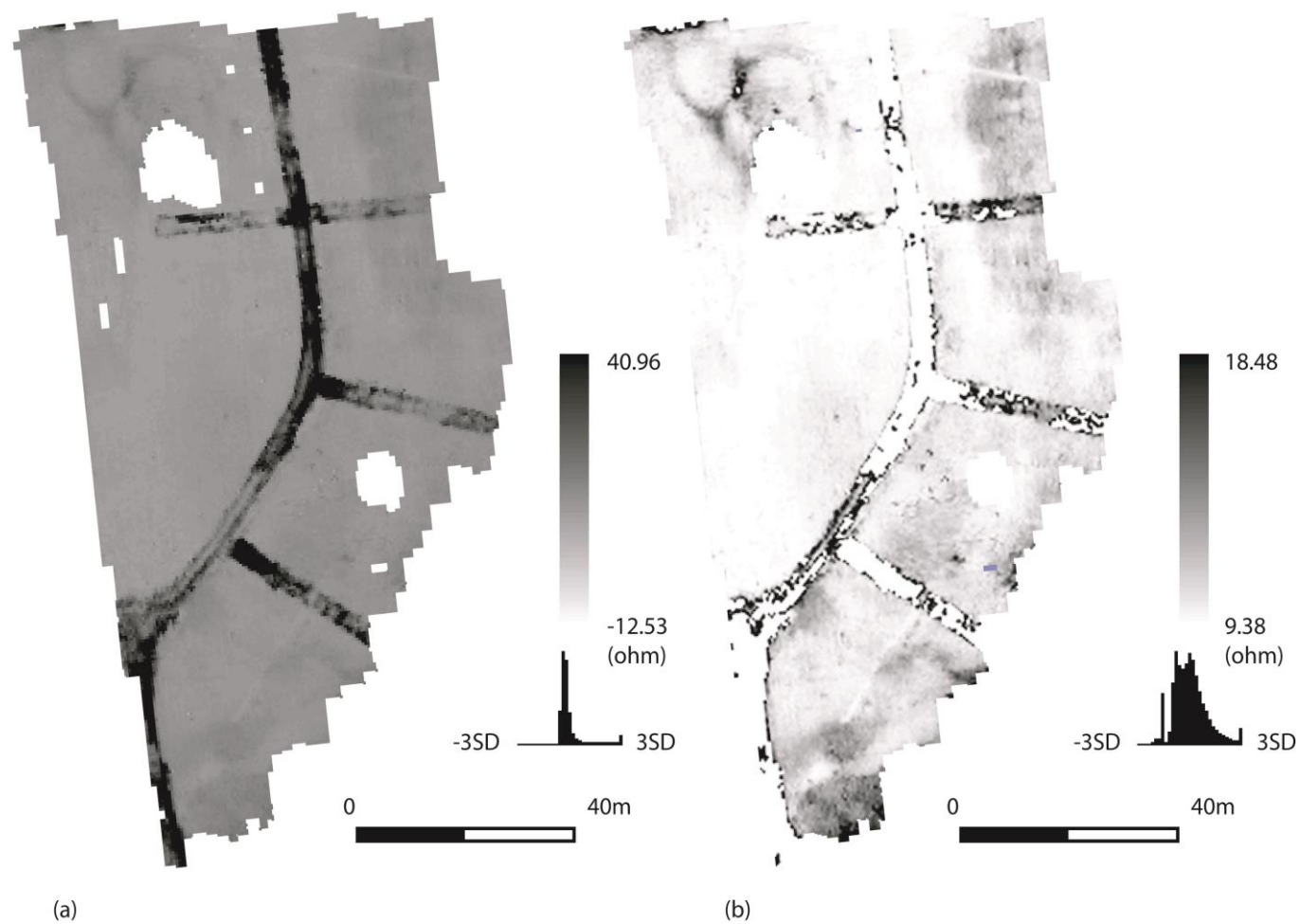


Figure 5. Greyscale plots of the survey data. Figure 5(a) is the raw data, which emphasises the pathways running through the survey area. The data was processed by clipping the higher readings and the results are depicted in Figure 5(b).

