

Linney Head Promontory Fort
Castlemartin
Pembrokeshire



Archaeological Recording



Oxford Archaeology

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Prepared by: Leo Webley
 Position: Project Officer (Post Excavation)
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Checked by: Stuart Foreman
 Position: Project Manager
 Date: 26th April 2005

Approved by: Nick Shepherd Signed.....
 Position: Head of Fieldwork
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Oxford Archaeology

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Janus House

Osney Mead

Oxford OX2 0ES

t: (0044) 01865 263800

f: (0044) 01865 793496

e: info@oxfordarch.co.uk

w: www.oxfordarch.co.uk

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Linney Head Promontory Fort, Castlemartin, Pembrokeshire

NGR: SR 8886 9569

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING

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SUMMARY

Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an earthwork survey and photographic recording at Linney Head Promontory Fort, Castlemartin, Pembrokeshire on behalf of Defence Estates. The survey showed that the ramparts of the fort extended for 100m further west than previously thought. A cross-section of the fort ramparts exposed by coastal erosion was recorded photographically. This revealed details of the construction of the ramparts, notably the use of stone revetment in the outer bank.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 In February 2005 OA carried out archaeological recording at Linney Head Promontory Fort, Castlemartin, Pembrokeshire (SR 8886 9569), on behalf of Defence Estates. The work was carried out in accordance with a brief set by the Archaeological Adviser to the clients, and a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with the Archaeologist for Pembrokeshire Coast National Park. The fort is a Scheduled Ancient Monument, as defined under the Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (Scheduled Monument number Pemb.316).
- 1.1.2 The work was prompted by coastal erosion to the western end of the ramparts of the fort, possibly exacerbated by livestock grazing. The original brief and WSI called for photographic recording of the exposed section of the ramparts, and collection of worked flint from the rampart area. In the event, safety considerations meant that the latter could not be carried out.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site lies on Carboniferous Limestone at c 25m above OD. The site is situated on a south-facing coastal promontory, surrounded on three sides by cliffs (figs 1 and 2). It seems likely that the promontory has been significantly reduced in size since antiquity by coastal erosion. The area is currently used for livestock grazing. The site has formed part of the Castlemartin Training Area since the Second World War, and is employed primarily in tank training.

1.3 Archaeological background

- 1.3.1 Promontory forts are cliff-top enclosures, defended by ramparts lain across the neck of land connecting them to the mainland. They mainly date to the Iron Age and Romano-British period, and are characteristic of south-west Wales and other maritime areas of western Britain. A number of such sites are known within the Castlemartin Training Area.
- 1.3.2 The Linney Head fort is cut off from the mainland by two concentric ramparts, each consisting of a bank and ditch. No previous archaeological excavation is recorded at the site. The National Monuments Record of Wales reports that photographs were previously taken in June 1999 of a cross-section of the ramparts exposed through erosion.

1.4 Acknowledgements

- 1.4.1 Thanks are due to Polly Groom (Pembrokeshire National Park Archaeologist), Martin Brown (Defence Estates Archaeologist), Nicky Rogers (Defence Estates Administrator), Colonel Barclay (Castlemartin Range Officer), Mark Storey and Robin Latour (OA survey team). Leo Webley wrote this report and Robin Latour prepared the illustrations. The OA Project Manager was Stuart Foreman.

2 AIMS

- 2.1.1 To undertake limited recording of the exposed stratigraphy of the promontory fort ramparts.
- 2.1.2 To carry out a limited earthwork survey of the accessible parts of the monument.
- 2.1.3 To make available the results of the recording work.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Survey

- 3.1.1 The field survey was carried out by members of OA's Geomatics Department. All survey was done using a Leica 1230 GPS rover and base unit.
- 3.1.2 The survey concentrated on geo-referencing the exposed rampart sections in advance of photographic rectification. A limited earthwork survey of the monument and the promontory to the west was also carried out. The survey results are presented in Figure 5.

3.2 Photographic recording

- 3.2.1 The exposed section was recorded photographically, from the adjacent promontory to the west, as the section is unsafe to approach. Views were taken of the overall appearance of the structure, the area exposed by erosion, the section's relationship to its setting and particular structural and constructional details (figs 3-6).

4 RESULTS

4.1 Survey

- 4.1.1 The most significant result of the survey was the identification of an additional rampart on the promontory to the west of the scheduled area (fig. 5). This appears to represent an extension of the inner rampart of the fort, from which it has presumably been severed by coastal erosion. The inner rampart thus seems to have been at least 280m long in its original form, 100m longer than has previously been assumed.

