



Tintagel Castle, Lower Ward Kiosk, Cornwall Archaeological Watching Brief



Cornwall Archaeological Unit

Report No

2015R032

Report Name

Tintagel Castle, Lower Ward Kiosk.
Archaeological Watching Brief

Report Author

CM Thorpe

Event Type

Watching Brief

Client Organisation

Pearce Construction

Client Contact

Richard Bevan

Monuments (MonUID)

1014793

Fieldwork dates (From)
Date)

10/02/15

(To)

20/04/15

(Created By)

Carl Thorpe

(Create

22/04/2015

Location (postal address; or general location and parish)

Tintagel Castle, Tintagel Parish

(Town – for urban sites)
(Postcode)

PL34 0HE

(Easting) X co-ord

SX 05172

(Northing) Y co-ord

88901

SX 05205

88984



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1 Project background

Cornwall Archaeological Unit, Cornwall Council (CAU) was commissioned by Richard Bevan, Pearce Construction (Barnstaple) Ltd, to undertake a programme of archaeological recording during the excavation of the foundations for a new custodian's kiosk in front of the entrance to the Lower Ward of Tintagel Castle, Cornwall along with its associated service cable trench linking the kiosk to the visitor centre within Tintagel Valley (Fig 3). The area excavated for the foundation of the kiosk measured 7m x 3m while the service cable trench was approximately 110m long.

The watching brief was required as a condition of Scheduled Monument Consent for the works. A written scheme of investigation, (WSI) outlining the methodology for a programme of archaeological recording was produced (06/01/15) by Adam Sharpe (Senior Archaeologist, CAU). This short report covers the results of the archaeological watching brief carried out on 10th February and 20th April 2015.

2 Location and setting

Tintagel Castle (MCO16987), situated on the north coast of Cornwall within the parish of Tintagel, is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (National Monument Number 1014793). It is the site of a late Roman settlement (possibly the *Durocornovio* of the Ravenna Cosmography) of the 4th and 5th centuries AD; a major fortified citadel with trading links to the Mediterranean in the post-Roman period during the 5th to 7th centuries AD; and a medieval castle dating to the 13th century (Figs 1 and 2).

A lead/silver mine known as King Arthur Mine (MCO12202) located at SX 05091 89052 under the island operated in the 19th century, the Haven (MCO4735) was used for servicing the slate quarrying and fishing industries.

Since the 1930s the Ministry of Works and latterly English Heritage Property in Care have held in Stewardship land at Tintagel which is owned by the Duchy of Cornwall. English Heritage has Guardianship and management responsibilities over the site. Apart from the track to the village, English Heritage does not possess the freehold, but manages and maintains the historic property on behalf of the Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport.

The site of the kiosk is situated within the barbican (SX 05174 88898) at 62m OD (Fig 3) immediately in front of the gateway leading into the Lower Ward of the castle. The service trench ran from the site of the kiosk across the paving within the barbican, then north, north-west along the exterior of the barbican wall (across the Great Ditch) before skirting the exterior curtain walls and tower of the Lower Ward before (at SX 05122 88949) plunging in a north easterly direction down the steep valley side to connect with the visitor centre located at SX 05203 88986 (Fig 3).

The bedrock geology is complex (BGS sheet 322), the Tintagel Group consisting of a mixture of Upper Devonian Upper Delabole slates, Lower Carboniferous slates and siltstones and Lower Carboniferous volcanic agglomerates. The whole has undergone complex faulting and thrusting movements that has greatly influenced the topography by creating numerous lines of weakness and instability, easily exploited by the action of the sea for example along the line of the Haven, and Merlin's cave. Some of the faults have been heavily mineralised, the lodes having been worked in the past for their metalliferous (lead) content.

3 Aims and objectives

The aims of the watching brief were to:

- Liaise with the works contractor on site to determine the most appropriate and least archaeologically sensitive route for the cable connection between the new ticket kiosk and the visitor centre.
- Discuss with the works contractor the form of attachment of the cable to the rock outcrops on this route to limit the visual impact of the new installation (if at any point it could not be buried under the turf).
- Determine the extent, condition, nature, character, date and significance of any archaeological remains revealed by the trenching works excavated to provide the foundations for the ticketing hut and to install a services connection from it to the visitor centre in the valley base.
- To further determine the extent and state of survival of early medieval features noted adjacent to the curtain wall of the Lower Ward during previous archaeological investigations.
- To recover any artefacts contained within the excavated material.