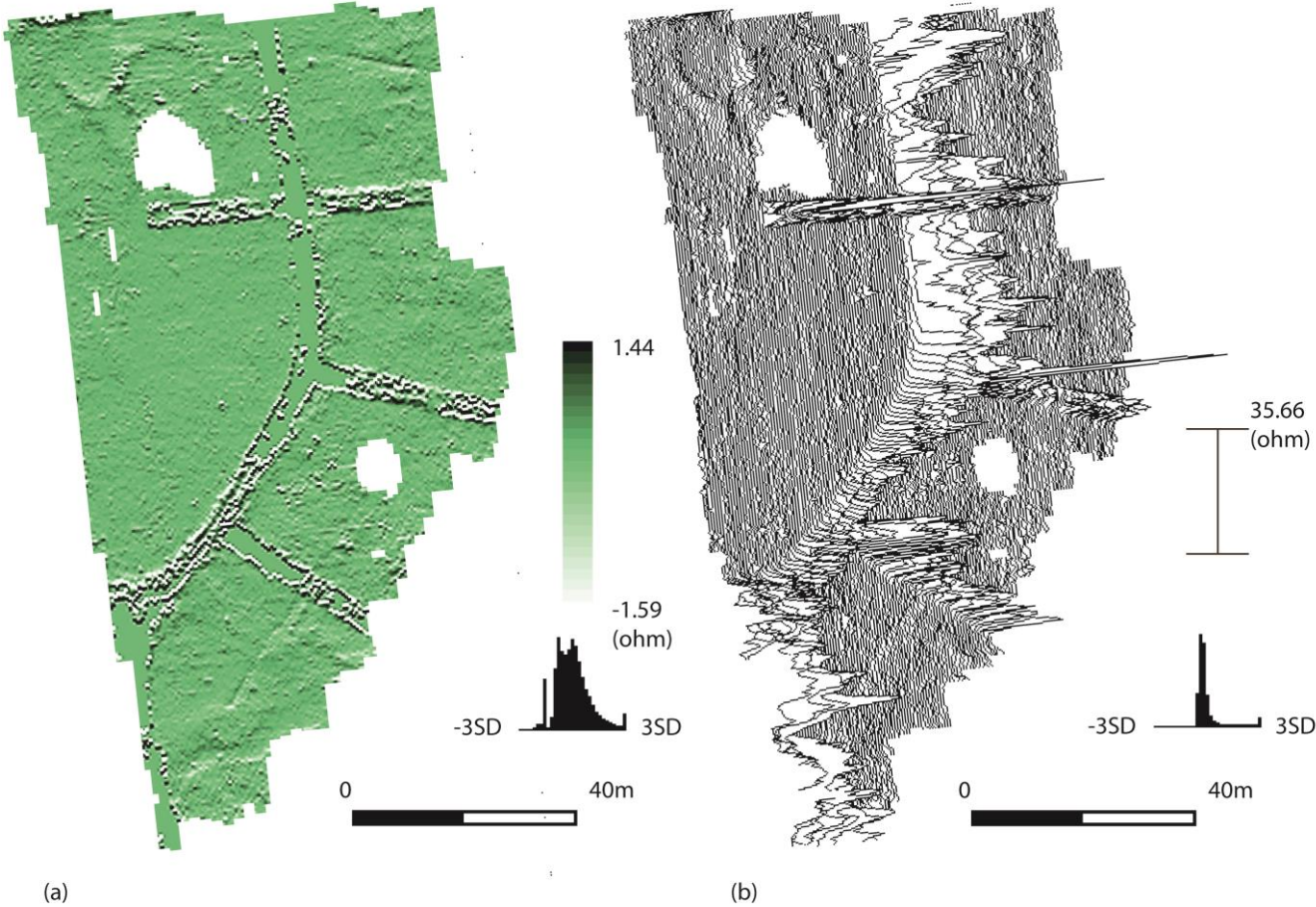


Figure 6. Alternative depictions of the survey data. Figure 6(a) is a relief plot and Figure 6(b) is a trace plot, which illustrates the relative magnitudes of the anomalies detected.

