

8. RESULTS OF FIELD SURVEY

The site was inspected on 4th January 2017, 21st January 2017, 27th February 2017 and 2nd March 2017 and on a subsequent bi-monthly basis throughout 2017. These inspections were the combination of field survey and inspection of scrambling incidents.



Plate 34: View north to St Patrick's Island, Skerries and the Mourne Mountains beyond

The site has extensive 360 degree views of the surrounding land and sea. To the north the view is of Loughshinny harbour overlooked by the highly visible Pope's Hill and the seaward side is dominated by the view to Skerries Islands, including Shenick Island where the Martello tower is visible and St Patrick's Island with the Mourne Mountains as a backdrop on a clear day. There are unimpaired views of the sea lanes of the Irish Sea punctuated by Rock-a-bill island. Towards the south-east the view is dominated by Lambay Island, while there are clear sightlines over Roaring Water Bay and the coastline to Rush with the backdrop of the Dublin and Wicklow mountains. On the landward side the relatively flat field slopes fall away gently to the south-west and the view is unimpeded westwards to the relict hedgeline of the Kenure Estate and the Skerries-Rush road.

8.1. Access & Perimeter

The promontory fort is most easily entered via the laneway that extends eastwards from the main Skerries-Rush road almost opposite to St Catherine's housing estate. Traversing a tarmacadamed area, the lane is bounded by earthen banks and entrances to the neighbouring fields. Until recent clearance the laneway was overgrown along the southern boundary of the site. The laneway of compacted earth, grass, and in places, gravel tends towards pooling of water especially around the

entrance to the site at its south-western corner. Here was the site of a 1960s cow shed, a burnt out car and dumped detritus, concrete piers and a blocked gateway, which were removed under Ministerial Consent (C786/E4805) in March 2017 (Baker 2017).

Access from the north is via the cliff path from Loughshinny which has undergone maintenance (insertion of gabions and steps) works at the Loughshinny end. The cliff path dips down as it curves towards the site. The entrance here is a path through a 1.2m break in the perimeter wall. Access from the south is via a cliff side walk through farmer's fields from the north beach in Rush. This pathway used to extend around the terminal of the southern boundary extremely close to the cliff face. Due to the inherent danger this was fenced off and the original gateway that had been blocked up was reopened and a 'kissing gate' installed.

The perimeter of the site is defined by the townland boundary between Drumanagh and Ballustree to the west. This boundary consists of a well-established hedgeline and a wall externally faced by a ditch. It runs mainly north-south curving gently at the north-western corner of the site before creating a sharp corner at the cliff face. The wall is rubble built and stands between 0.6m and 1.2m in height with at least six courses of roughly shaped stone (0.25m-0.45m diam.) visible. The wall averages 0.5m in width and is loosely mortared with a whitish mortar with large pebble aggregate. The wall is mostly overgrown with brambles. A wall in this position appears on the 1760 map. The remnant of the wall visible at the cliff-face appears to be that marked on the 1830s Name Book map as 'Wall, apparently ancient'.



Plate 35: View of erosion along the northern perimeter of Drumanagh

The northern perimeter of the site comprises a cliff-face that is generally sheer. The visible sections of soil are interspersed with the folding rocks, characteristic of the area. Attempts have been made to fence this area and it has been subject to erosion. The well (DU008-003-) marked on the First Edition map is situated along this perimeter but is completely overgrown and inaccessible.



Plate 36: Views of the eastern cliff face of Drumanagh headland. Courtesy of Nua Photography

The north-eastern corner of the promontory is characterised by a distinctive bay defined by grass-covered slopes forming a lunular-shaped inlet with a sandy beach. Although surrounded by rock there is a passage-like element at low-tide that suggests low-hulled boats could land here. The slopes along the entire eastern perimeter are relatively gentle and provide access to the shoreline below. This is at odds with the supposedly defensive nature of the site.



