

**Archaeological Excavation of  
a souterrain  
at  
Site 135, Tateetra 1, Dundalk, Co. Louth  
M1 – Dundalk Western Bypass**

**Licence Holder: Avril Hayes MA MIAI**

**Final Report**

**NGR: 302587/309824**

**Chainage: 22360**

**Excavation Number: E3975**

**Scheme Number: A010/001**

**ÆGIS Ref: 255-1.23**



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<b>PROJECT ARCHAEOLOGIST:</b>	Niall Roycroft

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*That the archaeological recommendations, mitigation proposals and suggested methodology followed in this report were first formulated and approved by the National Roads Authority Project Archaeologist Niall Roycroft, prior to the commencement of the archaeological dimension of the project.*

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# I. Abstract

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This final excavation report details the licenced archaeological excavation of a souterrain discovered during drainage works (licence holder: Avril Hayes; licence no: A010/001) associated with the construction of the M1, Dundalk Western Bypass Dundalk, Co. Louth. The site was located at Tateetra, a townland located in the northern section of the Bypass. Full site details include:

- Project Site No: Site 135, Tateetra 1
- NGR: 302587/309824
- Chainage: 22360

The souterrain was discovered during drainage works along the northwestern side of the proposed road when a drainage trench cut through the southern side of a circular chamber. The souterrain was exposed, recorded and partially excavated. Capstones were removed and the interior of the souterrain was excavated. The walls were left *in situ*. The passages were filled with gravel and the capstones were replaced. Nine capstones were retained by Dundalk Museum, three of which were decorated. The partial excavation took place from September to December 2004 with a staff level of nine.

The excavation project was funded in full by Celtic Roads Design Group. The site was centred at NGR 302608/309830 between project chainage 22360 and 22400 at 10m OD.

The southern and eastern side of the souterrain had already been infilled with imported material up to 2m in depth. Infilling was removed by a mechanical excavator working under archaeological supervision. The infill was stripped back to reveal an east to west running gallery (gallery 1) and a north to south running gallery (gallery 2) which ran under the fence line lining the northern/western extent of the roadtake. The entire extent of gallery 1 was exposed to an entrance at east. Subsequent stripping to the east of gallery 1 revealed a linear earthen feature (gallery 3) which ran in a roughly easterly direction and formed a right-angle. Another gallery (gallery 4) extended northward from this right angle where it terminated at north. An area 45m east to west by 35m north to south was stripped in order to expose the full extent of the souterrain. The finds included two cross-inscribed slabs and a stone featuring megalithic art, recovered from the roof of gallery 4; a stick pin and a white paste bead.

Analysis of the artefacts and radio-carbon dates obtained indicated that the souterrain was in use from the late 10<sup>th</sup> to the early 13<sup>th</sup> centuries AD.

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## III. Abbreviations Used in Text

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**Bank** Right bank and left bank of a river or stream may be determined when one looks downstream, i.e. in the direction that the river is flowing. It may also be an earthen 'wall' around an enclosure, often associated with a ditch.

**Barony, Parish, Townland** These terms refer to land divisions in Ireland. The barony is the largest land division in a county, which is formed from a number of parishes. These parishes are in turn made up of several townlands, which are the smallest land division in the country. The origins of these divisions are believed to be in the Early Medieval/Christian period (AD500-AD1000), or may date earlier in the Iron Age (500BC-AD500).

**Context** Each feature found during the excavations is allocated a number, commonly termed a 'Context Number' in order to record the archaeology.

**CPO** Compulsory Purchase Order

**First Edition** This relates to editions of the OS 6 inch maps for each county. The first edition map completed for the area dates to the early 1840s and this is referred to in the text as the "first edition".

**G.S.** Grid square

**LH -** This number is the number of the site on the RMP map (see below). It begins with the county code, here LH for Louth, the 6-inch sheet number, followed by the number of the archaeological site.

**M** Metres, all dimensions are given in metres or part of a metre, unless otherwise stated

**OS** Ordnance Survey

**Ph** Parish

**RMP** Record of Monuments and Places. An update of the older SMR, (sites and monuments record), on which all known archaeological sites are marked and listed in an accompanying inventory. The sites marked afford legal protection under the National Monuments Acts 1930-1994. The record is based on the 6 inch map series for the country and is recorded on a county basis.

**Sheet** This relates to the six inch map for each county which is divided into sheets.

**Td** Townland



# 1. Introduction

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## 1.1 Background to Excavation

The site at Tateetra was noted during monitoring of the topsoil stripping phase of the project in advance of the Dundalk Western Bypass, under licence: 04E0335. There was no trace of the site during test trenching and subsequent monitoring in the area. The site was excavated over a period of 7 weeks from October to December 2004.

The entire length of the route was subject to an Archaeological Impact Assessment in 1993 and 2000. A programme of centre-line testing was subsequently undertaken in 2002 by Irish Archaeological Consultancy Ltd (licence Nos 02E0373 & 02E0658) and archaeological sites encountered during the testing were excavated prior to the topsoil stripping phase of the project. Due to the depth of the souterrain it was not apparent during archaeological testing or monitoring and only presented itself during drainage works in the area.

## 1.2 Project Personnel

The site at Tateetra was excavated by nine staff of Aegis Archaeology Ltd. The licence holder for the project was Avril Hayes. Jack Curley was the site agent for the client. Niall Roycroft is the NRA Project Archaeologist.

## 1.3 Location and Existing Environment (figures 1 & 2)

The site is located to the north of Dundalk town in the townland of Tateetra (NGR 302587/309824), the parish of Castletown and Barony of Upper Dundalk (*Townland Index* 1982).



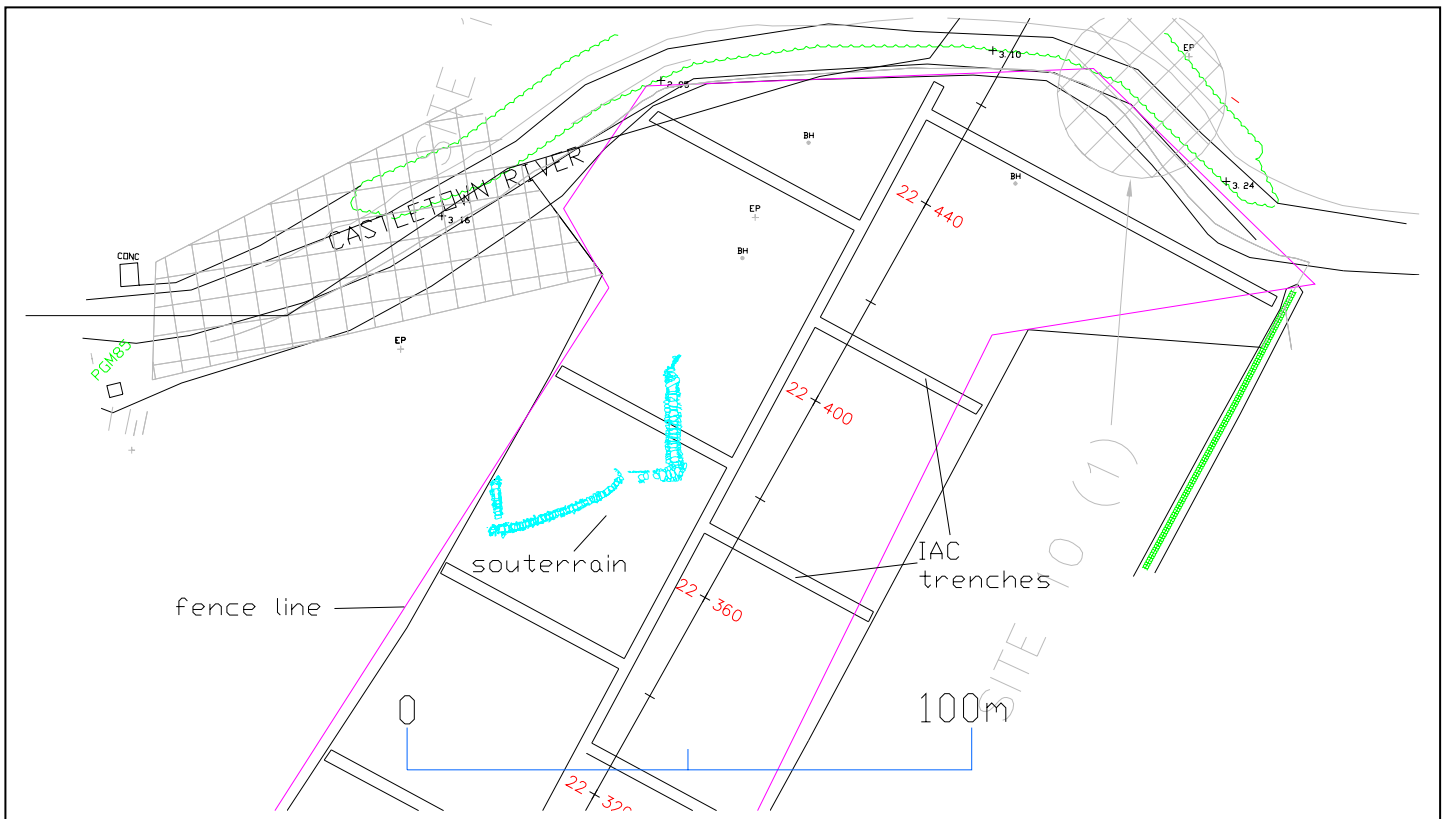


Figure 2. Location of site (in blue) in relation to Dundalk Western Bypass (north to top, supplied by NRA Project Archaeologist with additions)

## 1.4 Historical Background (figures 3 & 4)

The *Archaeological Inventory of County Louth* (Buckley 1986) does not record any archaeological sites in the townland of Tateetra (fig. 3). However, Balregan townland which borders Tateetra to the north notes several archaeological sites in the immediate vicinity of the souterrain, across the Catletown River to the northwest. Two possible sites of cairns (**LH007-007---** & **LH007-008---**) are noted in the survey from Wright's 1758 illustrations and descriptions. There is no visible trace of either cairn today. A possible stone alignment is also noted in Balregan (**LH007-006---**), again this site was described and illustrated by Wright and no visible trace remains. Equally no trace of two further monuments described by Wright remain **LH007-006---** (site of stone pair) and **LH007-004---**, a possible standing stone. A souterrain, **LH007-002---**, is noted in the vicinity of Balregan castle, **LH007-001---**, a tower house. The archaeological inventory records the site as a ruined tower house with two rectangular opposed corner projections and two opposed corner towers (Buckley 1986).