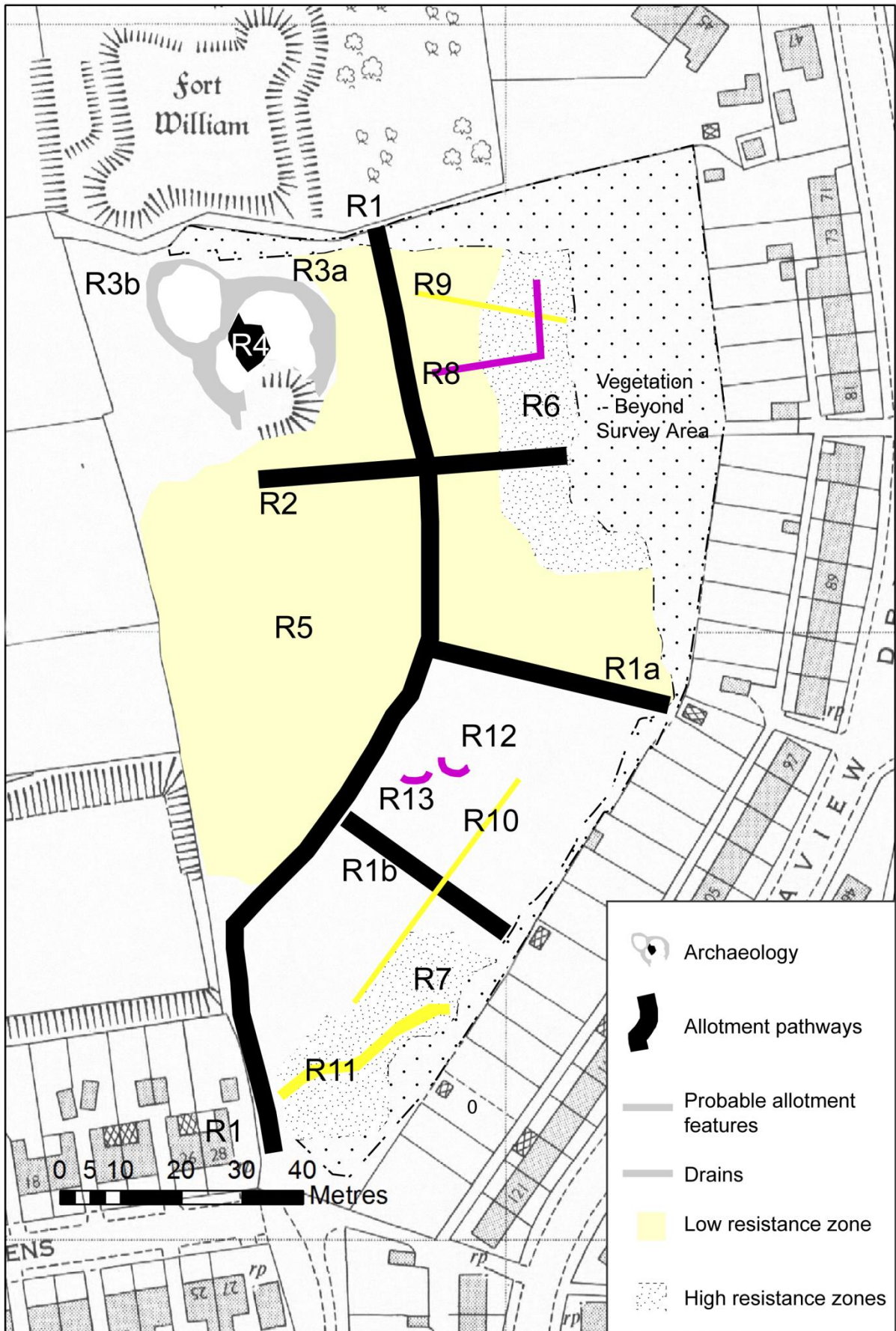


Figure 7. Interpretative diagram.

Table 1. Description and Interpretation of electrical resistance survey results (To be read in conjunction with Figure 7).		
Anomaly	Description	Interpretation
R1	Strongly imaged curvilinear anomaly of extremely high resistance values that originates from the gate at the southern tip of the park and extends northwards along the western edge of the field. After approximately 45m it curves north-eastwards around the contour of the hill before straightening again and heading northwards into the northern edge of the field. It has a consistent width of 4-5m and is approximately 162m long.	This is the main arterial path associated with the use of the area as public allotments. The surface of the ground is hard and gravelly along the course of the path.
R1a	Strongly imaged anomaly of extremely high resistance values that extends from the eastern edge of anomaly R1. It is starkly linear in form, is 4m wide and 33 long before extending into the south-eastern edge of the area.	Path forming part of a network of paths on the hillside associated with the allotments.
R1B	Strongly imaged anomaly of extremely high resistance values that extends from the eastern edge of anomaly R1. It is starkly linear in form, is 4m wide and 30 long before extending into the south-eastern edge of the area.	Path forming part of a network of paths on the hillside associated with the allotments.
R2	Strongly imaged anomaly of extremely high resistance values that extends west-east across the top of the hill and then downslope into the eastern edge of the survey area. It is 4m wide and 50m long.	This is most likely another part of the network of paths that criss-cross the hillside. However, it is the only path that crosses the arterial path (anomaly R1) and it does not appear as clearly as the others on the 2001 aerial photograph (Fig. 3). Its situation, close to the reported location of the enclosure and souterrain, offer the possibility that it is associated with these,

		although that is considered unlikely.
R3	<p>High resistance anomaly that appears to consist of two, conjoined, oval or subcircular areas defined by enclosures of relatively enhanced resistance levels in the north-west corner of the survey area.</p> <p>The southern 'oval is labelled R3a in Fig. 7. The south-east quadrant of R3a is obscured beneath the mound, but the remainder of the perimeter is well defined. It has dimensions of approximately 25m north-south by 21m east-west, with a maximum internal diameter of 21m. The perimeter varies between 2.5-4m in width.</p> <p>R3b is less well defined. There is a strongly imaged arc of high resistance between north-west, through west to south-east, while it extends beyond the survey area at the north, into an area of scrub vegetation separating the survey area from the artillery fort. The rest of the perimeter appears to be completed by vaguely imaged traces, completing a flattened oval anomaly measuring 17m north-west/south-east by 14m north-east/south-west. Its maximum internal diameter is 13.6m and the width of the perimeter varies greatly, although it is roughly 2m wide where the anomaly is most distinct.</p>	<p>This anomaly probably represents archaeological remains. The conjoined enclosures are in the position marked on the OS maps up to 1938 with an oval, tree-lined enclosure that corresponds with the probable location of the 'fort' recorded in the 19th century accounts (See Section 3 above). R3a appears to form a larger enclosure with R3b perhaps constituting an annex on the north-western side. Definition and therefore interpretation of the anomaly is not definite as parts of both elements of the anomaly lie beyond the area surveyed.</p>