The primary objective of the project was to report on the findings of the excavations and to complete an entry within the OASIS/ADS-Online database.

4 Working methods

The fieldwork was carried out over two days in Spring 2015. The first in February by Ann Preston-Jones (CAU) which examined the area of the new custodian's kiosk in the Lower Ward. A second watching brief exercise carried out by Carl Thorpe took place in late April and monitored the groundworks associated with the service cable trench.

In February 2015 the area of the kiosk foundation (which measured 7m x 3m) was inspected archaeologically after the modern topsoil and other material identified as having been derived from previous groundworks within the Upper and Lower Wards which took place in 1998/9 (Reynolds 2006; Thorpe 2014) had been removed. A trench 7m x 3m was dug by a mini digger. Bedrock was encountered at the base of the excavation throughout the trench (Figs 4 and 5).

The sides of the trench were archaeologically inspected and a measured sketch section (Fig 4) of the western exposed face was drawn up (not to scale). The sides were also examined for artefacts. A photographic record was made. The spoil was also examined for any artefacts.

In April 2015 work on the service cable trench was monitored. The cables were buried at a very shallow level below the ground surface. The turf was cut by knife or spade and then peeled back to reveal a narrow trench into which the cable was inserted with the turf then being replaced (Figs 6 and 7). The underside of the turf, and the exposed soil within the trench were examined for artefacts. A photographic record was made. .

Unfortunately the last 32m of the northern end of the service trench could not be examined by the monitoring archaeologist. The very steep nature of the ground necessitated access by rope and harness and slippery ground conditions prevented close inspection. The site archaeologist accompanying the workmen showed them examples of the ceramics which they might be expected to encounter and thus what to look out for and collect. They were also asked to note the nature of the ground the trench cut through especially any noticeable changes.

Late 20th century artefacts (plastic and sweet wrappers) were present; these were recorded but not retained.

5 Results

5.1 Kiosk

The new kiosk was situated on the mainland within the barbican (SX 05174 88898) immediately in front of the gateway to Lower Ward of the castle, and immediately below the crag upon which the Upper Ward is situated (Figs 3 and 5).

An area measuring 7m x 3m with the long axis parallel to the path in a north, north-west to south, south-east direction was excavated for the foundation. This was dug by a mini digger. The back (west) side of the trench was excavated to a depth of between 1.5m to 2m being cut into the slope of the bank while the front was dug to a depth of 0.10m below the level of the cobbles forming the path.

The profile recorded along the back (west) side of the trench consisted of the following and was recorded in section (Fig 4).

Depth	Thickness	Description	Interpretation	Context
0m – 0.05m	0.05m	Grass roots and topsoil.	Topsoil.	(9)
0.05m – 0.1m	0.05m	Grey-brown clay loam.	Subsoil.	(8)
0.1m – 0.4m (south) 0.1m – 1.3m (north)	0.30m (south) 1.2m (north)	Grey-brown clay loam with numerous shillet blocks, some up to 0.30m in size. Several tip lines observed.	Layer. Modern re-deposited spoil dump.	(3)
0.4m – 0.42m (south) 1.3m – 1.32m (north)	0.02m	Dark grey-brown silty clay. Few stone inclusions.	Old turf line?	(2)
1.32m – 1.62m (north)	0.30m	Green, light grey-brown clay with shillet fragments. (North part of section only)	Layer. Modern re-deposited spoil dump.	(7)
1.62m – 1.82m (north)	0.20m	Red, grey-brown clay with shillet fragments. (North part of section only)	Layer. Material derived from cliff fall? Possibly a tip/dump layer?	(6)
1.82m – 2.12m (north)	0.3m	Greenish, light grey-brown silty clay with few shillet fragments. (North part of section only)	Layer. Decayed natural? Some silt brought down from cliff face behind?	(5)
2.12m – 2.17m (north)	0.05m	Yellow, grey-green stony clay.	Layer. Decayed natural	(4)