4.2 Photographic recording

- 4.2.1 The stratigraphy of the outer rampart of the fort was clearly exposed in section (fig. 4). The rock-cut ditch has steep sides and a flat base. It is filled with reddish brown soil containing some medium to large stone inclusions. There are no obvious layer

distinctions within the fill, although part of the section is obscured by grass growth. The rampart bank, immediately to the south, is composed of reddish brown soil with moderate inclusions of medium to large stones. It is revetted on its outer (northern) side by a substantial deposit of large stones with little soil visible between them. No revetment can be seen on the inner face of the rampart, although this is partially obscured by vegetation growth. The stony deposit seals a thin layer of soil identical in colour to the rampart core, but lacking stone inclusions. This may represent a pre-rampart buried soil. Below this is an earlier buried soil, forming a very distinct band of pale brown (possibly leached) material extending beneath the full width of the bank.

- 4.2.2 The ditch of the inner rampart is wider and deeper than that of the outer rampart, and has a more V-shaped cut (fig. 4). There are some indications of separate fills within the ditch, with a lower fill of mid brown soil, a middle fill of yellow soil, and a *possible* upper fill of dark brown soil, although the latter may well merely represent slumped modern topsoil. The inner bank has eroded at a shallow angle, and no clear cross-section is visible.

5 DISCUSSION

- 5.1.1 The site survey has shown that the ramparts of the fort were originally around 100m longer than has previously been recognised. The fort was thus clearly a substantial monument that would have required a large investment of labour to construct. The survey results highlight the great extent to which coastal erosion has impinged on the site over the centuries.
- 5.1.2 The photographic recording has provided a clear section through the outer rampart. The earth core of the bank seems to have been externally revetted with stone, perhaps in the form of a dry stone wall that has subsequently slumped. At the Flimston Bay promontory fort, 4km to the west, it has been shown that dry stone walls were used to revet both the inner and outer faces of one of the ramparts (OA 2005b).

5.1.3 APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Defence Estates 2005 *Brief for Archaeological Recording: Linney Head Hillfort, Castlemartin Army Training Estate, Pembrokeshire.*
- OA 2005a *Linney Head Promontory Fort, Castlemartin Army Training Estate, Pembrokeshire: A Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Repair and Recording.*
- OA 2005b *Flimston Bay Promontory Fort, Castlemartin, Pembrokeshire: Archaeological Recording and Repair.*

APPENDIX 2 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Linney Head Promontory Fort, Castlemartin