	Readings defining these anomalies are 20-25% stronger than the surrounding ground.	
R4	Band of high resistance readings up to 6m wide within anomaly R3 but obscured by the mound at the south-east.	The form of this anomaly is not well defined, but the roughly linear high resistance band is not inconsistent with the signal from a buried, stone-built structure. It is therefore possible that the anomaly represents the souterrain, which was reported as being within the Fort, or else another internal feature or cobbled surface. Its proximity to the edge of the mound, however, means that it might simply be imaging a spread of buried rubble.
R5	Extensive zone of low resistance readings at the top of the hill and surrounding the mound.	Response to poor drainage on the level part of the hill. While the survey was completed in dry conditions, council officials indicated that this area was generally waterlogged and in poor condition (F. Grant 2013 pers. Comm.). Large areas of rutting and tyre tracks within this zone attest to the poor condition of the ground surface.
R6	Subrectangular zone of higher resistance readings on the north-east slopes of the survey area that is bordered by a band of lower resistance.	The position and shape of this zone replicate some of the subdivisions shown on the 1938 map, and the relatively regular boundary suggests it may reflect the extent of an area of allotment plots. The higher readings may be due to differential cultivation within this area.
R7	Subrectangular zone of higher resistance readings on the south and south-east slopes of the survey area.	Again, the higher resistance levels within this zone may be due to cultivation practices within the area. As with R6, much of the

		boundary of the area is regular and well defined and the position and shape of the anomaly is consistent with the representation of the allotment plots on the 1938 OS map. Some of the more extreme high resistance readings, particularly at the extreme southern tip of the field, may be due to deposits of rubble or gravel left over from installing the pathways (R1-R2) in the field.
R8	Sharply defined high resistance anomaly on the north-east facing slope of the hill. It consists of 2 'arms' intersecting almost in a right angle. The north-south arm is approximately 14m long while the east-west arm extends for over 20m from the flat hilltop down the eastern slope of the hill to meet the first arm, in the process travelling through the low resistance zone R5 and into the zone of higher readings R6. Both arms of the anomaly are approximately 1m wide.	The most likely interpretation of these two linear features is that they represent a fence used to define one of the allotment plots. They do not respect the boundary of zone R6, so may be from a different layout on the hill. The SM 7 file suggests that there was some reorganisation of the allotments in the late 1980's (Neill 1988 unpaginated) and this, as well as other amendments, may have periodically moved the boundaries of the plots. However, this is not a definite explanation. It is conceivable that they belong to an earlier period of activity on the hill, possibly even connected with the artillery fort but, given the sharp definition of the anomalies, they are more likely to image a modern feature.
R9	Low resistance linear anomaly extending downslope from the low resistance zone (R5) beyond the north-east corner of the survey area. It is 15m long and 1.5m wide.	Modern Field drain
R10	Low resistance linear anomaly extending downslope from the edge	Modern Field drain

	of a bush in the centre of the east-facing slope into the southern tip of the area It is 65m long and 1.5m wide.	
R11	Meandering, roughly defined, low resistance anomaly extending north-eastwards from the western edge of the survey area, just above the southern tip. It travels across and down the slope to the south-east edge of the field. It has an overall length of 35m and a maximum width of 4.5m	The eastern edge of this anomaly coincides with the area where the field drain R10 terminates. It is likely to represent either an earlier artificial drain, or else a natural run-off.
R12	Semi-circular arc of high resistance readings close to a tree on the edge of the level part of the hill, overlooking the terrain to the south-east. Diameter is approximately 4.5m	Most likely this is the image of a small ornamental garden feature or screen associated with the allotments.
R13	Semi-circular arc of high resistance readings close to a tree on the edge of the level part of the hill, overlooking the terrain to the south-east. Diameter is approximately 4.2m	Most likely this is the image of a small ornamental garden feature or screen associated with the allotments.

6. Discussion

The raw survey dataset (Fig. 5(a)) is dominated by the high resistance anomalies R1, R1a, R1b and R2. Anomalies R1, R1a and R1b are certainly paths associated with the use of the area as allotments and are clearly visible on the 2001 aerial photograph (Fig. 3). The linear anomaly R2 is also most probably imaging a pathway related to this network. It is not shown as clearly as the other paths on the aerial photograph and its location, at the top of the hill and immediately adjacent to the mound, means that it is close to the reported position of the souterrain. In addition, unlike the anomalies R1a and R1b it crosses the primary pathway R1. However, its stark linear shape and similar width (consistently approximately 4m), as well as the comparable strength of the signals with those from anomaly R1, R1a and R1b, means that it can confidently be associated with the path system related to the allotments.

By comparison to the strongly imaged paths, the remainder of the raw dataset appears broadly homogenous in character. In order to properly examine the remainder of the survey area, it was necessary to filter the data and negate the effects of the strongest resistance readings from the paths. The processed data is shown at figures 5(b), 6(a) and (b), and without the effect of the higher readings from the paths, the definition of a number of other anomalies is enhanced.