There are no finds recorded from the townland of Tateetra in the National Museum Topographical files, (prior to the archaeological works carried out as part of the Dundalk Bypass).

The entire route of the Dundalk Western Bypass was subject to a phase of centre-line test trenching. Numerous archaeological sites were identified and excavated as a result of this. None was discovered in the townland of Tateetra during that phase of the project.

The townland of Tateetra is located in the parish of Castletown and the Barony of Upper Dundalk. Lewis refers to the remains of druidical remains scattered over the promontory of Balrichen at the junction between two rivers. He describes the remains as consisting of a circle of five large upright stones, a cairn and several pillars, some detached, and some in groups (1837, 309). This area is located to the north and east of the site at Tateetra.

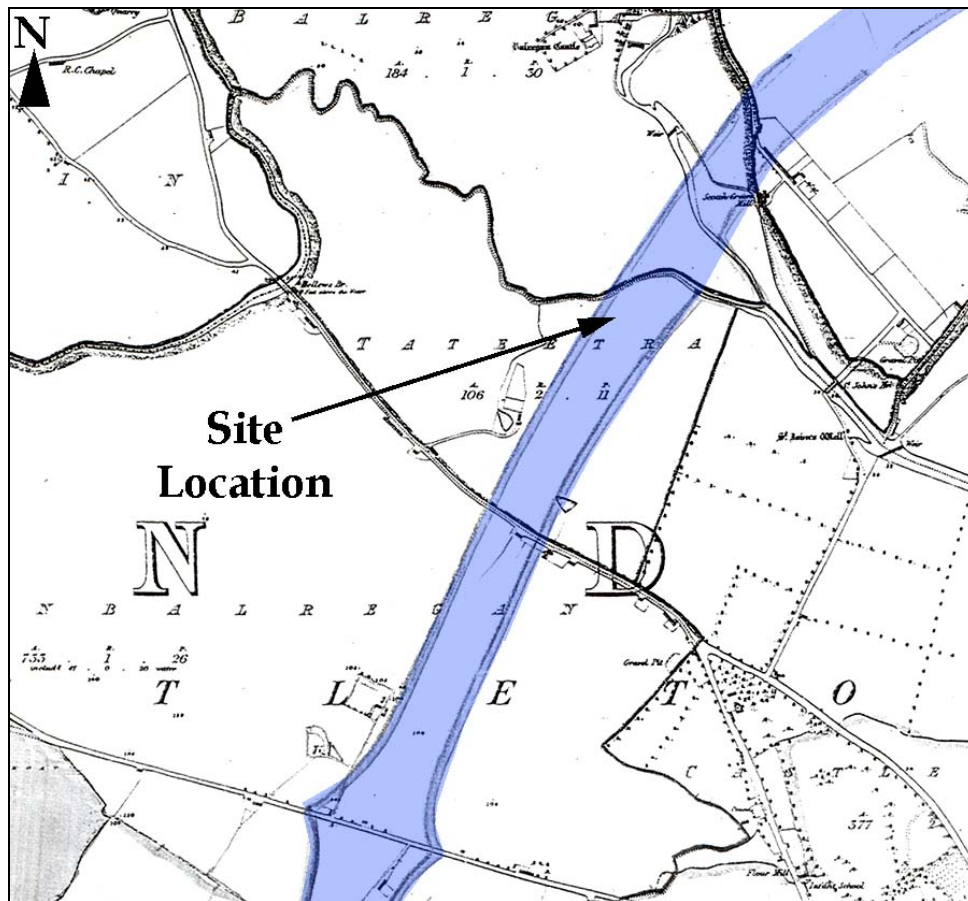


Figure 4. 1<sup>st</sup> edition 6-inch map showing general site location, proposed road in blue (OS 1835, sheet 7)

The **Iron Age** in Ireland (500BC-AD500) is more elusive than the previous periods, with no definitive site type or burial tradition attributable to the period. This was reflected also in the findings along the Dundalk Western Bypass, where Iron Age activity was noted in

connection with sites from preceding periods. Perhaps some of the most famous structures dating to the Iron Age in Ireland are the linear earthworks that are located along the southern borders of Ulster to the north and northwest of Co. Louth (Mallory and McNeill 1991, 150-2). These include the Dorsey and the Black Pig's Dyke (*ibid.*). The great Iron Age sites of *Emain Macha* and Loughnashade are also located to the northwest of Co. Louth in Co. Armagh.

The **early medieval** (AD400-1100) period in Ireland is characterised by the introduction of Christianity to the country and history (i.e. writing, Edwards 1990; Sheehan and Monk 1998). The social and political organisation of Ireland during this period has been depicted in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> century law tracts as fragmented (Edwards 1990, 8). The land consisted of small units occupied by tribes called a *túath*. These tribes were connected through kinships. The kin owned land jointly and later on in the period formed groups, which were controlled by a hierarchy of kingships. The rise of powerful dynasties gradually superseded these kingships. This part of Louth, a border state of the Ulaid, was ruled by the *Conailli Muirtheimne*, but they were gradually absorbed in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries by the continuing wave of tribes vying for control of the area (Byrne 1973).

In addition to the indigenous Irish, by the early 9<sup>th</sup> century, the Viking expansion into Ireland was well underway. Gradually these Scandinavian settlers were absorbed into the Irish political scene (Bradley 1988, 70). By the 10<sup>th</sup> century there were about a dozen over-kingdoms ruled by these dynasties but by the mid-12<sup>th</sup> century as land control was consolidated the number of kingdoms had reduced (Edwards 1990, 8). In the north the powerful dynasty were the *Uí Néill*. There are annalistic references recounting the burning of Louth, Dromiskin and Monasterboice by *Domnall ua Néill* in AD 970 where Scandinavian settlements were attacked (Bradley 1988, 66).

Archaeological monuments attributable to this period include ringforts and cashels (both enclosed farmsteads), some hut sites, souterrains (underground chambers), and many monastic and ecclesiastical sites. These sites may occur in association in the landscape (Stout 1997). In fact it is likely that neighbouring settlements belonged to the same clan or kinship group and probably cooperated with one another (Mitchell 1976, 170). There is a complex of archaeological monuments dating to the early medieval period located to the east of the southern end of the Dundalk Western Bypass (**LH007-072---**), in the townland of Ballybarrack. The complex includes souterrains, a church, and an ogham stone.

A number of sites dating to the early medieval period were excavated, by Irish Archaeological Consultancy Ltd, along the line of the Dundalk Western Bypass. At

Newtownbalregan, c.1km south of Tateetra 1, a high status ringfort and souterrain dating from the 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> centuries was uncovered (Bayley and Roycroft 2003a & 2003b; Roycroft 2005). A portion of **LH004-067---**, a ringfort and souterrain was also excavated at Carn More (Roycroft 2005). A large complex at Balriggeran consisting of a multi-phased enclosed settlement with associated exterior stock enclosure and field system, was excavated (Delaney and Roycroft 2003; Roycroft 2005).

The **later medieval** (AD1100-1600) period begins historically with the invasion of the Anglo-Normans in AD1169 (Barry 1987; O'Keeffe 2002). Their presence can be seen in the archaeological record through the towns they established and reorganised. Archaeological monuments dating to this period include ringworks, hall houses, moated sites, and tower houses. It was in this period, specifically AD1185, that Dundalk was granted to the Anglo-Norman Bertram de Verdon (Roycroft 2005, 81). In AD1318 this area came to the fore of history when Edward The Bruce was killed at the Battle of Faughart (*ibid.*). A motte and bailey (the latter now replaced by modern waterworks), often referred to as *Dún Dealgan*, is located to the east of the Western Bypass (**LH007-118---**), and dates to this Anglo-Norman period. This archaeological complex (in the townlands of Castletown and Ballyonan) also includes a tower house and a church and graveyard, among other monuments. The medieval fortified hilltop of Fort Hill (in Balriggeran) was partially within the CPO lands for the Dundalk Western Bypass. The site was excavated by Irish Archaeological Consultancy Ltd under licence number 02E1326. The construction of the medieval element of Fort Hill has been attributed to the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century (*ibid.*), which would tie in with the stresses that this area was obviously under at that time with the Bruce Invasion.

## 1.5 Excavation Methodology

The excavation of the site at Tateetra was run in compliance with the agreed method statement submitted with the excavation licence for this project. The infill covering the site was stripped by a mechanical excavator working under archaeological supervision. The site was exposed and recorded. The capstones were individually numbered prior to being lifted by machine and sling. The interior of the souterrain was then excavated by hand and was recorded. Drawings were completed using a combination of hand-drawn plans and a full laser survey, undertaken by Gridpoint Solutions Ltd. The laser survey was undertaken prior to and after the capstones were lifted, which included plans and elevations. A geologist undertook the identification of the capstones and walling. After the excavation the souterrain was lined with plastic and infilled with gravel. The capstones were then replaced, and a layer of plastic and gravel was filled over the souterrain. The portion of gallery 2 which extended beyond the roadtake at west was not excavated (figure 5).

Nine capstones from gallery 4 were retained by Dundalk Museum in consultation with Niall Roycroft (NRA Project Archaeologist). The capstones retained were nos 68, 69, 73, 76, 83, 86 and three decorated capstones (72, 85 and 89) find nos 29:1; 29:2 and 29:3, respectively.

The resolution of the project is being undertaken in accordance with guidelines as set out by the heritage policy paper *Policy & Guidelines for Archaeological Excavation* (DAHGI 1999). The project also draws on English Heritage's policy document *Management of Archaeological Projects* (1991), which includes the following project pathway:

- Phase 1                      Project Plan
- Phase 2                      Fieldwork (on-site resolution)
- Phase 3                      Assessment of Potential for Analysis
- Phase 4                      Analysis and Report Production
- Phase 5                      Dissemination

Phase Two- the site excavation, by hand, of the site, used an amended version of the MoLAS (Museum of London Archaeological Service 1994) system of context recording. This is a method of excavation that has been used in Britain since the 1970s and has proved to be very successful, in both the efficiency of on-site recording/excavating and in the formation of the report in post-excavation.

Aegis has its own Quality Manual (2001 and revisions) which sets out all its Standard Operating Procedures (SOPS) for work of this type. These are followed as part of the company's wider Quality Management System. The Assessment of Potential for Analysis was undertaken during the post-excavation stage of the project and appears in Section 7 of this report. The main areas for analysis consisted of material sampled for identification and dating (see section 13).

This report represents phase 4 of the project pathway. This report is the first stage of the dissemination process (phase 5).