Site code: CALHF 05

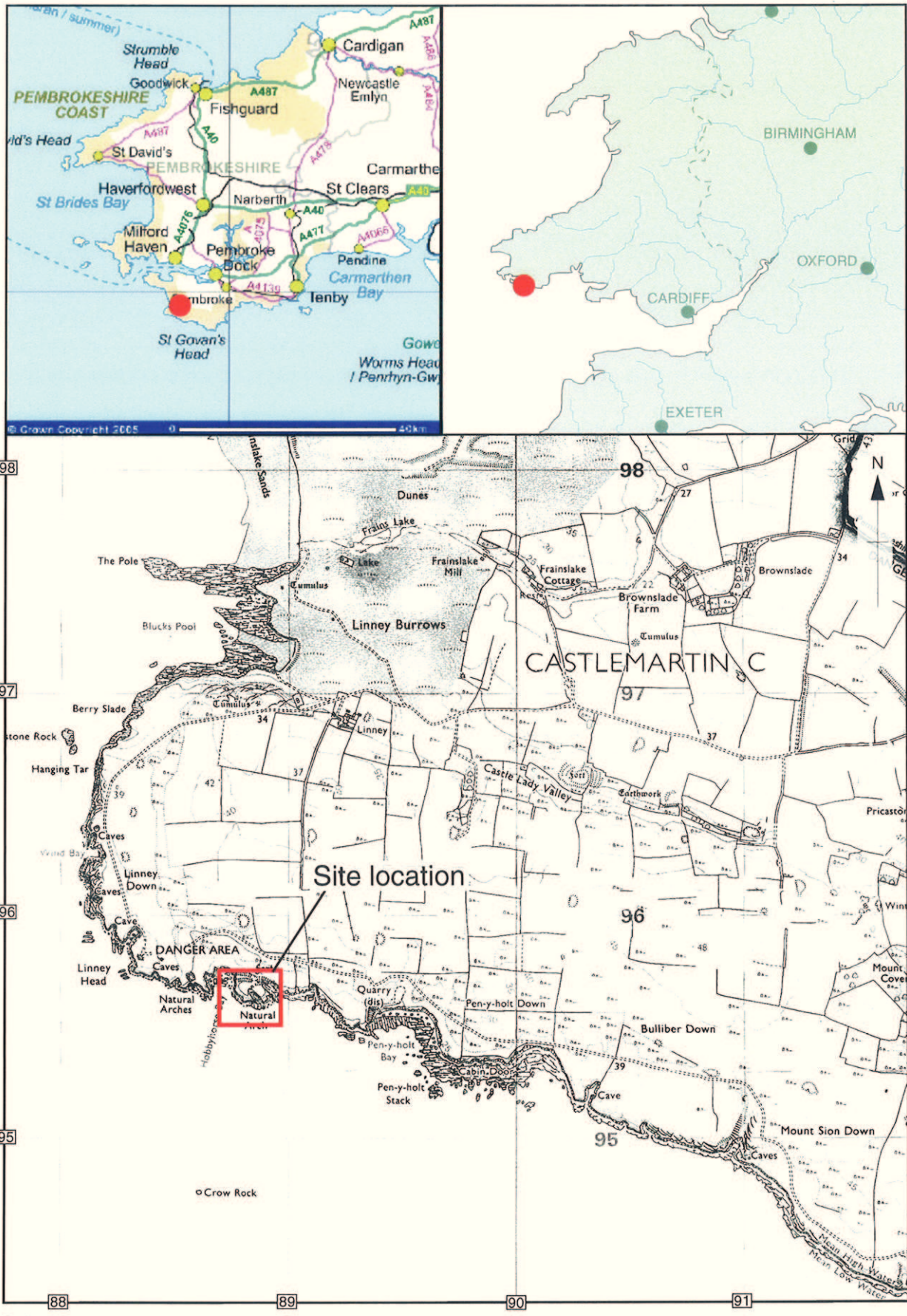
Grid reference: SR88869569

Type of evaluation: Archaeological recording

Date and duration of project: 19th February 2005

Summary of results: Earthwork survey showed that the ramparts of the fort extended for 100m further west than previously thought. A cross-section of the fort ramparts exposed by coastal erosion was recorded photographically. This revealed details of the construction of the ramparts, notably the use of stone revetment in the outer bank.

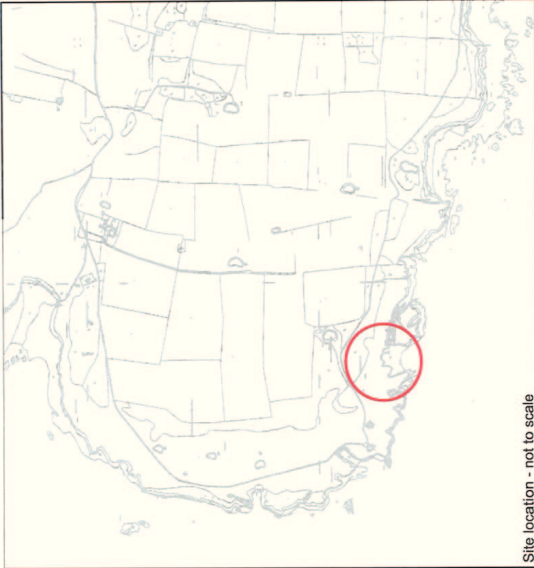
Location of archive: The archive will be deposited permanently at Herefordshire County Museum under Accession Code 2005-33