The most significant results from the processed dataset are the sub circular high resistance anomalies (R3a and R3b) in the north-west corner of the park. The precise shape of the feature or features represented by these anomalies is not certain due to their extension into the area of undergrowth bordering the northern field boundary, and also beneath the mound to the south-east, but they seem to represent two conjoined high resistance oval or subcircular enclosures (Figure 8). It seems unlikely that these are geological responses as they are dissimilar to any of the other anomalies revealed during the survey. The definition of these anomalies, as high resistance perimeters with values roughly 20% above the surrounding soils, suggests they may represent the base of heaped earthen banks.

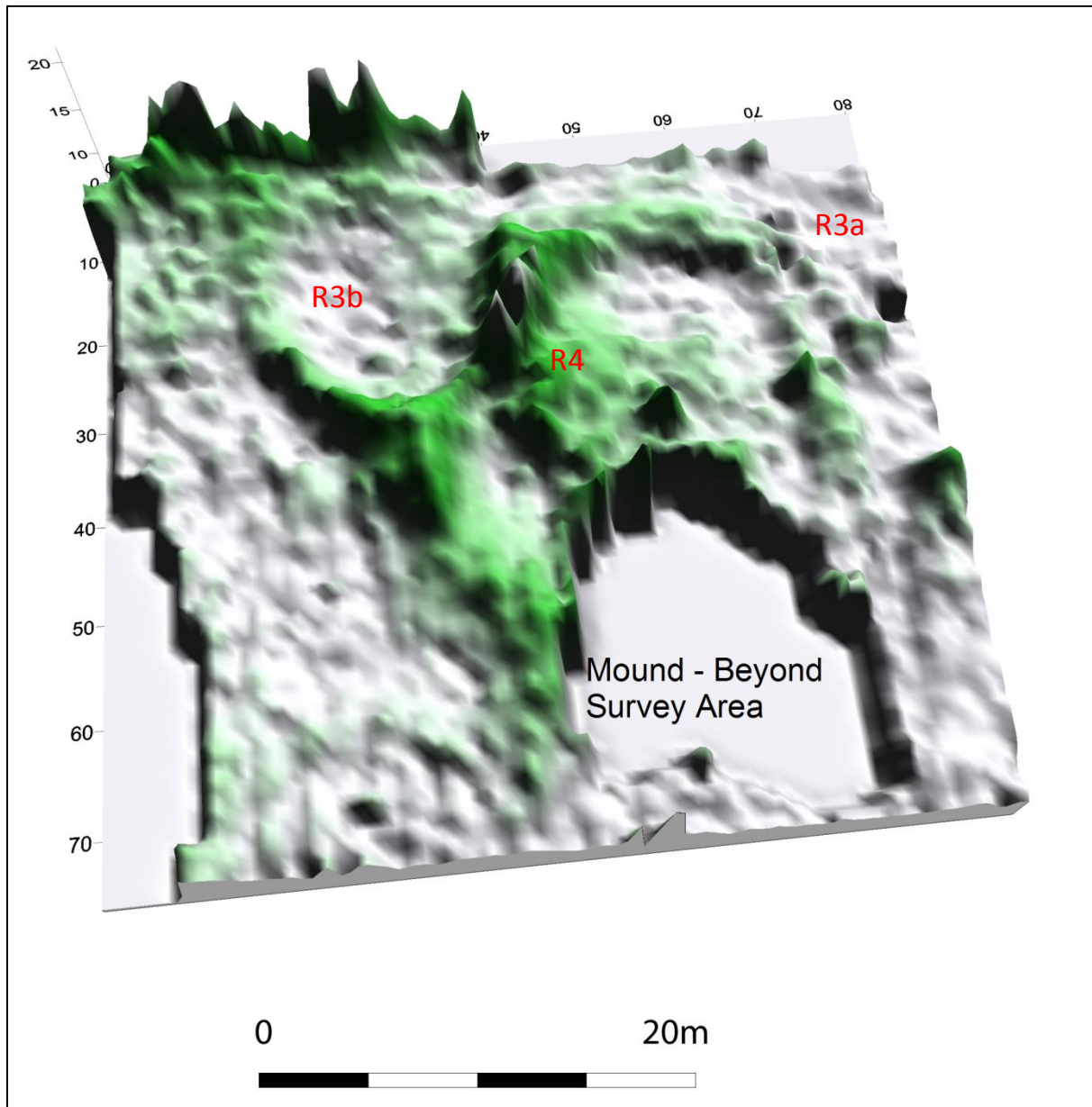


Figure 8. 3D image of the possible rath and annex detected as anomaly R3 and the internal anomaly R4. The measured resistance values recorded during the survey have been substituted for heights on the z axis.

The position of these anomalies is also significant. Figure 9 is a comparison between the OS representations of the features in the north-west of the survey area (Fig. 9(a)) and the survey data (Fig. 9(b)). The red oval shown in Fig. 9(a) represents the position of the oval enclosure shown on all of the OS maps up until the 1938 map. This is superimposed on the modern OS map, where the visible mound is represented with hachures. This image graphically shows that the extant mound is significantly smaller than the enclosure depicted on the earlier maps.