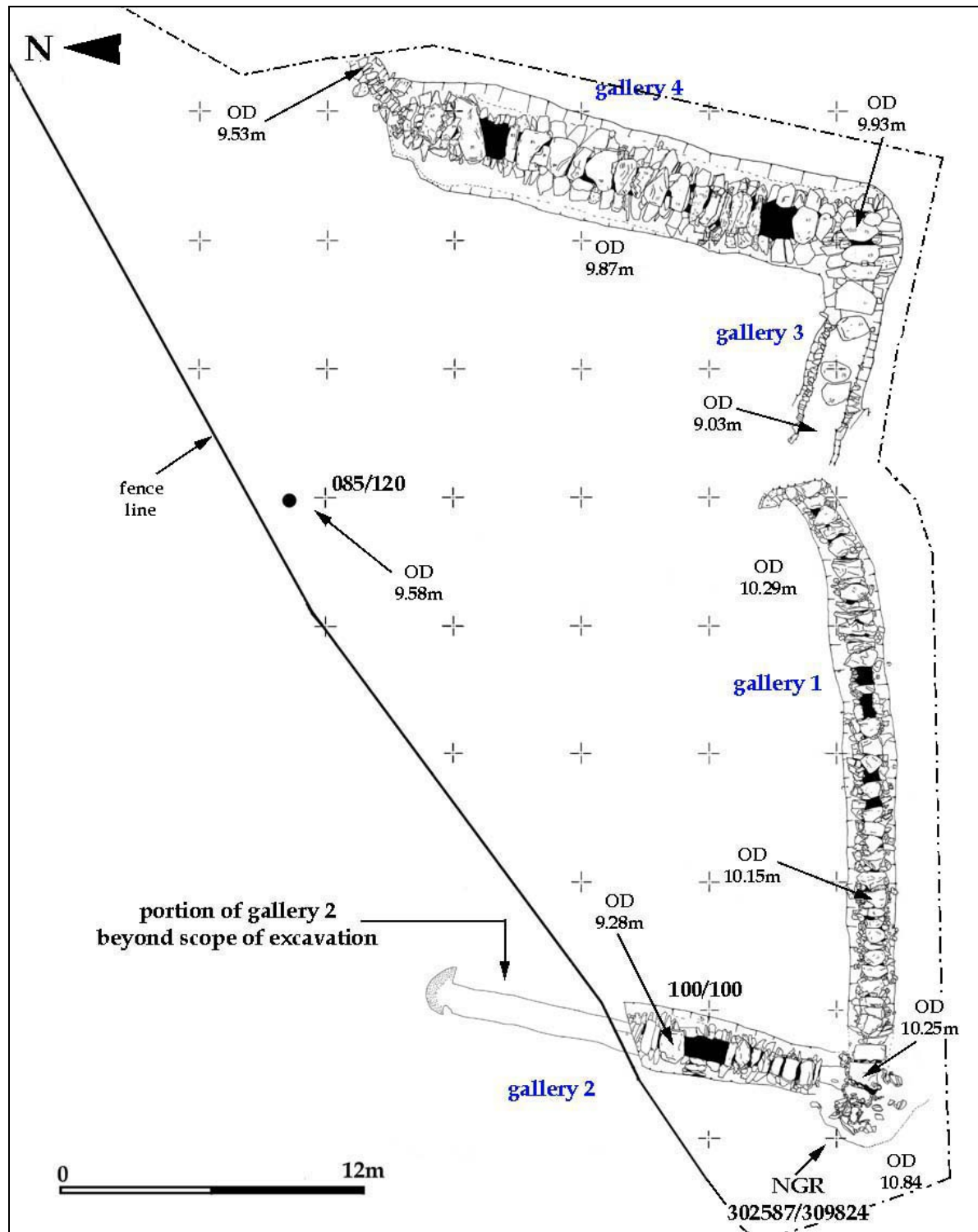


Figure 5. Plan of souterrain showing site grid

## 2. Context List

Context Number	Description
1	Topsoil
2	Embankment infill/redeposited subsoil
3	Gallery 3 & 4 trench fill
4	Chamber 1 trench fill
5	Gallery 1 capstones
6	Gallery 2 capstones
7	Linear fill over gallery 3
8	Fill of cut [c9]
9	Cut of furrow/slot trench filled by [c8]
10	Floor of gallery 1
11	Fill of [c13]
12	Packing stones over gallery 3 & 4
13	Cut of circular pit containing [c11]
14	Collapsed material in gallery 3
15	Floor of chamber 1
16	Floor of gallery 2
17	Stony fill of [c18]
18	Circular pit in floor of gallery 2 filled by [c17]
19	Cut of sump/well in floor of gallery 2 partially filled by floor surface [c16]
20	Wall niche in gallery 2
21	Floor of gallery 3 & 4
22	Sump/well in gallery 4 partially filled by [c21]
23	Sump/well at north of gallery 3 partially filled by [c21]
24	Animal skeleton
25	Cut for galleries 1, 2 & chamber 1
26	Cut for galleries 3 & 4
27	Walls of galleries 1 & 2
28	Walls of gallery 3 & 4
29	Capstones over gallery 3 & 4
30	Natural
31	Collapsed capstones of gallery 3
32	Upcast deposit from sump cut [c19]

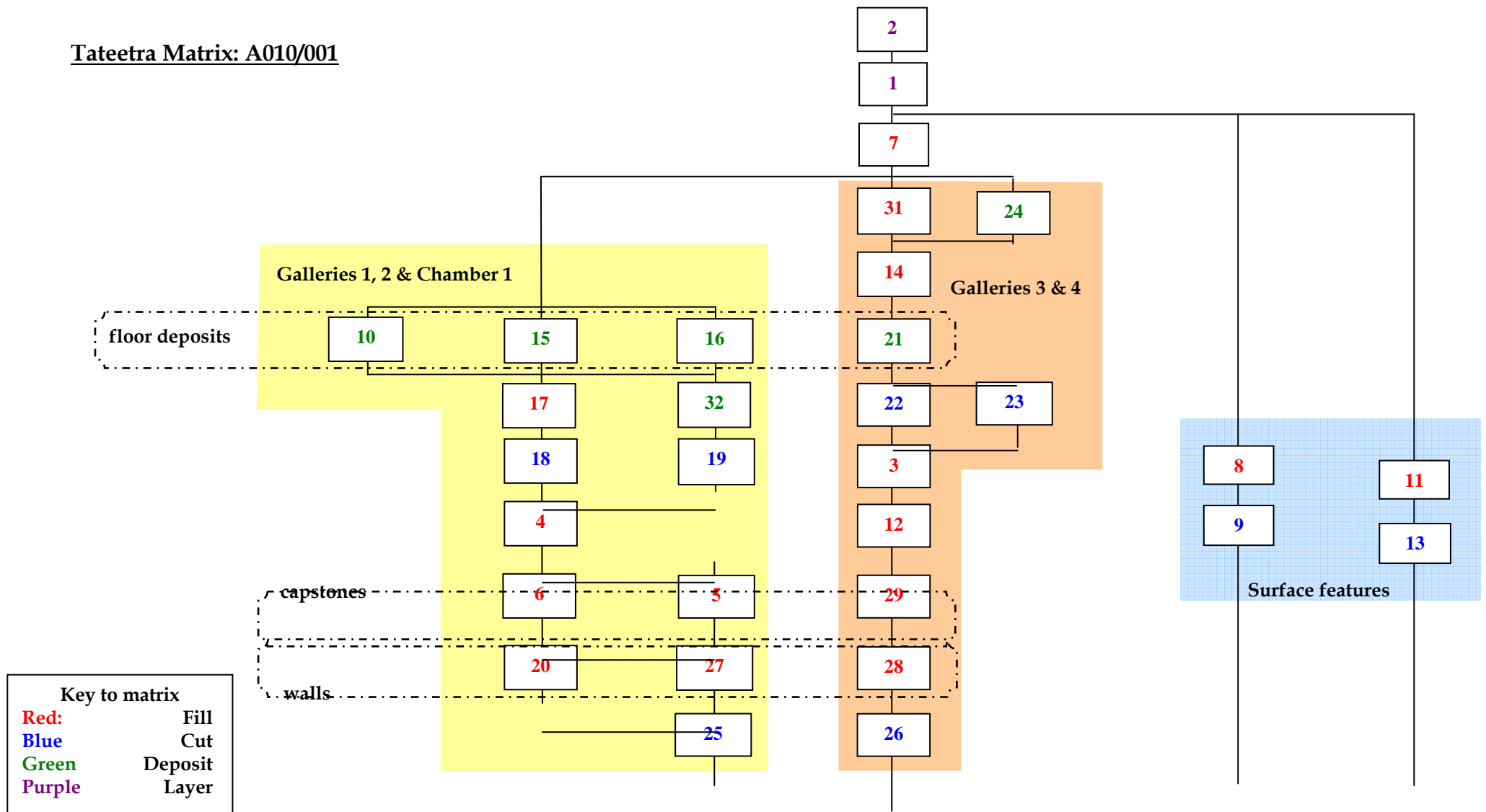
## 3. Stratigraphic Sequence

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### 3.1 Matrix

The first stage of report compilation is the formation of the site matrix. This structure collates all the contexts that have been excavated and recorded, and preserves their stratigraphic relationships in flow chart fashion. The entire interpretation of the site rests on this visual manifestation of the archaeology as excavated. The contexts of the matrix are then grouped and segmented to create features and phases, all of which are described in detail below (section 3.2 Context Descriptions and section 4 Interpretation of Stratigraphy). Features are labelled by their cut numbers.