Plate 37: View of Drumanagh southern perimeter wall from Roaring Water Bay

The southern perimeter of the promontory consists of grassy relatively steep slopes over the characteristic rock of the area above Roaring Water Bay, although there is a distinct change as the promontory meets the land. Here the cliff face consists of soil and the drop is sheer. The southern perimeter of the site is defined by the laneway and is the townland boundary between Drumanagh and Rush. It consists of a wall-faced earthen bank that extends from c.2m west of the wall associated with the southern gate. This boundary averages 0.9m in height and the wall is rubble built and unmortared with stones 0.2m-0.3m in diameter. A wall in this position appears on the 1760 map.

8.2. Outside the Ramparts

The land between the ramparts and the western boundary is relatively flat and is traversed by footpaths trodden towards breaks in the ramparts. This area contains the sub-surface enclosure (DU008-094----) and was ploughed in 2014 which impacted on the outer counterscarp of the ramparts to the north. Currently it is a mixture of grass and vegetation which has been rutted by recent motorbike scrambling activity.



Plate 38: The pond, facing east-south-east

There are two water features in this area. The pond and stream, known locally as Roaring Water stream (Seamus McGuinness pers. comm.) is characterised as a wide expanse of shallow water overgrown with vegetation which narrows towards the ramparts where it flows through the outer ditch and over the cliff face. Approximately 130m north of this is a well. The circular well measures approximately 0.9m in diameter and is truncated to the south where large concrete blocks have been dumped. The well is lined with large (0.2m x 0.4m diam.) roughly shaped stones. At least two courses of stone are visible before the water which is 0.45m below edge. The well site is overgrown with brambles and long grass.



Plate 40: The main entrance to the site through the inner rampart, facing south, March 2017

8.3. The Ramparts

The inner rampart is the most substantially surviving to a height of c.2m above the interior of the site. The ditch external to it is most pronounced towards the southern end of the site where the stream runs through it. The ramparts are traversed towards the south where the road to the Martello tower was inserted. This is now a low point with flowing water. Large timber and concrete blocks have been laid to facilitate crossing.



Plate 41: Southern crossing point of the stream and ramparts

The stream is also crossed by a stone bridge where it narrows towards the ramparts. It is grassed over and c. 2.5m-3m in width. This crossing is contiguous with a break in the ramparts and constitutes the main entrance to the interior of the site. Aerial photography of the 1960s-1980s shows activity at this point which may indicate the construction or modification of this entrance way. Approximately 25m north is another break in the inner rampart, c.4m in width. Towards the north of the site the ramparts have been modified (pre. 1810) to incorporate interior field boundaries which form a high bank at the junction with the inner rampart. Modification has also resulted in a distinctive circular mound visible on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map and subsequent maps. There is another gap in the ramparts towards the northern limit where the defences narrow and the inner bank and ditch and the counterscarp bank converge close to the overgrown well.



Plate 42: Relict field boundaries, facing east

The area of the ramparts and the entranceways have been used as a circuit for motorbike scrambling. An older circuit active in the mid-2000s formed a distinct ribbon shape concentrated along the interior of the ramparts and the field interior field boundaries. The current active circuit is more comprehensive circling the length of the ramparts and entranceways along its north-south axis, as well as traversing the ramparts east-west in several places. This has proved highly detrimental to the ramparts stripping them of their grass covering, exposing stone and creating rutting.

The circuit of disturbance was walked on a number of occasions. A struck flint was recovered from the disturbance of the most westerly of the banks of the ramparts. Fragments of clinker associated with glass making and a struck flint was recovered from the upcast within the main entrance way through the ramparts.



Plate 43: 2007 motor and quad biking circuit damage



Plate 44: Current motorbike scrambling circuit, 2017

8.4. Interior of the Promontory

Although generally characterised as flat (50m OD), the ground level of the interior is varied across the site. Relatively high around the Martello tower, the ground slopes steeply down to the north-west and gently down to west where there is a distinctive low-point about mid-way east-west towards the northern half of the site rising up to the relict field boundaries. There is also a distinct rise visible from the southern limit of the promontory looking north-east towards the Martello. Despite the thatch-like grass which covers the interior of the promontory the relict field boundaries comprised of banks and ditches are highly visible, as is the road to the Martello tower. There is an area of uneven ground south of the Martello tower which is contiguous with what were thought to be sub-surface structures on aerial photographs and which geophysical survey identified a well-defined cultivation pattern (Dowling 2014, Area 1C).