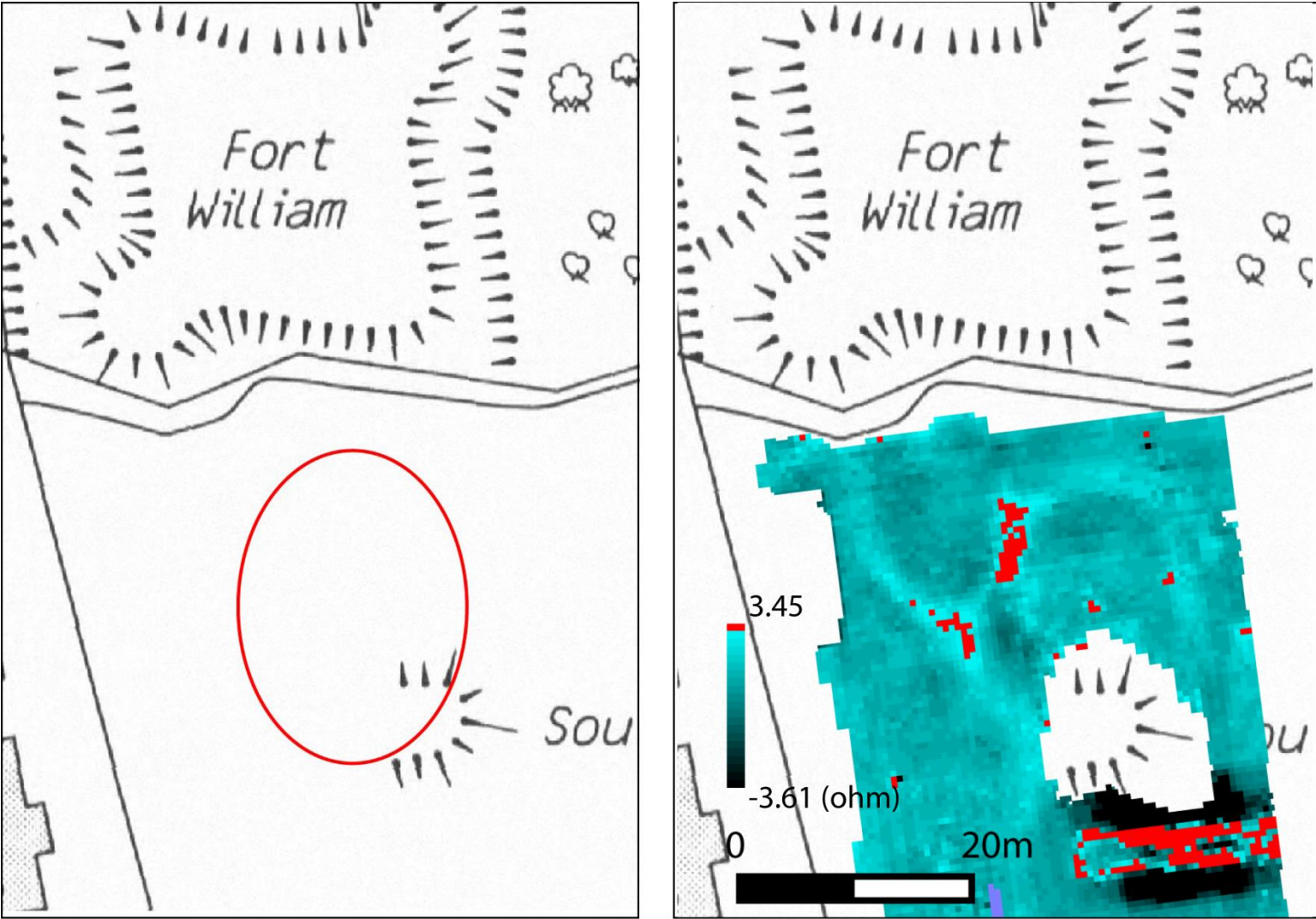


Figure 9. Comparison between OS depiction of the features in the north-west corner of the survey area (Figure 9(a), above left) and the anomalies detected by the survey in the same area (Figure 9(b), above right)

Figure 9(b) shows the geophysical survey of the same area, superimposed on the same modern map. This demonstrates that anomaly R3a broadly occupies the position of the oval features depicted on the early OS maps. Its dimensions also closely replicate those of the OS depictions. The anomaly has dimensions of approximately 25m north-south by 21m east-west, while the corresponding depictions on the maps are consistently in the region of 27m north-south x 22m east-west.

The feature imaged as anomaly R3a is therefore likely to be the enclosure depicted on the OS maps and probably represent the subsurface remains of the earthwork described in the 19th century accounts. In 1894, Biggar described this as a 'rath' and, while the contemporary understanding of this term differs somewhat from its 19th century meaning, the anomaly detected is most compatible with an interpretation as a rath or earthen ringfort. In his study of Irish ringforts, Stout declared that some 80% of these monuments have internal diameters of 20-40m (Stout 1997, 15), suggesting that the Skegoneill rath, with its maximum recorded internal diameter of 21m, may have been a relatively small example. The 2.5 to 4m-wide, high resistance perimeter of the anomaly images the base of the earthen bank surrounding the oval interior and it may be significant that, in the 3d model Figure 8, there are faint traces of an outer arc at the north-east, tentatively suggesting a second, outer bank in this area.