Tateetra Matrix: A010/001



30

### 3.2 Context Descriptions (figure 6)

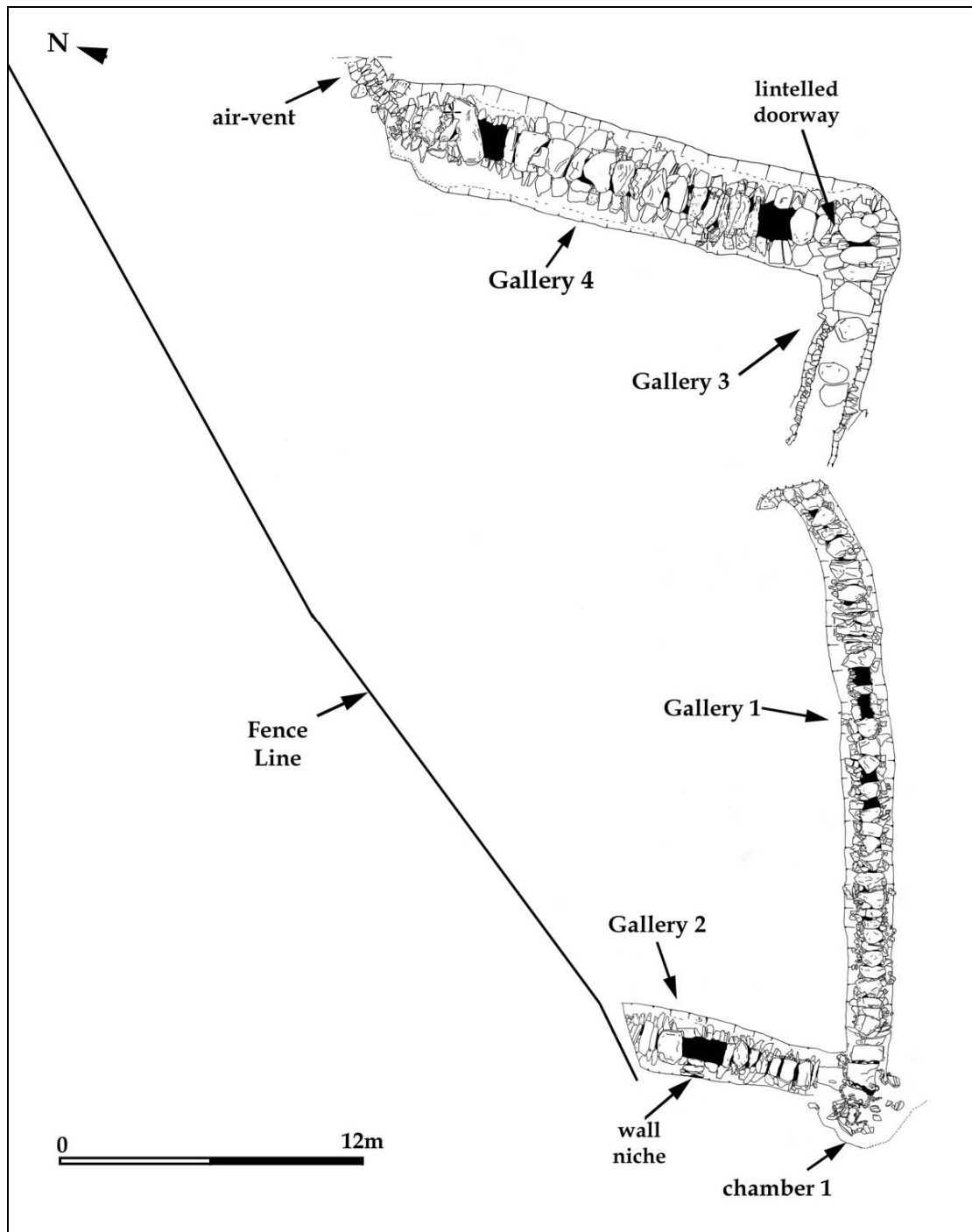


Figure 6. Plan of souterrain showing main structural elements

#### Context 1

##### Description: Topsoil

This was a moderately firm dark greyish brown clayey silt with moderate inclusions of small and medium sized stones. Most of this had been removed during topsoil stripping in April 2004 as detailed in the interim progress report 3 (Hayes 2004 ref. 255-1.5).

## Context 2

### Description: Subsoil/infill

This was a mottled mid yellow grey clayey silt with frequent inclusions of small and medium sized stones. There was approximately between 2m and 3m of this material above the capstones of the galleries.

## Context 3 (plate 1)

### Description: Fill of gallery 3 trench cut

This was a firm gravely silt which filled the trench cut of galleries 3 & 4. It was mottled dark greyish brown and mid orangey brown and contained frequent angular natural stone inclusions. Fragments of animal bone (sample no. 12) were also recovered from this. This material covered a portion of gallery 3 & all of gallery 4 to a maximum depth of 0.60m.

## Context 4 (plate 2; figure 7)

### Description: Trench cut fill of chamber 1 and galleries 1 & 2

This was a firm mottled greyish brown sandy silt with frequent inclusions of small and medium sized stones. It was between 0.50m and 0.60m deep. Most of this was disturbed during the excavation of a trench for drainage, which initially revealed the souterrain.

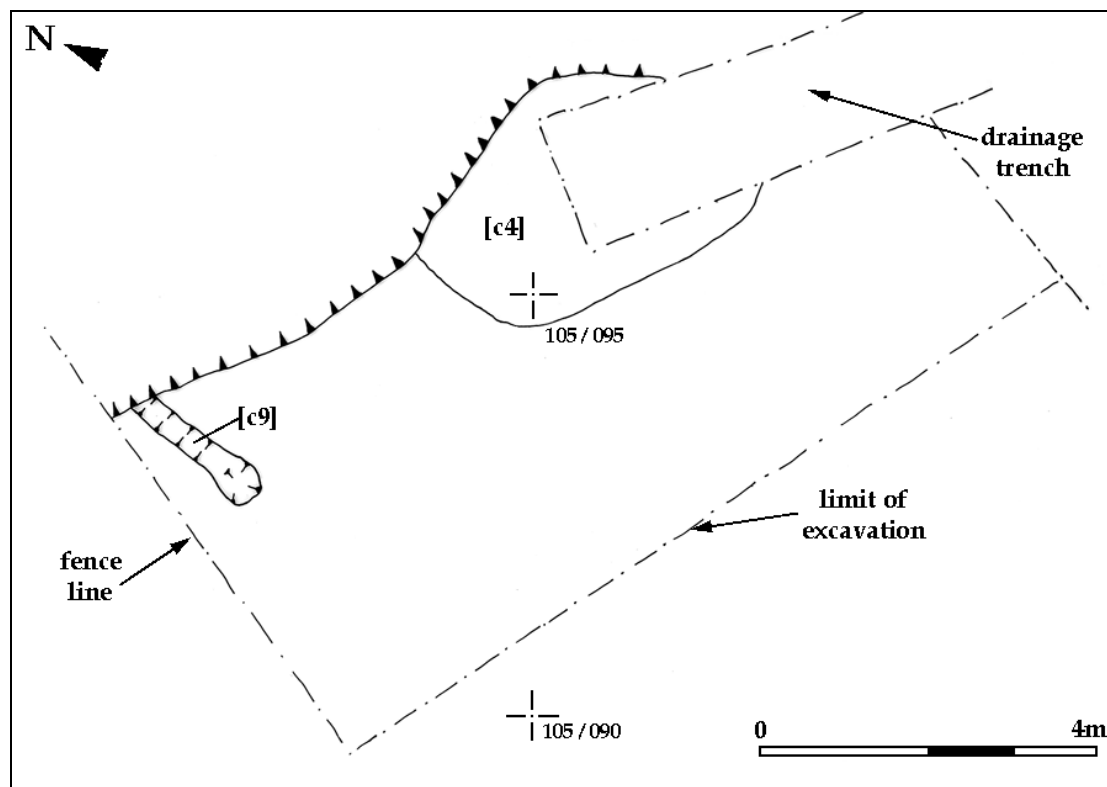


Figure 7. Plan of south end of excavation showing [c4] & [c9]

**Context 5 (plate 3; figure 8)**

**Description: Capstones over gallery 1**

These capstones were on average between 0.65m and 1.30m in length and between 0.35m and 1.10m wide. They were generally sandstone and siltstone slabs and there were forty of them over gallery 1 (numbered 1-40, from west to east).

**Context 6 (plate 3; figure 8)**

**Description: Capstones over gallery 2**

Seventeen capstones were exposed and removed from over gallery 2 (numbered 41-57, from south to north). This gallery continued beyond the road-take to the north. The stones removed were between 0.60m and 1.37m in length and between 0.19m and 0.90m wide. These slabs were all sandstone and siltstone.

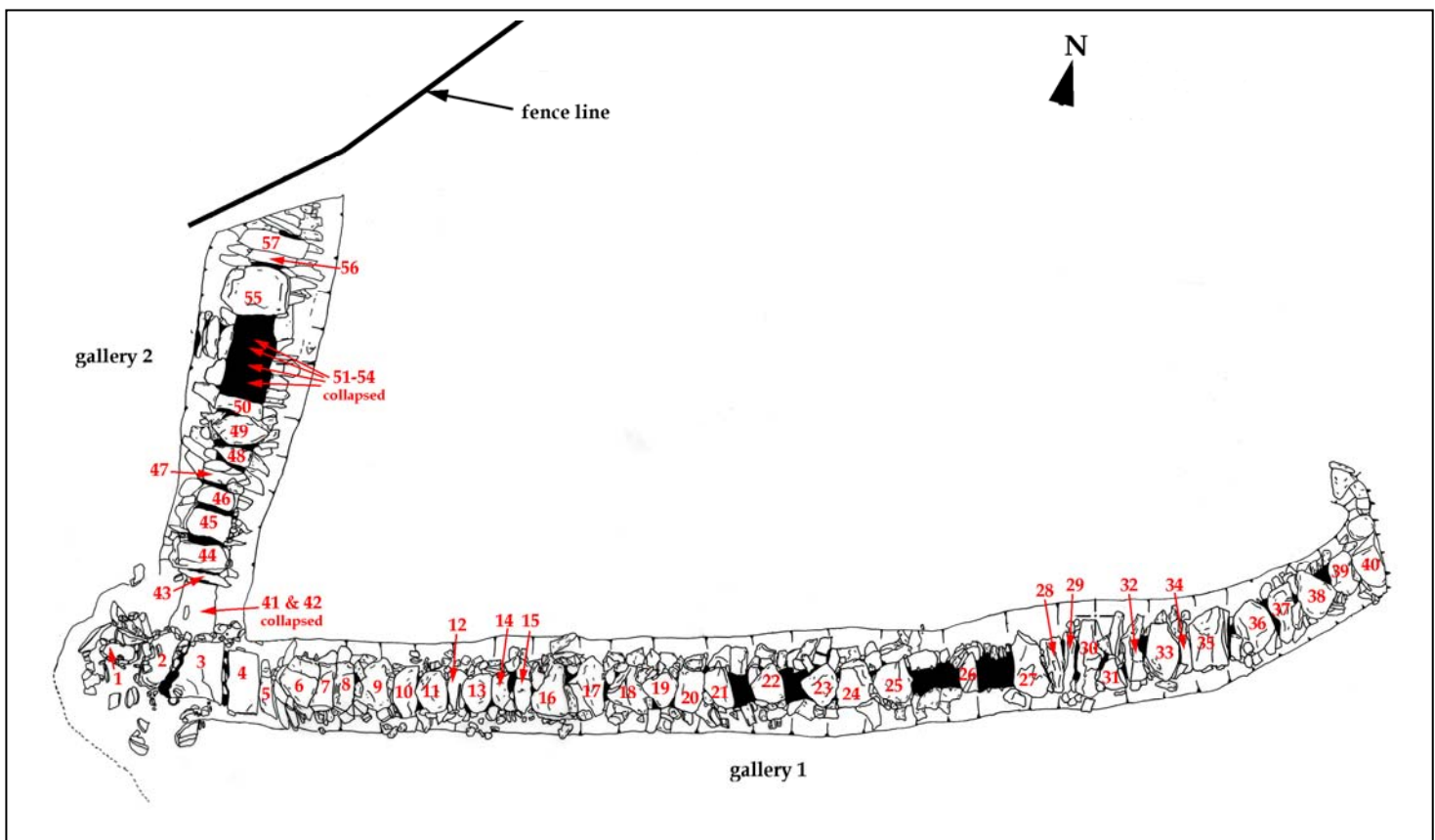


Figure 8. [c5] & [c6] capstones over galleries 1 & 2 with unique numbers (not to scale, for indication only)