8.5. Martello Tower

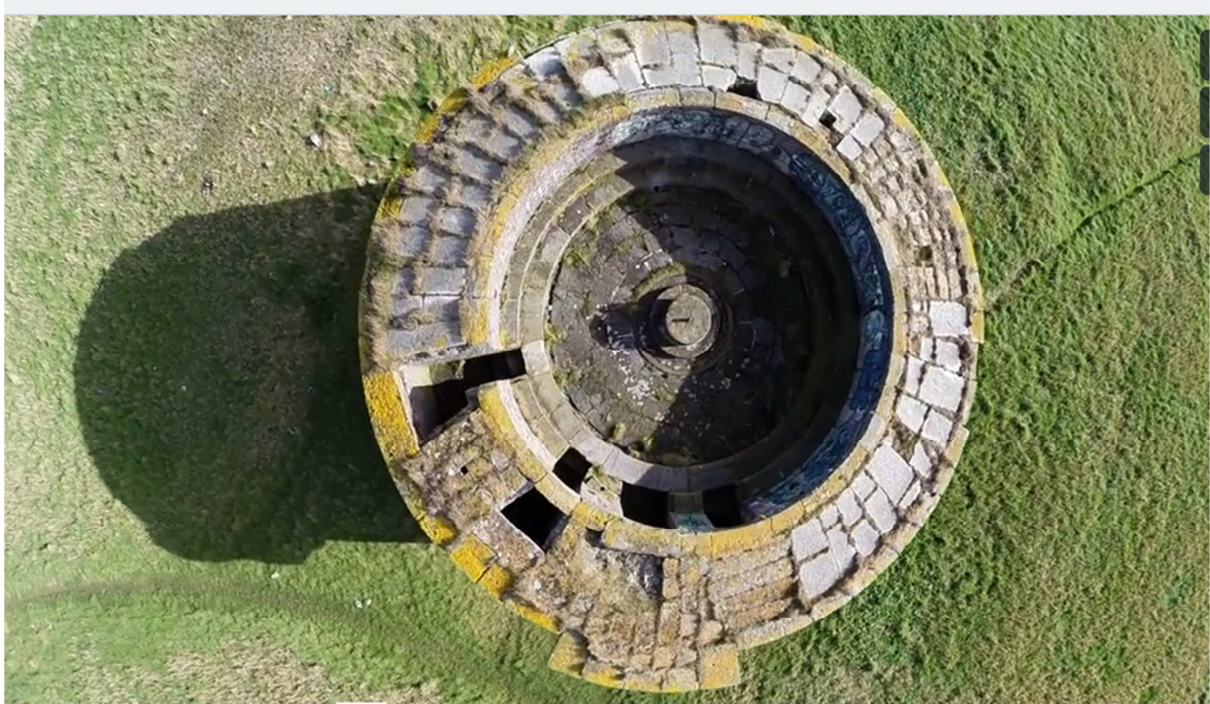


Plate 45: Drone view of the Martello Tower 2014. Image Nua Photography

Located at the east end of the promontory, there is a squat cylindrical tower built of masonry, which has been rendered. The entrance is on the west side and is positioned above ground level and it is defended by a machicolation carried on corbels. A rope has been attached to allow access by climbing in and toe-holds have been worn in the masonry below the entrance. Stones from the collapse of the nearby privy have been piled at the base to aid entry. The exterior has long been subject to graffiti –at

person height around its circumference. In recent times the bars and grates blocking the opes have been removed. A limited number of coping stones on the parapet are missing.