The reported association of the enclosure with a 'cave' or souterrain may bolster this interpretation. These underground passages are frequently associated with ringforts (Edwards 1990, 29; Neill 2009, 243). The survey did not detect definite evidence of the souterrain, but the band of high resistance readings (R4) in the centre of the anomaly R3a possibly signals its location, although if it survives as a stone-built chamber, it may reasonably have been anticipated to represent as a stronger, more sharply defined, high resistance anomaly in the dataset. It may be either that it is weakly imaged as it is relatively deeply buried, or that any surviving stone-built passage or chambers now also lie beneath the mound. Alternatively, the anomaly R4 could represent an internal structure, such as a building or cobbled surface, within the enclosure.

The presence of the probable rath detected as anomaly R3a, allied to the 19th century accounts of a 'rath' as well as the reports of a souterrain all point to the occupation of the Seaview Allotments site in the Early Christian period (c. AD 400-1200), well in advance of the construction of the artillery fort. Indeed, this occupation may have been enduring as in many cases, a souterrain associated with a rath-site often represents a phase of occupation that post-dates the primary use of the ringfort (Stout 1997, 33).

The anomaly R3b has an obvious relationship to the probable rath R3a and may form part of the enclosure that was depicted on the early OS maps. However, it is not possible to determine if they are contemporary, or what their respective functions were. External or adjacent structures are a common feature of ringfort morphology (Edwards 1990, 32), and it is thought that these annexes are likely to have been constructed to protect livestock in particular cows, which were the basic unit of wealth in early medieval Ireland (McCormick 2013). Enclosures such as Ballynalob, and Ballymoneymore, both in Co. Antrim (ANT 023:002 and 059:049 respectively) and Glenloughan, Co. Down (DOW 033:005) (Fig. 10) display a similar arrangement of a conjoined rath and annex to the Skegoneill anomaly, though all are of a larger scale. Only the Glenloughan site was excavated and it was found that the annex had been constructed at some time after the partial silting up of the original rath ditch (Jope 1966, 164). In other cases, ringforts have been deliberately augmented or remodelled in the late 18th and 19th century to create decorative landscape features. The rath at Coolcran Co. Fermanagh was found to have been enlarged and had its enclosing bank augmented in the 19th century for this purpose (Williams 1985).