**Context 7 (plate 4)**

**Description: Linear fill over gallery 3**

This was a firm dark reddish brown sandy silt with a moderate amount of small stone inclusions. It lay over the collapsed capstones in gallery 3 [c31] and continued towards the entrance to gallery 1. It was up to 1.45m deep. Charcoal was recovered from this context (sample no. 2).



**Context 9 (plate 5; figure 7)**

**Description: Possible field boundary or agricultural furrow**

This linear cut was 1.60m in length from north to south. It had a maximum width of 0.45m and it was 0.18m deep. It had sloping sides and an irregular base with a gradual break of slope. It was filled by [c8], a moderately compact mid greyish brown clayey silt with frequent inclusions of small pebbles. At its northern end this feature was truncated by a machine-cut baulk. To the south it seemed to peter out, but may have continued as a shallow ridge. It appears to have been part of an agricultural furrow.

**Context 10 (plate 6)**

**Description: Floor of gallery 1**

This consisted of a firm dark greyish brown gravelly clay layer on the base of gallery 1. It contained occasional small and medium sized stones and occasional flecks of charcoal (sample no. 3). It covered the entire length of gallery 1 to a depth of approximately 0.10m. At the eastern end of the gallery it reached a maximum depth of 0.20m. Fragments of pottery (find no: 10:1) were recovered from this context towards its western extremity where a step led into the chamber connecting gallery 1 and gallery 2. A copper-alloy stick pin (find no. 10:2) was recovered from [c10] at the entrance to the gallery.

**Context 11 (plate 7)**

**Description: Fill of pit [c13]**

[c11] was a loose dark blackish brown clayey silt with occasional small stones and flecks of charcoal (sample no. 4). It was 0.65m in diameter and was 0.15m deep.

**Context 12 (plate 9; figure 9)**

**Description: Stone packing over galleries 3 & 4**

This context consisted of the stone packing between the capstones and along the sides of galleries 3 & 4. The stones were on average between 0.10m and 0.30m in diameter. At the northern end of the gallery 4 these stones covered an air vent leading out of the gallery. The air-vent was not excavated. Animal bone fragments were recovered from this context (sample no. 11).

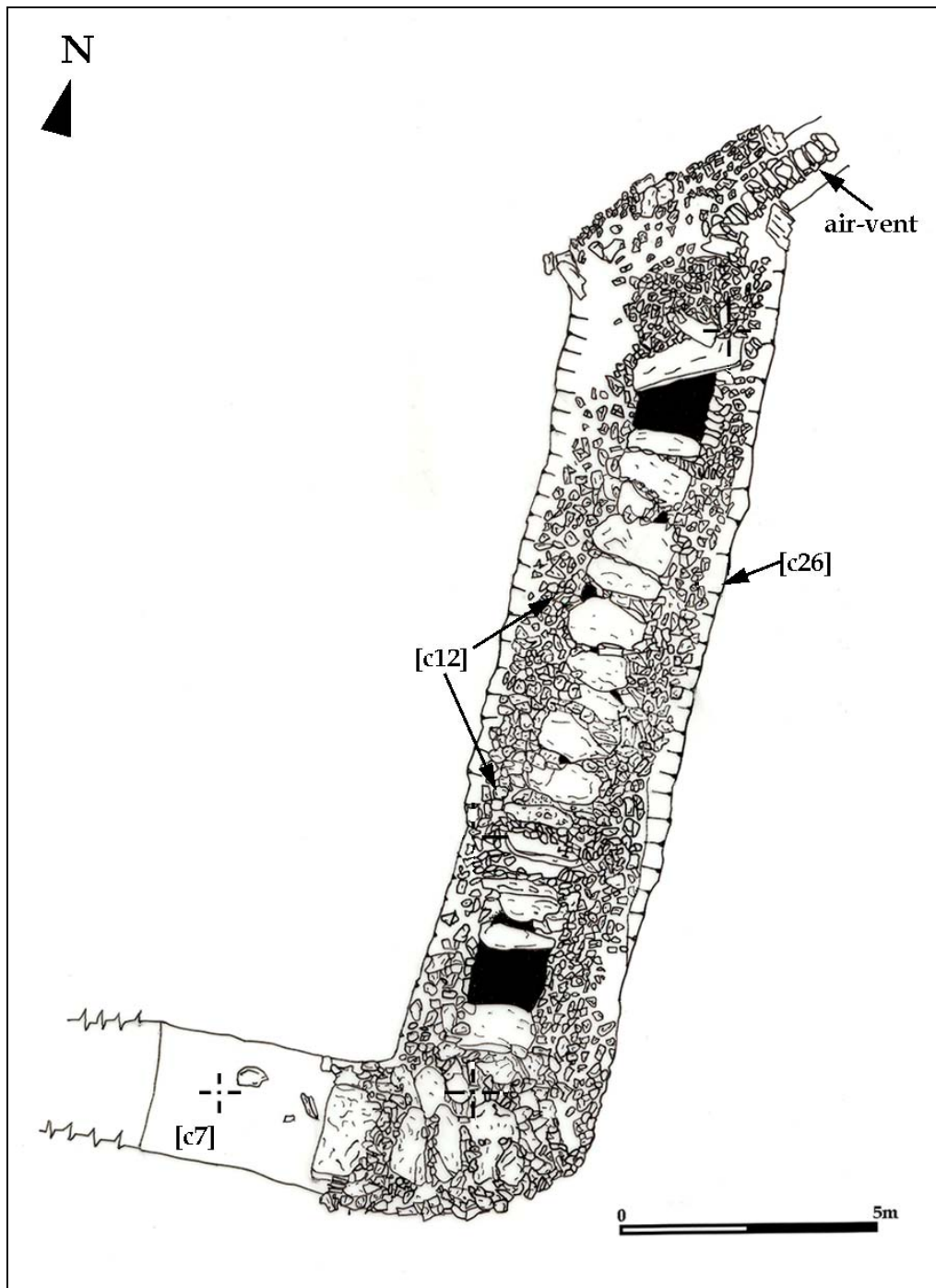


Figure 9. Stone packing [c12] over gallery 4

**Context 13 (plate 8; figure 10)**

**Description: Shallow circular pit**

This pit was approximately 0.65m in diameter and 0.15m deep. The sides were concave and the base was irregular. The break of slope was imperceptible at the top and at the base. It was filled by [c11]. The pit was situated at a distance from the souterrain galleries. It does not appear to have been archaeological in nature.

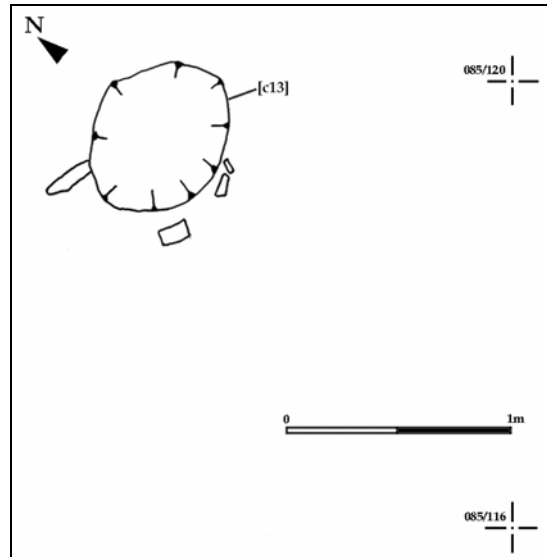


Figure 10. Plan of pit [c13]

#### Context 14 (plate 10; figure 11)

##### Description: Collapsed material gallery 3

This was a moderately compact mid greyish brown sandy silt in gallery 3. It contained a moderate amount of small pebbles, fragments of animal bone (sample no. 9) and small pieces of charcoal (sample no. 7). It had a maximum depth of 1.18m. This material appears to have been quite similar to [c7], which lay above it.

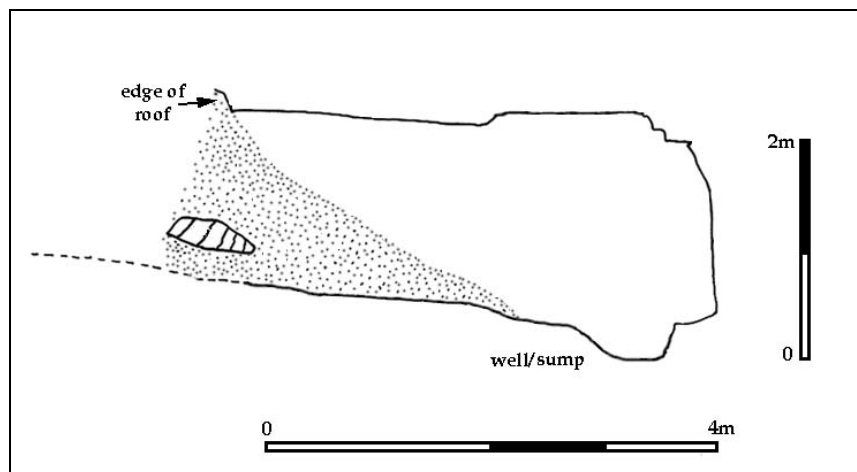


Figure 11. Infill into east end of gallery 3

#### Context 15

##### Description: Floor of chamber 1

This consisted of a layer of firm dark greyish brown gravelly clay lying on the base of the chamber at the terminus of galleries 1 and 2. This material was similar to [c10] and was between 0.10m and 0.20m deep.