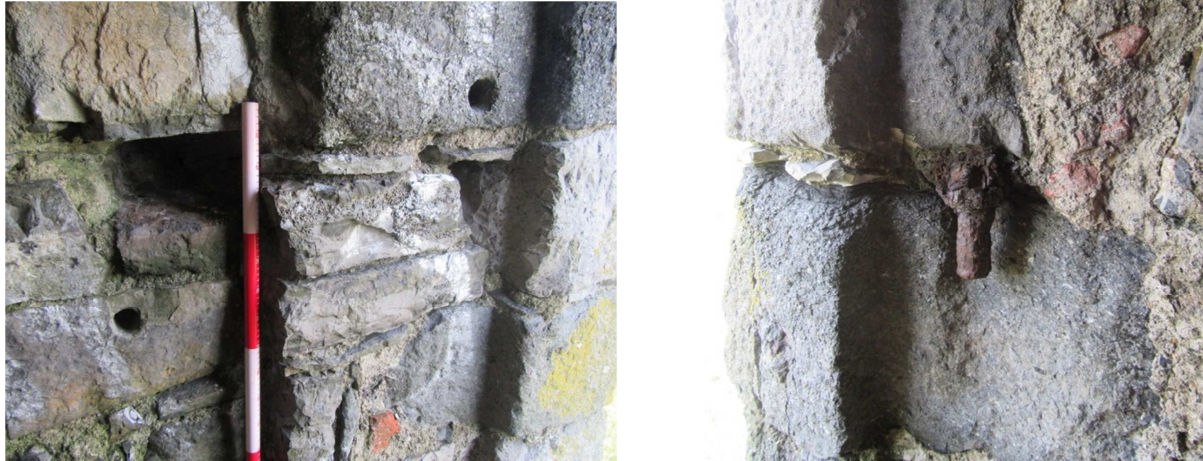


Plate 46: Interior of the Martello tower entranceway

The interior is not easily accessed but it is in relatively good condition. The entrance is square-headed with limestone rubble reveals and soffit. The remnants of the door are visible as rusted iron works and holes in the opposing stones. The entrance opens onto the first floor. The wooden floor was previously burnt and removed with the beam sockets evident at first-floor entrance level. The interior of the tower had been lime-washed but is now dotted with graffiti. The basement is divided east-west by the remains of red-brick walls and lit by opes to the east and west. There is some modern detritus, concentrated mounds of guano and scatters of brick and stone across the floor. Towards the south-west at basement level is a small fireplace and another inserted into the wall at first-floor level to the south. The entrances to the stairway are one above the other facing west immediately inside the main entrance. There is some stone collapse at the basal entrance but generally the stairway is in good condition.



Plate 47: Interior of the Martello tower, first floor

The stone surrounding the opening to the roof and parapet is detailed both internally and externally indicating a covering, gate or door. Central to the roof is the mount for the canon with iron detailing. The internal wall of the parapet has been covered in graffiti but is in good condition. The interior of the machicolation has also been subject to graffiti but likewise is in good condition. The iron fittings of the oven have rusted and partially been removed. As is visible from the exterior there are some coping stones missing from the parapet and the joints have become grass filled but the general condition is very good with exceptional views over the coastline and the promontory itself.



Plate 48: Roof of Martello Tower

8.6. The Privy:

An examination of the accessible maps of the Martello Towers of Fingal on the Military Archives website, indicate that additional structures were constructed around Martello towers between the early 1850s and 1862. These include a piggery or pig sty, and a privy typically denoted as square structures.