		(North part of section only)	bedrock.	
2.17m 2.19m (north)	-	0.02m (north)	Solid grey, green-brown shillet.	Natural bedrock (1)
0.42m 1.62m (south)	-	1.2m (south)		

Taken down to bedrock throughout the trench the findings of the test pitting (Thorpe 2014) was confirmed in that it was found that the majority of the material was 'made' ground coming from earlier groundworks within the Upper and Lower Wards carried out in 1998/9 by English Heritage (Reynolds 2006). This lay upon a deposit of material most likely derived from silts washed down off the crag along with fallen stone, which in places had been grassed over resulting in an old turf line (that is (2), Figs 4 and 5).

No archaeological features were recorded, and no artefacts recovered.

5.2 Service trench

A trench roughly 110m long was dug for the service cables connecting the new kiosk with the visitor centre down in the valley (Fig 3). The turf was cut by knife or spade (Figs 6 and 7) to a depth of about 0.25m (just below root level) and then peeled back to reveal a shallow slot between 0.05m and 0.1m wide into which the cable was inserted. The turf was then replaced.

Throughout the entire length of this trench the depth (Fig 7) was just below the base of the subsoil and roots being cut into grey-brown clay loam. No archaeological features were recorded, and no artefacts recovered (apart from some plastic and sweet wrappers).

6 Discussion

The excavation of the foundations for the kiosk revealed that the mound of material that lay on the site was indeed dumped material derived from previous works within the Lower Ward of the castle. This lay on top of a small deposit of silt and stone that had fallen from the crag above and become grassed over. Bedrock proved to be close to the surface. No archaeology was recorded, and no artefacts were recovered.

The trench for the service cabling was only shallow, the depth of which was insufficient to affect any archaeology with the cables being laid immediately below the turf-line. No artefacts were recovered. At the north eastern end of the cable run, as it plunged down the valley side, two possible artificial terraces were observed, one mid slope centered at SX 05190 88964 and one below it, just above the visitor centre at SX 05193 88970 (Fig 12). These resembled the artificial terraces noted on the east-facing sides of Tintagel island being defined by levelled ground and with the rock outcrops deliberately cut to have near vertical faces (though there a possibility that these are slate quarry faces).

No other features of archaeological interest were recorded and it appears that the work had very little or no impact on any significant buried remains.

7 References

Reynolds, A, 2006. *Repairs to Tintagel Castle, Cornwall. Archaeological recording*, Historic Environment Service, Cornwall County Council Archive report 2006R030

Thorpe, C, 2014. Tintagel Castle Visitor Facilities, Trial Trenching, Cornwall: Archaeological Watching Brief. CAU Archive report 2014R066

8 Project archive

The CAU project number is **146457**

The project's documentary, digital, photographic and drawn archive is maintained by Cornwall Archaeological Unit, Cornwall Council, Fal Building, County Hall, Treyew Road, Truro, TR1 3AY. The contents of this archive are as listed below:

1. Projects file containing site records and notes, project correspondence and administration (**146457**).
2. Field plans and copies of historic maps stored in an A2-size plastic envelope (GRE 834/1-2).
3. Digital photographs stored in the directory: R:\Historic Environment (Images)\SITES.Q-T\TINTAGEL\Tintagel New Lower Ward Kiosk WB 2015. HEXQPR 146478
4. English Heritage/ADS OASIS online reference: cornwall2- 210006
5. This report text is held in digital form as: G:\TWE\Waste & Env\Strat Waste & Land\Historic Environment\Projects\Sites\Sites T\Tintagel Castle projects 2015\Tintagel Castle Lower Ward new ticket hut WB HEXQPR146457\Report

No artefacts were recovered in the course of this project.