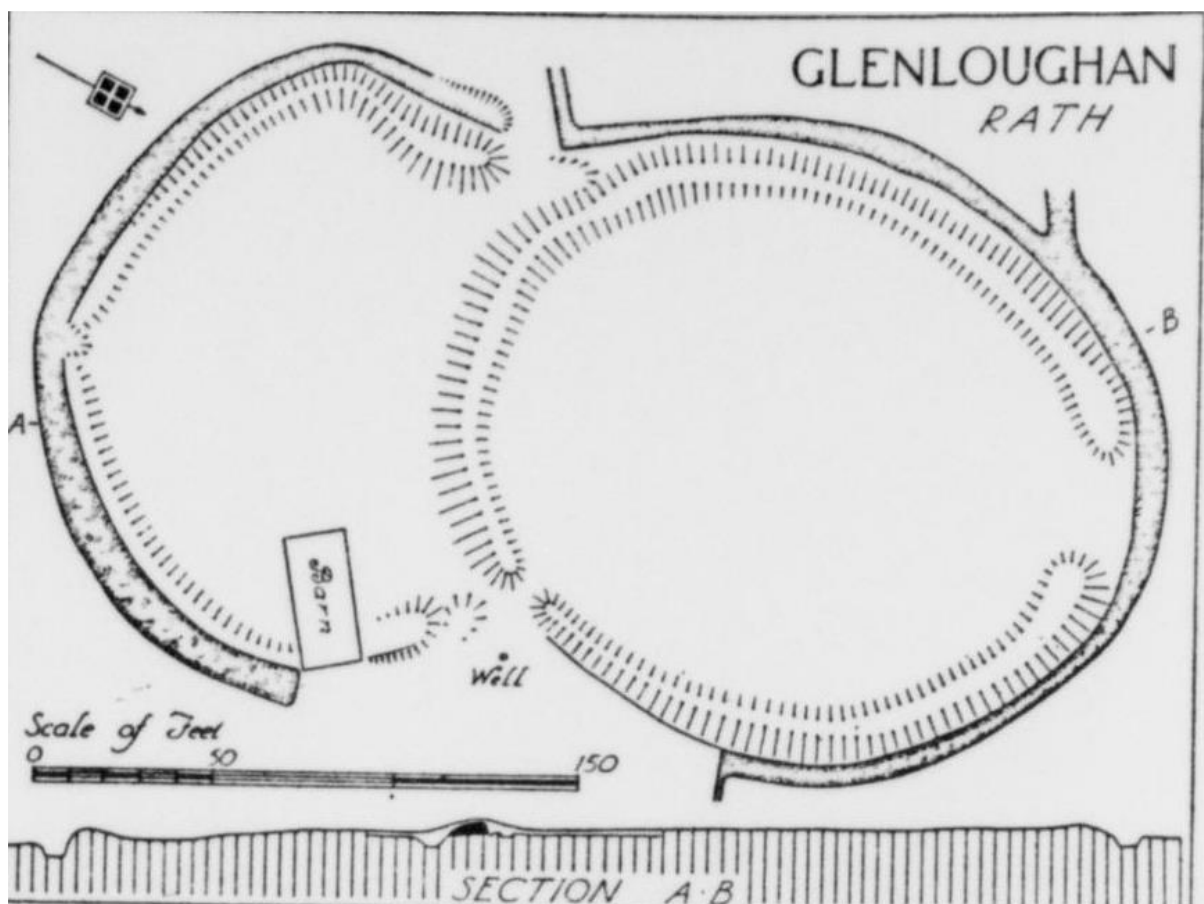


Figure 10. Glenloughan conjoined rath and annex (After Jope 1966).

The OS depictions would seem to lend strength to the suggestion that the site was landscaped. Recognised raths or antiquities were routinely marked 'Fort' or 'Site of Fort' on the early OS maps. No such annotation is given for the Skegoneill enclosure, and its depiction as an enclosure lined with trees suggests that the OS surveyors interpreted the remains as a landscape feature. Only the labelling of 'Cave' and latterly 'Souterrain' is suggestive of an antiquity at this location on the OS maps. Biggar's reference to the planting of sallagh trees on the fort may also indicate that it was landscaped and it is possible this activity may also explain the creation of the annex alongside the original rath.

An alternative, but perhaps more unlikely explanation for the annex R3b is prompted by the proximity of Fort William immediately to the north. The northern quadrant of the anomaly almost encroaches on the outer ditch of the fort. It was not unknown in the conflicts of the early 17th century for English commanders to incorporate existing Gaelic settlements into their artillery forts. This was patently the case at Mountnorris, Co. Armagh as graphically reported by Robert Cecil (Calendar of State Papers of Ireland 1600-1601, 20) and illustrated by Bartlett in the same year (Hayes McCoy 1964 PI II) (Fig. 11). While it is unlikely that anomaly R3B formed part of the artillery fort's defences as the limits of the latter are quite visible and well-defined on the ground, the subsurface anomaly does extend northwards beyond the survey area into the patch of undergrowth that marks the edge of the Fort's ditch. The interface between the edge of the fort and the anomaly was therefore not imaged and, if there were upstanding remains when the Fort was being constructed, the English would undoubtedly have been aware of their existence and, as demonstrated at Mountnorris, capable of reworking them for their own purposes.



Figure 11. Bartlett's depiction of Mountrorris Fort which incorporated a pre-existing rath in a bastioned artillery fort.

The earthen mound that stands on the summit of the hill today is much larger than the 4.5m reported to the NIEA and recorded in the SM 7 file (Williams 1982 unpaginated), although it is worth emphasising that the actual dimensions of the mound were not verified for the NIEA record. Certainly, the mound is never shown in such a reduced state on any of the OS maps; it is smallest on the 1938 map, where the diameter at the base still exceeds 7m. From inspection of the maps and an examination of the feature today, it appears certain that the mound has been regularly enlarged by the deposit of soil and refuse. The visible remains of the fort reported in the 19th century, as well as the souterrain, may lie beneath the mound and are not obviously visible today.

Most of the other anomalies within the field are likely to be associated with much later activity, when the park was subdivided into allotments. The survey area is divided into zones of higher and lower resistance, with the former being confined to the slopes. The low resistance zone (R5) occupies most of the level hilltop, which is poorly draining and susceptible to waterlogging and standing water for most of the year, according to the council official responsible for overseeing the maintenance of the site (F. Grant 2013 pers. Comm.). The zones of high resistance (R6 and R 7) both have regular edges, and broadly correspond with the location of field divisions shown on the 1938 map. The angular corner formed by anomaly R7 straddles the low resistance zone (R3) and this high resistance area (R5) at the north-east of the field. It may therefore not be related to the allotment activity, and it is not impossible that it is somehow related to the artillery fort. However, the precise definition of the anomaly and its location on the slopes where the 1938 maps shows field divisions point to a more modern origin for the anomaly.

7. Conclusion

The aim of the survey was to provide information on surviving archaeology within the Seaview Allotments area. The presence, if not the precise location, of the souterrain within the park, is well known in the locality and the survey suggests that any remains of this feature probably now lie beneath the largely modern mound. The most significant result of the survey was the identification of the features in the north-west corner of the field, which seem to represent the site of the enclosure or 'fort' visible in the 19th century. The form of these anomalies, and the close association with the souterrain suggests that a rath probably formerly stood at this location. The addition of the annex may have been contemporary with the rath, or belong to a later period. The survey has shown, in any case, that there is convincing evidence for settlement activity in this location in the Early Christian period, long before the building of the artillery fort. It is submitted that the presence of this phase of

activity should be taken into account and emphasised in any scheme for the promotion of the archaeological heritage of the Seaview Allotments/Fort William site.

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