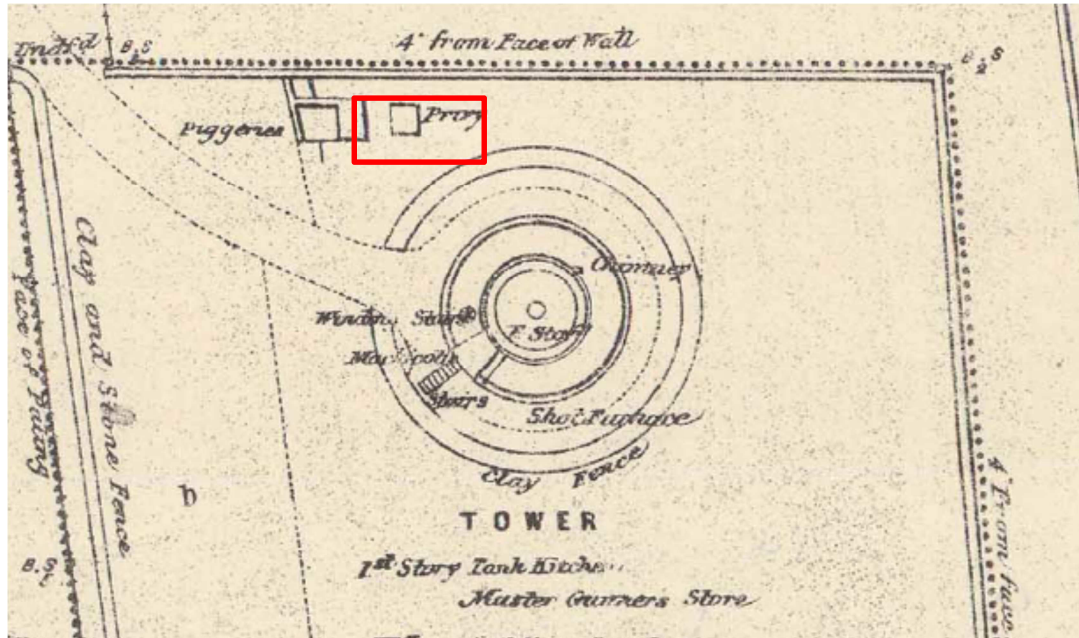


Fig. 14: Skerries Royal Engineer Corps Drawing (surveyed 1859, published 1862)
Military Archives: Archival Reference Code: IE/MA/MPD/ad119458004 1862

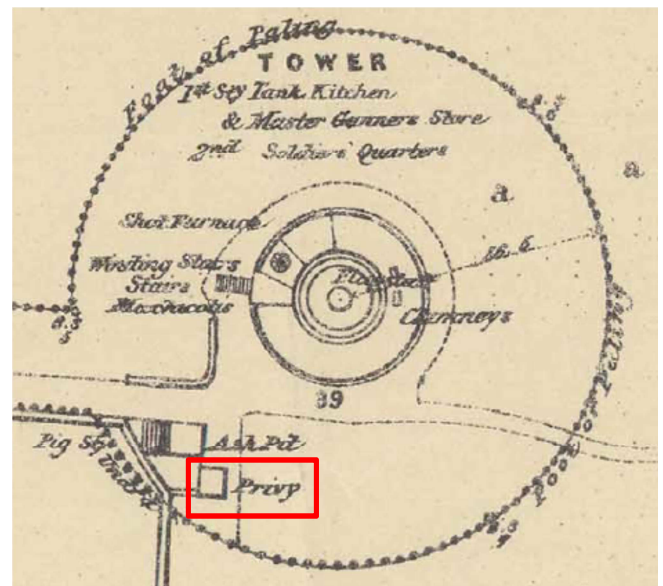
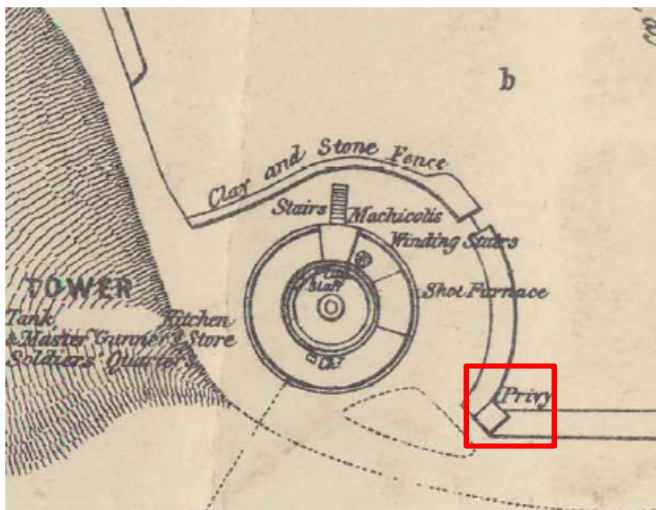