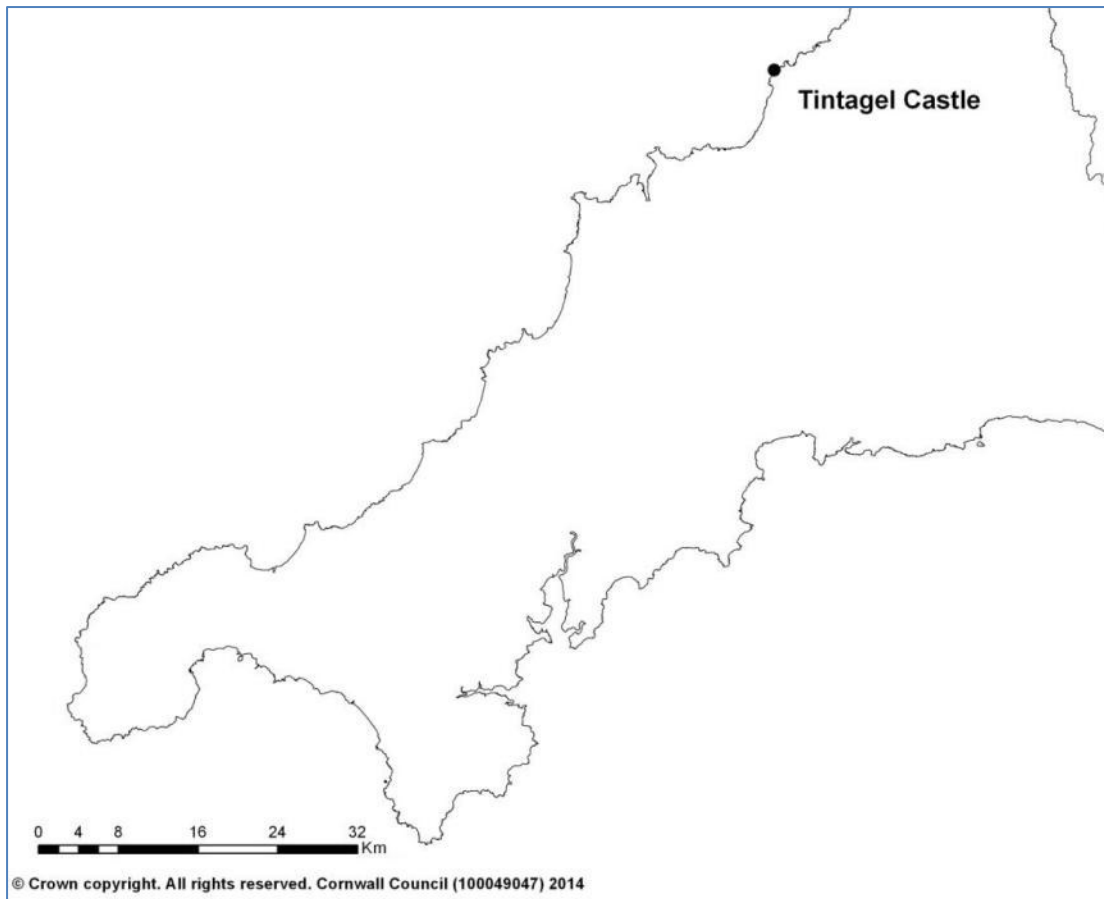


Figure 1. The location of Tintagel Castle.