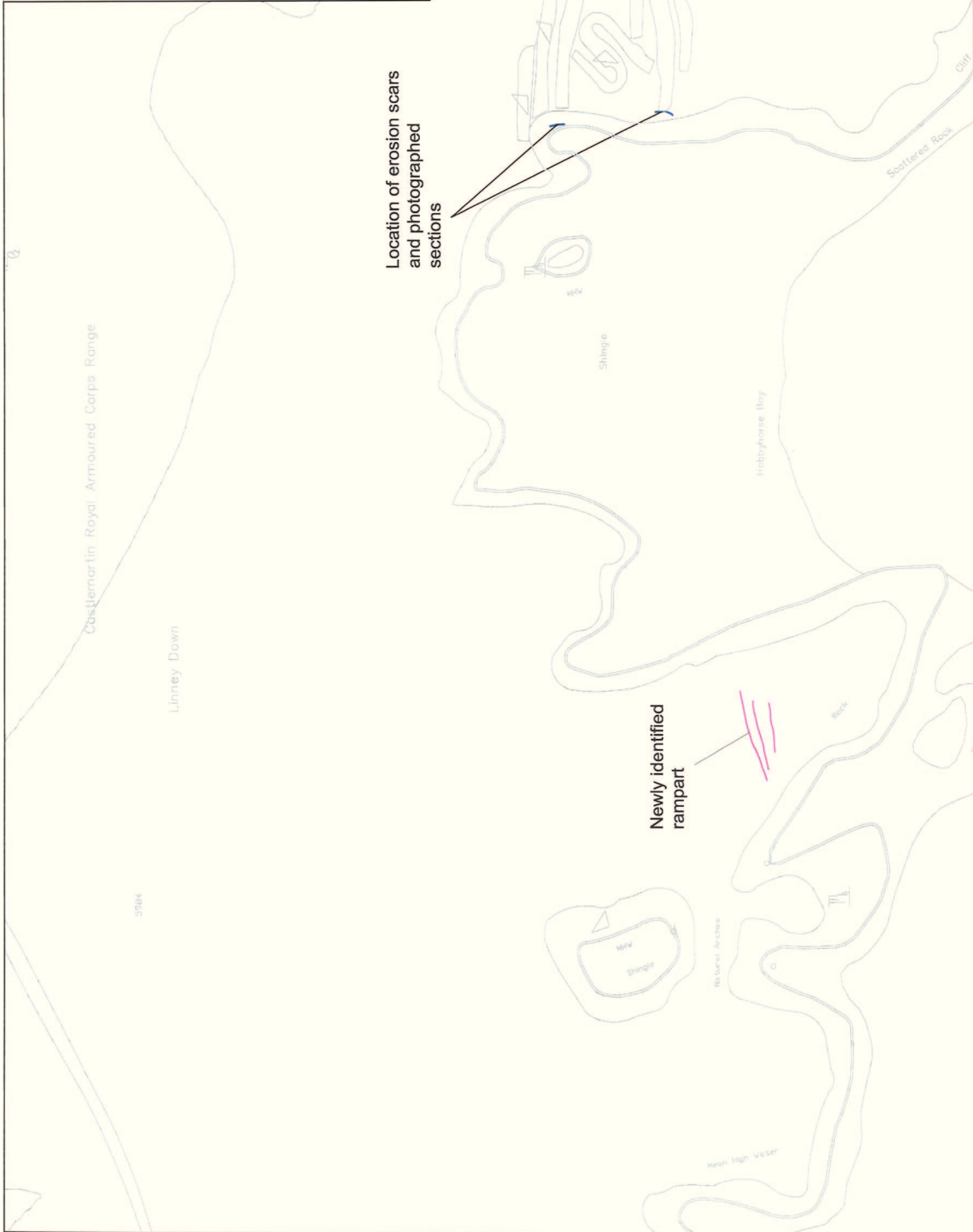
Scale 1:25,000

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Figure 1: Site location



Site location - not to scale



Location of erosion scars and photographed sections

Newly identified rampart

<p>Oxford Archaeology Archaeology Centre Oxford, OX2 0ES. Tel: 01865 208200 Fax: 01865 794066 e-mail: oxford@oxfordarch.co.uk web: www.oxfordarch.co.uk</p>	<p>MODCLOT Linney Head, Castlemartin</p>
	<p>Drawing No. I mod/oa/2 Date printed 12.05.05 Drawing title</p>
<p> — New rampart — Archaeological section Survey Data supplied by : OA </p>	
<p> Scale at A3 1:1000 </p>	