Fig. 15: Portrane and Rush Martellos and privies, 1862

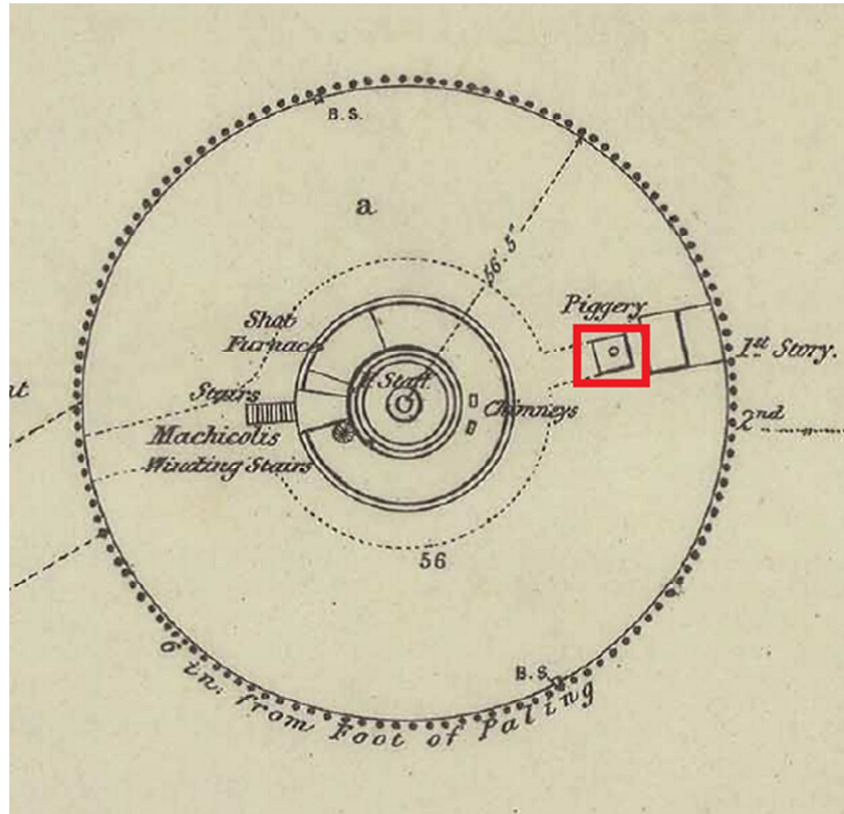


Fig. 16: Drumanagh, Royal Engineer Corps Drawing (surveyed 1859, published 1862)
 Military Archives: Archival Reference Code: IE/MA/MPD/ad134122-003

The best surviving remains of a privy are on Shenick Island, due to its relative inaccessibility. The privies have been removed from the other Martello towers in Fingal, excepting the remaining fragment at Drumanagh.



Plate 49: Privy, Shenick Island

The surviving privy fragment at Drumanagh measures 2.75m in maximum height and 1.5m in width north-south. The southern wall measures 0.72m east-west at the base. The width of both wall fragments is a consistent 0.42m and the two course rubble foundation visible to the west is 0.3m in height. The remains of the privy have been subject to graffiti, fires and vandalism, resulting in cracking and significant collapse.



Plate 50: Drumanagh privy, facing east-north-east, December 2017



Plate 51: Drumanagh Privy, facing north, March 2017

8.7. Gates

There are two gates that have been inserted into the perimeter boundaries of the site. They both comprise limestone built gate piers. The southern gate is marked by two indented piers of limestone blocks c. 2.93m apart, and forms the access way from the laneway adjacent to the southern boundary of the site onto the road to the Martello Tower. It is abutted by several metres of wall to either side which appear to have been inserted into an earlier boundary wall. Immediately (0.7m) to the west of the western pier is a stile consisting of two graduated steps (lower 0.6m from ground level/upper 0.4m from top of wall), 0.27m apart incorporated in to the wall (0.48m in width). A 'kissing gate' was installed in March 2017 to provide pedestrian access.