Figure 2. Site location

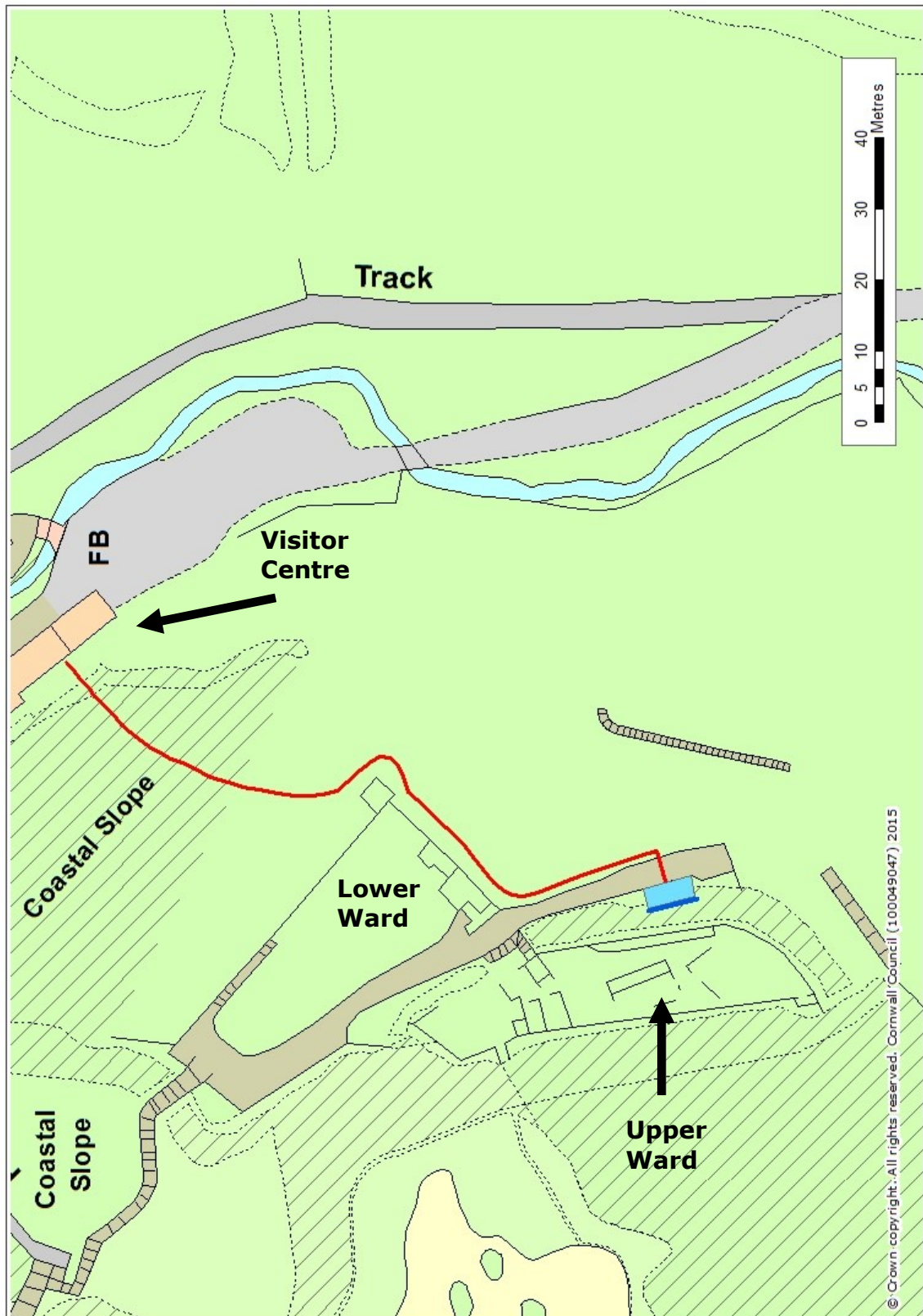


Figure 3. Location of new admissions kiosk (blue) the recorded section (dark blue line) and the route of the service cable trench (red).