**Context 16**

**Description: Floor of gallery 2**

This was a firm layer of dark greyish brown gravelly clay, which contained a moderate amount of small stones. It lay on the base of the gallery, beneath material that collapsed into the gallery when capstones were being removed.

**Context 17**

**Description: Fill of pit [c18]**

[c17] was a loose dark greyish brown stony clay. It contained a frequent amount of stones between 0.10m and 0.20m in diameter. It also contained occasional flecks of charcoal (sample no. 5) and fragments of animal bone (sample no. 13).

**Context 18 (plate 13)**

**Description: Circular pit in floor of gallery 2**

This circular pit was approximately 0.50m in diameter and 0.50m deep. The break of slope was sharp at the top and at the base. The sides were concave and the base was rounded. This pit was situated in the floor of gallery 2, approximately 0.25m to the south of [c19], a sump/well.

**Context 19 (plate 14)**

**Description: Sump/well in gallery 2**

This was an irregularly-shaped cut in the floor of gallery 2 approximately 0.25m to the north of [c18]. It was 0.90m in length from east to west, 0.80m wide from north to south and 0.70m deep. The break of slope was sharp at the top and at the base. The sides were concave and the base was rounded. Immediately to the north of the cut there was a deposit of material, which was presumably the material that had been removed in the excavation of the sump. The sump contained approximately 0.15m of [c16].

**Context 20 (plate 15)**

**Description: Wall niche in gallery 2**

This feature was situated in the east-facing wall of gallery 2. It consisted of an alcove cut approximately 0.60m high into the side of the gallery. It was 0.50m wide. The sides were stone-lined but the back was earth cut. There was a large stone at the bottom of the niche, which formed a shelf elevated approximately 0.50m from the base of the gallery.

**Context 21 (plate 16)**

**Description: Floor of galleries 3 & 4**

This layer of firm dark greyish brown gravely clay formed the floor of galleries 3 & 4. It contained a moderate amount of small stones, occasional flecks of charcoal (sample no. 6) and fragments of animal bone (sample no. 8). This material covered the base of the galleries to an average depth of 0.05m. Up to 1.18m of [c14] lay above [c21] in gallery 3.

**Context 22 (plate 17)**

**Description: Sump/well in gallery 4**

This sub-oval shaped feature was cut into the floor of gallery 4 at its northern extremity. It was 0.90m in length from east to west, 0.70m wide from north to south and 0.30m deep. There was approximately 0.05m of [c21] in the base of the cut.

**Context 23 (plate 18)**

**Description: Sump/well in gallery 3**

This was a sub-oval shaped cut situated at the east end of gallery 3. It was 0.85m in length from north to south, 0.70m wide from east to west and 0.30m deep. The break of slope was sharp at the top and at the base. The base was rounded, with a stone approximately 0.10m in diameter in it. The sides were concave. It contained approximately 0.05m of [c21].

**Context 24**

**Description: Animal skeleton**

These skeletal remains of a small animal were found partially covering the eastern extent of [c14] in gallery 3 (sample no. 14). The remains were in quite a poor state of preservation. Probably a later intrusion after silting in of souterrain.

**Context 25 (plate 19)**

**Description: Cut for Galleries 1, 2 and chamber 1**

L-shaped cut in plan with chamber forming right angle between east west gallery (gallery 1) and north south gallery (gallery 2). Gallery 1 was 25m long x 2m wide at top. Gallery 2 was 16m long in total with a 2.5m wide cut at top. The cut was on average 1.40m deep. The upper portions of the cut were straight sided. The full extent of the cut was not realised as the walls were left *in situ*. The cut for chamber 1 measured 1.50m in diameter and was 1.60m deep. It is likely that the upper portions of the cut were truncated as the removal of embankment infill material and the mottled nature of the subsoil in this area made identification of the cut difficult to discern.

### Context 26 (plate 20)

#### Description: Cut for galleries 3 & 4

L-shaped cut in plan forming right angle at the junction between the two galleries. The gallery 4 extent was 17m long north to south with cut at top 4m wide on average. The average depth of the cut was 2.30m. Gallery 3 was 10m long east to west with an average width at top 2.5m. The sides of the cut were straight with a sharp break of slope at top. The depth of the cut in gallery 3 varied from 1.60m to 1.70m. It is likely that the upper portions of the cut were truncated as the removal of embankment infill material and the mottled nature of the subsoil in this area made identification of the cut difficult to discern.

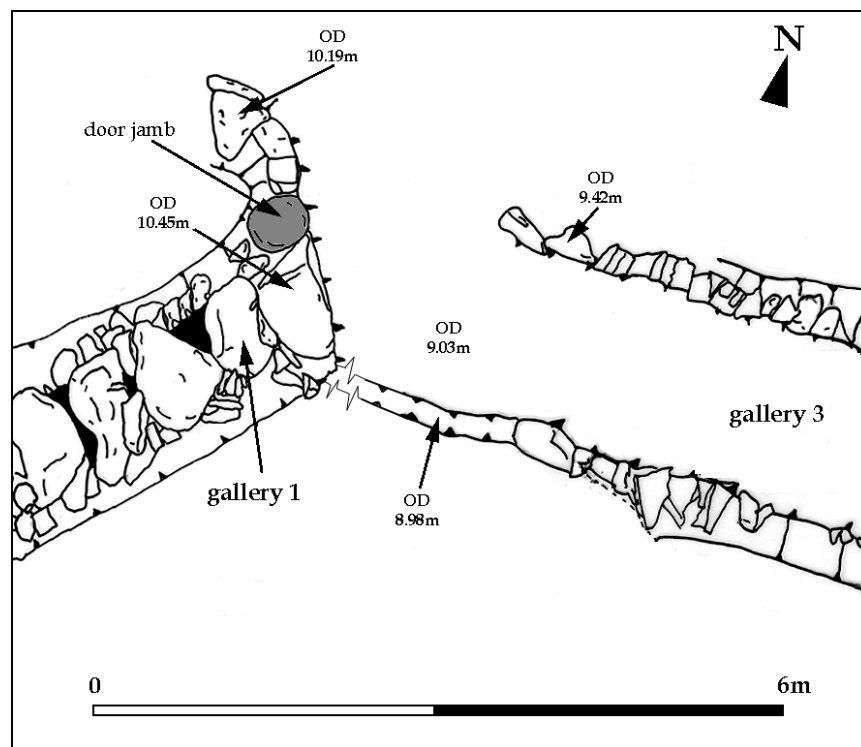


Figure 12. Post-excavation plan of west end of gallery 3 and east end of gallery 1

### Context 27 (plate 21)

#### Description: Walls of galleries 1 & 2

Dry stone walling, roughly coursed shale. A basal stone foundation course comprised large stones measuring on average 0.50m x 0.35m (0.75m x 0.50m – 0.25 x 0.30m). These stones were set on a flat edge. The remaining upper courses were roughly coursed and comprised smaller sub angular and rounded shale stones. The walls were slightly corbelled at the top.

Walls of gallery 1 were 1m high on average but reached a maximum height of 1.10m in the centre of the gallery. The minimum height of the walls were close to the entrance where the walls were between 0.70m and 0.80m high. The basal width between the walls of gallery 1 were 1m at west end to 0.80m wide at east end. The width between the walls at the top was

on average 0.65m. Walls of gallery 2 were on average 1m high but were lower toward west to 0.80m high. The basal width between the walls was 1m to 0.70m at the top.

**Context 28 (plate 22; figure 12)**

**Description: Walls of galleries 3 & 4**

The dry stone walls of galleries 3 & 4 were composed of roughly coursed shale overlying a basal stone foundation course of large stones set on edge (avg. size 0.50m x 0.30m; largest 0.70m x 0.40m; smallest 0.20m x 0.20m). The upper courses were sub-angular roughly coursed shale stones. The top course of the walls consisted of large flatish stones. The northern end wall of gallery 4 had an air vent located in the upper course of the wall. The basal width between gallery 4 walls was 2m which narrowed to an average width of 1.25m at the top. Gallery 3 wall was heavily denuded and not present at its west end. These walls were 1.50m high with only basal stones present at the west end of the gallery. There was evidence at the south side that the wall continued west to meet the entrance to gallery 1. The basal width between both walls in this section of the souterrain was on average 1.50m.