Plate 52: The exterior of the southern gate flanked by boundary stones

The western gate is marked by two piers of very overgrown limestone blocks c.2.8m apart this gateway faces west onto a field boundary and would have formed the entranceway into the site from the Loughshinny side. The square piers measure 0.95m in average diameter and are at least 2m in height. The overgrown remnants of an iron gate are barely visible between the piers. The form and fabric is the same as the gate on the southern boundary associated directly with the Martello Tower indicating a nineteenth century date.

8.8. Boundary Stones

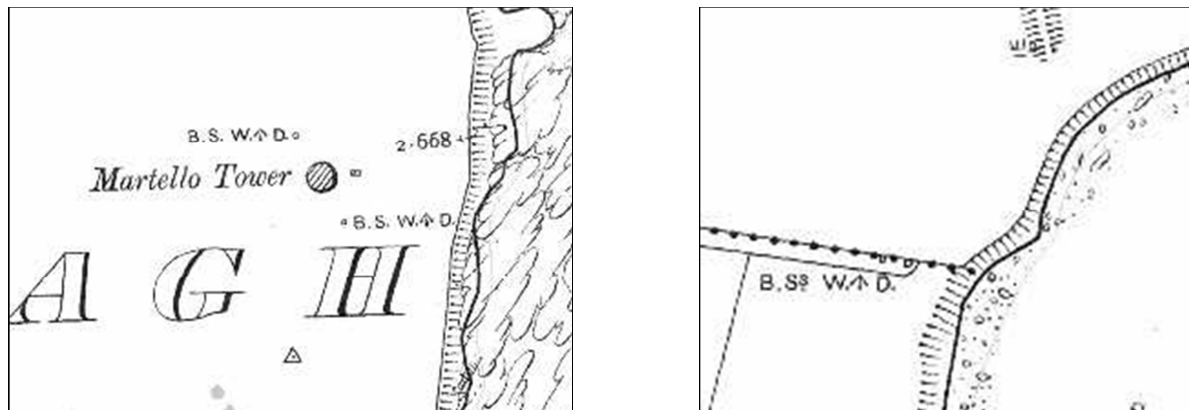


Fig. 17: Boundary stone at the Martello tower and Laneway, OS 25 inch map 1906-1908

There are four boundary stones marked on the military maps; two either side of the Martello tower indicating the extent of the plot surrounding the tower and two at the entrance way to the road to the Martello. The former have been removed from their original setting and their current positions identified within the locality. The boundary stones at the entranceway are located exterior to the southern gate, approximately 5m apart. Both are of cut granite with a pyramidal top and a visible height of 0.75m with each face measuring 0.3m in width. Arrows are visible on all faces.

8.9. Trackways

The original approach to the Martello tower survives as a sunken trackway extending from the south-east corner of the fort approximately 6m in width. It is defined by low banks and ditches but overgrown and obscured along its southern limit by a pathway made by walkers and motorcycle scramblers.



Plate 53: Original approach to the Martello tower (right) and modern trackway

Highly visible on the 1999 geophysical survey is a trackway that extends from the current main entrance through the ramparts. It runs parallel to the possible landing bay at the north-east corner of the promontory. This trackway presents as a pair of shallow linear depression on the LiDAR survey, approximately 70m north of, and running parallel to, the approach to the Martello tower. This trackway has also been recorded within Areas 1a and 1b of the 2014 geophysical survey as ditches containing stones/soil infill 2m in average width and spaced 10m apart. (Dowling 2014, 66). While not particularly visible on site due to the height of the grass thatch within the interior the extant 18th/19th century field boundaries appear to post-date the trackway.

External to the ramparts and extending north-south from the pond to a derelict gate in the southern field boundary is a presumed trackway. It is only visible on the 2014 geophysical survey where it appears as a 'broad magnetic lineation' (Dowling 2014, 74).

Extending around the perimeter of the site and crossing to the Martello tower are a series of modern trackways trampled by the frequent visitors to the site. They are visible on the satellite imagery of the site and represent the use of the site by walkers. However in recent months these paths are being used and expanded by motorbike use around the site and there is also evidence of horse-riding along these paths.