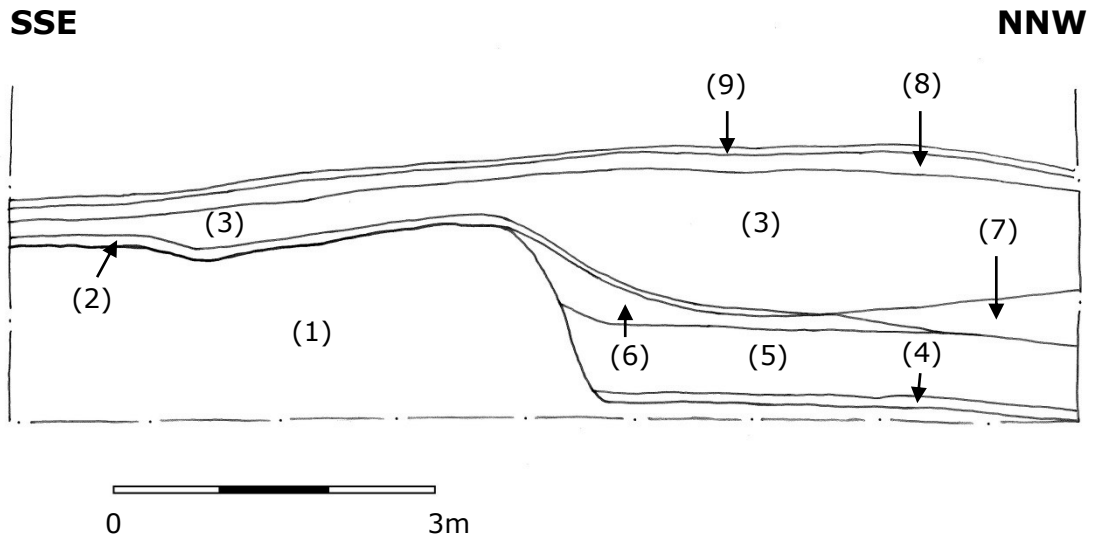


Figure 4. Western section of Kiosk foundation trench.

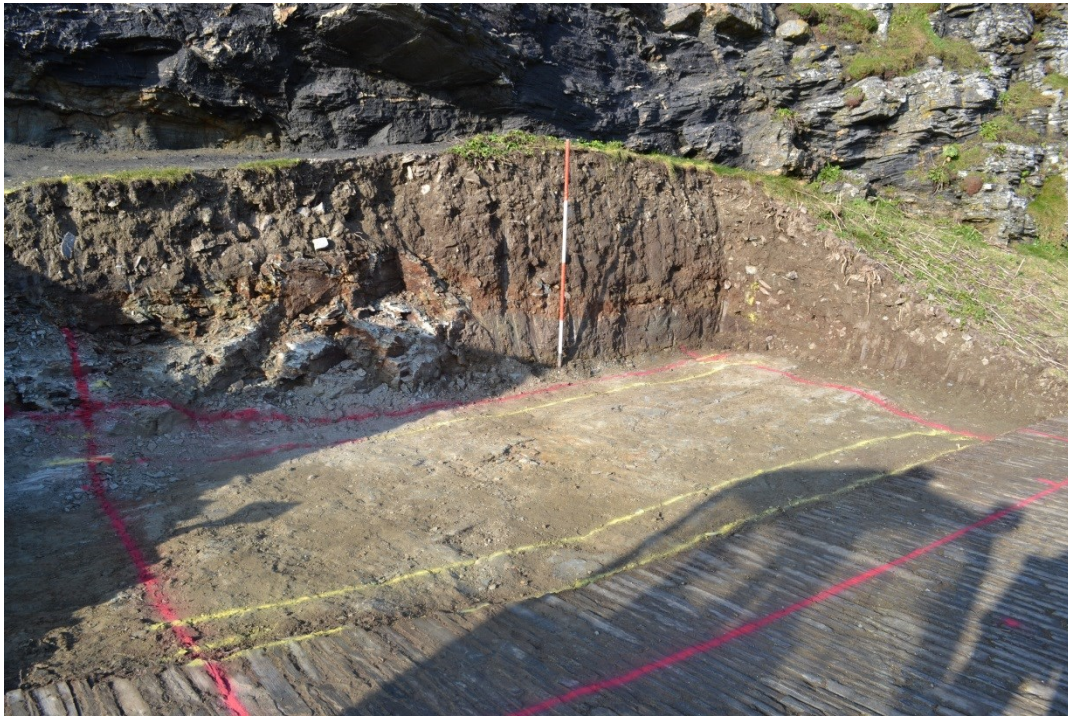


Figure 5. Photograph of western section of Kiosk foundation trench.



Figure 7. Service trench showing the laying immediately below the turf.



Figure 6. Excavation of Service trench



Figure 9. Line of Service cable on path outside of curtain wall of Lower Ward looking north-east.



Figure 8. Line of Service cable on path outside east curtain wall of Lower Ward.



Figure 10. Cutting of service trench in ditch outside north-east curtain wall of Lower Ward.



Figure 11. Course of cable trench from the Lower Ward ditch to the visitor centre in the valley below. View looking north-east.



Figure 12. Photograph of the course of the service cable trench down the valley side, clearly showing one, possibly two terraces cut into the valley side.



Figure 13. Route of service cable along exterior of barbican wall looking south, south-east.



Figure 14. The new visitor kiosk.