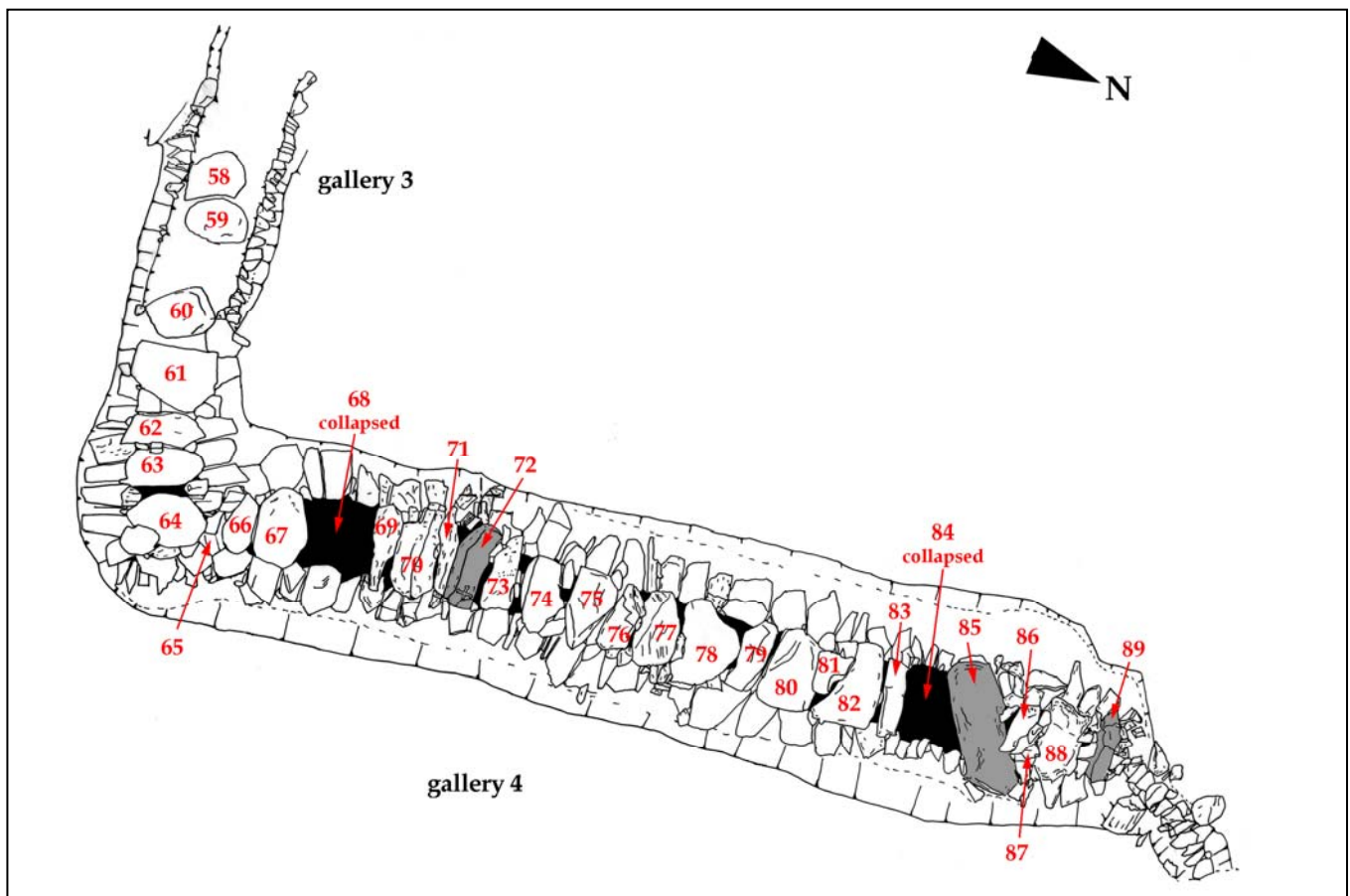


Figure 13. [c29] & [c31] capstones over galleries 3 and 4 with unique numbers (not to scale, for indication only; decorated capstones shaded)

**Context 29 (plate 23; figure 13)**

**Description: Capstones over gallery 3 & 4**

Thirty-two capstones covered galleries 3 & 4 (numbered 58-89, west to east to north). These ranged between 0.50m and 2.70m in length and between 0.30m and 1.20m wide. These were generally sandstone and siltstone slabs with one granite slab (65), one limestone slab (62) and one metamorphic rock (74).

**Context 30**

**Description: Natural**

This was a mid orangey brown sandy silt with patches of isolated shale outcrop.

**Context 31**

**Description: Collapsed capstones gallery 3**

There were three capstones which had collapsed naturally at the west end of gallery 3. These stones were numbered (58-60). These capstones lay above infill layer [c14] and were located beneath a later infill layer [c7].

**Context 32**

**Description: Deposit – upcast from sump cut [c19]**

This deposit consisted of a firm mid greenish grey sandy gravel. It was roughly circular in plan measuring 0.80m x 0.70m and was 0.20m high. It was located directly east of cut [c19].





Plate 1. [c3] fill over gallery 4, from south



Plate 2. [c4] fill over chamber 1, from west



Plate 3. Capstones [c5] & [c6] over galleries 1 & 2, from southeast



Plate 4. [c7] linear fill of gallery 3 connecting  
gallery 1 to gallery 4, from south





Plate 5. Linear feature [c9] to west of chamber 1, from west



Plate 6. Floor of gallery 1 [c10] from west



Plate 7. [c11] circular pit at west side of site, from northeast



Plate 8. Cut [c13], with fill [c11] excavated, from north



Plate 9. [c12] packing over galleries 3 & 4, from south





Plate 10. [c14] infill under capstones & upstanding portion of gallery 3 (arrowed), from west



Plate 11. Chamber 1 floor surface [c15], from west, featuring drop hole and step at top of plate



Plate 12. Gallery 2 floor surface [c16] from north



Plate 13. Pit [c18] in floor of gallery 2, from southwest



Plate 14. Sump/well [c19] in floor of gallery 2, from southwest





Plate 15. Wall niche [c20] in south wall of gallery 2, from east



Plate 16. [c21] floor surface in gallery 4, from north



Plate 17. Sump/well [c22] at west end of gallery 4



Plate 18. Sump/well [c23] at north end of gallery 3, from west

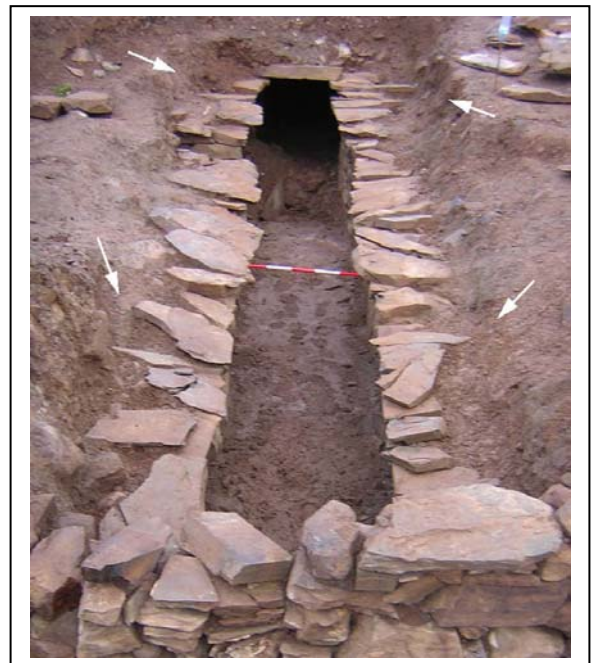


Plate 19. Upper portion of cut [c25] gallery 2 (arrowed), from south





Plate 20. [c26] cut for gallery 4 (arrowed), from north



Plate 21. Walls [c27] gallery 1, from east



Plate 22. Walls [c28] gallery 4, from  
southwest, air-vent arrowed



Plate 23. Capstones over galleries 3 & 4  
[c29], from southwest





Plate 24. Eastern end of gallery 1 from east, bracing socket (arrowed)



Plate 25. Lintelled doorway, from gallery 4 at north



Plate 26. Bolt holes on western jamb, with  
bracing sockets arrowed

Plate 27. Opposing bracing sockets on  
east wall of gallery 4 (arrowed)







Plate 28. Cross slab capstone (A010/001:29:1) *in situ*,  
from west



Plate 29. Four crosses (arrowed) evident on slab after removal of  
packing [c12], from east



Plate 30. Cross evident from  
souterrain interior (arrowed), once  
packing was removed



Plate 31. Cross inscribed slab (A010/001:29:2)



Plate 32. Close up of cross





Plate 33. Location of cross-inscribed slab A010/001:29:2



Plate 34. Location of capstone A010/001:29:3



Plate 35. Capstone (A010/001:29:3) showing megalithic art





Plate 36. Souterrain at Tateetra, from south



Plate 37. Souterrain at Tateetra with  
capstones removed, from southwest

Plate 38. Find No: A010/001:12:1 (Bead)  
and  
A010/001:10:2 (stick pin)  
Not to Scale



## 4. Interpretation of Stratigraphy

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### 4.1 Introduction

The souterrain is located in an elevated area, formerly pasture-land, south of the Castletown River (NGR 302587/309824). The site is located around chainage CH22360 at the western side of the roadtake for the Dundalk Western Bypass. The site was identified when an east to west orientated drainage trench cut into a chamber at the junction of Galleries 1 & 2. The southern & eastern side of the site had already been infilled with imported material up to 2m in depth. Infilling was removed by a mechanical excavator working under archaeological supervision. The infill was stripped back to reveal an east to west orientated gallery (Gallery 1) and a north to south running gallery (Gallery 2) which ran under the fence line lining the northern/western extent of the roadtake. The entire extent of gallery 1 was exposed to an entrance at east. Subsequent stripping to the east of gallery 1 revealed a linear earthen feature (Gallery 3) which ran in a roughly easterly direction and formed a right-angle with Another gallery (Gallery 4) extended northward from this right angle where it terminated at north. An area 45m east to west by 35m north to south was stripped in order to expose the full extent of the souterrain.

The souterrain was U-shaped in plan (figure 14; plates 36-37). All of the walls were dry-stone and consisted of roughly coursed shale overlying a basal stone foundation course of large stones set on edge. There were two distinct elements to the morphology of the souterrain. One element consisted of restricted passages incorporating galleries 1, 2 and chamber 1 and the second element consisted of the larger unrestricted passages, comprising galleries 3 and 4.

### 4.2 Gallery 1 (figs 14-15, 20-24, 35; plates 3, 6, 11, 24)

The cut [c25] for gallery 1 was dug directly into subsoil [c30]. The gallery was linear and ran in a roughly east to west direction, curving slightly westward and narrowing at east. The

western end of gallery 1 terminated in chamber 1 and the eastern end of the gallery was an entrance feature which almost directly faced the western end of gallery 3. The entrance feature consisted of a jamb stone at the terminus of the north wall. There was no corresponding jamb noted at the terminus of the south wall. A step feature (0.25m high) was located at the west end of the gallery which rose the floor level in the area, where a drophole into gallery 1 was located (plate 11). The entire extent of the gallery measured 25m long and had a basal width of 1m, narrowing to 0.80m wide toward the entrance. The walls [c27] were 1m high at south becoming higher in the centre of the gallery (1.10m high) and reached a decreasing height at the east from 0.90m to 0.70m at the entrance.

A bracing socket was positioned to the south of the jamb stone on the north side of the entrance to gallery 1 (plate 24). A wall led north from this jamb stone for approximately 1 metre. This appears to be evidence of an entrance feature leading into the souterrain complex from the north. It is presumed that the door would have spanned from a now missing jamb stone at the western end of gallery 3. The positioning of the bracing socket on the south side of the jamb suggests that door would have been bolted from the inside.

There was a basal deposit present on the floors of gallery 1 [c10]. This layer was not imported but a natural build-up of compressed subsoil caused by trampling. Fragments of a single Souterrain Ware vessel (find no: A010-001:10: 1) were recovered from this context in gallery 1, towards its western extremity at the bottom of the step leading to the drophole into gallery 2. This floor surface covered the entire length of the gallery and chamber 1 to a depth of approximately 0.10m. A copper alloy stick pin (A010-001: 10: 2) was recovered from this floor surface at the entrance to the gallery at the east. Charcoal samples (sample no. 3) were recovered from this floor surface.