Figure 2: Site plan showing location of sections and new rampart

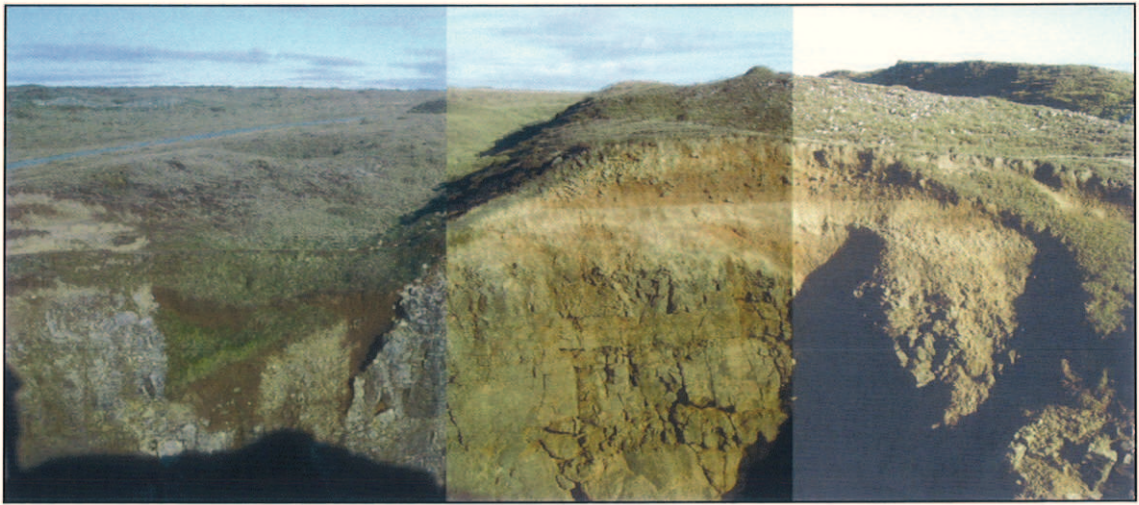


Linney Head main fort, outer ramparts (view to the east)



View to the east, with main ramparts in the foreground and the newly identified rampart in the foreground

Figure 3: Linney Head fort, general site view



Close-up of outermost rampart and eroded section, to the east

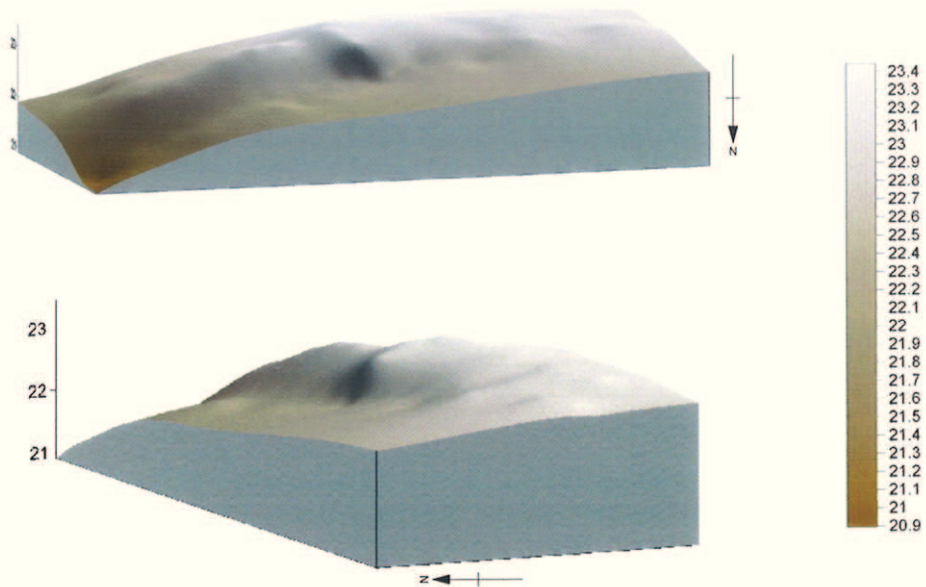


Close-up of inner rampart and eroded section, view to the SE

Figure 4: Close-up views of the eroded sections



Site view to the east, with the newly identified rampart in the foreground



3D models of the new rampart, results of the GPS survey

Figure 5: Newly identified rampart, photographed and rendered in 3D



View of the eroded sections, looking to the east



View of the eroded sections, to the east.

Figure 6: Panoramic view of the eroded sections, from neighbouring promontory



Oxford Archaeology

Janus House
Osney Mead
Oxford OX2 0ES

t: (0044) 01865 263800
f: (0044) 01865 793496
e: info@oxfordarch.co.uk
w: www.oxfordarch.co.uk



Oxford Archaeology North

Storey Institute
Meeting House Lane
Lancaster LA1 1TF

t: (0044) 01524 541000
f: (0044) 01524 848606
e: lancinfo@oxfordarch.co.uk
w: www.oxfordarch.co.uk



Director: David Jennings, BA MIFA FSA

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