This drophole feature was infilled with collapse from drainage works cutting chamber 1 at west. Once it was excavated, an opening to gallery 2, measuring 0.80m x 0.40m, was apparent in the floor against the north wall of gallery 1. The drop onto the floor of gallery 2 was 0.80m deep. A very flat capstone was located to the south of the drophole. It overlay another flat capstone and it may be that this stone was used to cover the opening from gallery 1. If the souterrain was defended from gallery 1 the drophole is a north-eastern group Class B trapdoor (Clinton 2001, 126), which meant it was sealed from within. This is in direct contrast to a north-eastern group Class A trapdoor which was sealed from without.

The walls of gallery 1 were slightly corbelled and roofed with forty capstones [c5]. Packing stones were evident over the cracks between capstones.

It has been suggested based on decorative evidence that the pottery is from later in the Early Christian period (Zajac 2006) and this seems to be borne out by the late 10<sup>th</sup> early 11<sup>th</sup> century AD date returned from charcoal in the floor surface of gallery 1 (Beta Analytic 2006).

### **4.3 Chamber 1 (figs 14-15, 21; plates 3, 11)**

Chamber 1 was located at the west end of gallery 1. The chamber was heavily denuded at its south side as it was cut by drainage works for the road. The chamber was roughly oval in shape measuring 1.75m north to south by 1.50m east to west. The original height of the chamber wall survived only at west and north. The wall [c27] of the chamber was 1.10m high and was slightly corbelled. The chamber was overlain by at least one capstone, while the remainder had collapsed. The cut [c25] for the chamber was only evident at west and was filled by [c4], a firm mottled greyish brown sandy silt with frequent inclusions of small and medium-sized stones. The majority of this infill was removed during drainage works which initially revealed the souterrain. This infill overlay capstones covering the chamber [c5].

### **4.4 Gallery 2 (figs 14-19; plates 3, 12-15, 19)**

Gallery 2 was positioned at a lower level than gallery 1 extending north through a drop hole from the west end of Gallery 1. It was 16m long and terminated in a sub-circular chamber which was heavily collapsed. Only the southernmost 9m of gallery 2 was exposed during the excavations as the remaining 7m was located beyond the fence line at north. Seventeen capstones covered the open portion of gallery 2. They were composed of sandstone and siltstone. The cut for the gallery [c25] was dug directly into subsoil [c30]. The gallery was entered through a drophole feature in the floor of the west end of gallery 1 (described above). The walls of gallery 2 were on average 1.10m high. Although the cut was not fully excavated the depth of the cut was on average 1.40m deep. The walls were lowest at the south toward the junction with gallery 1, where they were 0.80m high. The gallery was on average 1m wide at base and narrowed to the top to between 0.70m and 0.80m wide. There was a 0.40m drop in floor level from south to north. There was a 0.10m deep basal deposit present on the floor of gallery 2, [c16].

There were two features dug into the floor of gallery 2 under the trample floor surface [c16]. The features included a filled circular pit (plate 13) and a sump or well (plate 14). Sumps were constructed to avoid flooding within souterrains. The circular pit [c19] was filled by [c17], a loose dark greyish brown stony clay. It contained occasional flecks of charcoal (sample no. 5) and fragments of cattle bones (sample no. 14). It may have functioned as a

storage pit. A date range of early 11<sup>th</sup> to mid 13<sup>th</sup> century AD date was returned from the charcoal in the pit (Beta Analytic 2006). Approximately 0.25m to the north of [c19], a sump/well [c18] was dug into the natural to a depth of 0.70m. Immediately to the north of this cut there was a deposit of material [c32], which was presumably the material that had been removed in the excavation of the sump. It is probable that the initial excavation of both features would have taken place after full construction of the gallery, whilst the souterrain was in use.

A wall niche 0.65m high by 0.55m wide by 0.60m deep was located in the east facing wall of gallery 2 (plate 15). The niche [c20] was cut into the natural subsoil with a large stone forming the base. The sides were stone lined and the rear wall of the niche was earth cut. The niche was capped with three long stones, which were set at right angles to capstones over the gallery. Pit [c19] was located less than 1m north of this niche so it is possible that both features were associated.

## 4.5 Gallery 3 (figs 14-16, 25-26, 36; plates 4, 9-10, 18, 23)

The cut [c26] for galleries 3 and 4 was 'L'-shaped. It led eastward for 10m from the entrance to gallery 1 and turned sharply northward through a doorway feature into gallery 4 which ran for 17m. It was dug into the subsoil [c30] with a small section cut into bedrock. This gallery was considerably bigger in section than the others. The walls [c28] were built in a similar style to the other galleries, a basal foundation of large stones with shale walls. Gallery 3 measured 10m long and was severely denuded at west. The intact walls were on average 1.50m high. The gallery was on average 1.50m wide at base and 1m wide at the top. Given the gallery was not fully excavated the estimated depth of the cut was 1.70m.

Gallery 3 was initially identified as a linear earth filled feature (plate 4), which lead from the entrance to gallery 1 to the capstones at the junction of where gallery 3 turned northward into gallery 4. A 1.45m deep deposit [c7] was found to overlie three collapsed capstones [c31], which in turn overlay an uneven deposit [c14], which appeared to partially infill the intact portion of the gallery to the east. A complete articulated skeleton of a young sheep/goat [c24] was found resting on this context, inside the intact portion of the gallery. [c7] was over cut at south during excavations to reveal the entrance to gallery 1. Upon excavation of this infill material the ruined remains of side walls lining the cut were evident. The remains of a basal stone course was present on the south side of gallery 1 entrance and led to gallery 3. It opposed the entrance feature to gallery 1. Only the basal stones of the walls were evident at east. The ruined portion of the walls reached heights of between 0.60m and 0.80m. There was a 0.90m drop in floor level from west to east. The cut [c26] was 2.5m wide at the top.

It appears that [c14] represented an initial silting up of the gallery prior to the roof collapsing. The absence of capstones at the west end of the gallery may indicate that this portion of the gallery was not roofed with stone. However, there were no postholes found in the floor of the gallery or timber deposits in the infill (burnt or otherwise) to suggest a timber roof. It may be that a number of capstones and upper portions of the walls were taken after the souterrain went out of use. It is obvious from the drop in floor level and the height of the cut that the west end of this portion of the gallery was much shallower than the rest of the gallery. A circular sump/well [c23] was located in the floor the gallery at east. It had been partially silted in with floor surface [c21]. Fragments of horse and cattle bones were recovered from the floor surface. Charcoal from [c21] returned a date range from the mid-11<sup>th</sup> century to the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century AD. Charcoal was also recovered from both infill layers in gallery 3. The infill [c7] over the collapsed capstones returned a date range of the late 8<sup>th</sup> to late 10<sup>th</sup> centuries AD and [c14] infill under the collapsed capstones returned a date from the mid 7<sup>th</sup> to the late 8<sup>th</sup> centuries AD.

#### **4.6 Gallery 4 (figs 14-16, 27-34, 37; plates 9, 16, 22-23, 25-27)**

At the east end of gallery 3 a door feature led into the northward-running gallery 4. The doorway consisted of two vertical jambstones (igneous granite) and lintel stone which lay across an interface stone course lying on the jambstones (plate 25). The opening measured 1.50m high by 1m wide. The western door jamb had two depressions interpreted as bolt holes on the north side of the jamb at the top and bottom. The opposite door jamb had no cut features. Immediately north of the door jambs two opposing bracing sockets were noted in the east and west walls of the gallery indicating that the door would have been braced from the north side of the gallery (that is from inside gallery 4, plates 26-27). It is unknown what type of door would have been used, however, the boltholes in one of the jambstones would suggest a swinging door secured with two bolts; an upper and lower one. In this arrangement the door could have been secured onto the opposing jamb although no archaeological evidence was found as to how this was precisely done.

The gallery was 17.5m long and was 1.60m high. Only the upper portions of the construction cut [c26] for the gallery was exposed and excavated and it measured 4m wide (plate 20). The estimated depth was 2.30m. The walls of the gallery were on average 2m wide at the bottom narrowing to an average width of 1.25m at the top. There was a 0.80m drop in floor surface from south to north. A second roughly circular sump/well [c22] was located at the north end of the gallery cut into the floor. As with sump/well [c23] the trampled floor surface [c21] had silted into the sump. This floor surface overlay the entire length of galleries 3 & 4. Mid-11<sup>th</sup> to

mid-13<sup>th</sup> century AD dates were returned from charcoal in this floor surface, which also contained the remains of horse and cattle bones. A 5.75m length of the gallery (immediately north of the door way) was cut into bedrock, which formed the lowest part of the walls in this area.

An air-vent was located in the northern end wall of gallery 4, some 1.5m above the gallery floor level. The air-vent was drystone-built and led from the upper course of the end wall. This feature was exposed for a length of 3.5m. The entire extent of the air-vent could not be exposed due to the presence of subsurface ESB cables in the area. The air-vent was 0.50m wide, lined with stone and covered with small capstones. It had an internal opening measuring 0.15m<sup>2</sup>. The air-vent was recorded and left *in situ* (plate 22).

The capstones over galleries 3 & 4 [c29] were larger than those over the other galleries. There were thirty-two, all either sandstone or siltstone except one of metamorphic rock. Two were reused cross slabs (A010-001:29:1 & A010-001:29:2), and a third capstone was inscribed with Neolithic megalithic art (A010-001:29:3) (figure 34; plates 28-35). It is possible that stones from elements of archaeological complex **LH007-001---**, across the Castletown River to the north of the souterrain, could have been incorporated into the souterrain, although this is speculative.

A 0.35m deep layer of packing stones [c12], rested over the cracks of the capstones and along the east and west sides of the galleries. [c12] was 1.50m wide and ran the length of the gallery. A stone bead (find no. 12:1) was recovered from [c12] and has a general date from the latter part of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium AD. This layer of packing was then overlaid by [c3], a 0.60m deep mottled deposit of firm gravely silt which appeared to be the deliberate backfill sealing layer over the gallery. This backfill layer contained fragments of horse, cattle, pig and sheep/goat bones.

## 4.7 Surface Features (plates 5, 7-8)

There were two surface features found in the area stripped around the souterrain. A linear cut [c9] located just to the west of gallery 2 could be the remains of an agricultural furrow (plate 5). A circular pit [c13] 0.65m in diameter and 0.15m deep was found approximately 20m north of gallery 1. It was filled by [c11], a burnt clayey silt ranging in colour from dark brownish black to dark orangey red. This contained occasional small fragments of charcoal from which an early 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> century AD date range was obtained. It is unclear what the function of this pit was. There was no evidence of *in situ* burning and on excavation the pit was very shallow (plates 7 and 8).





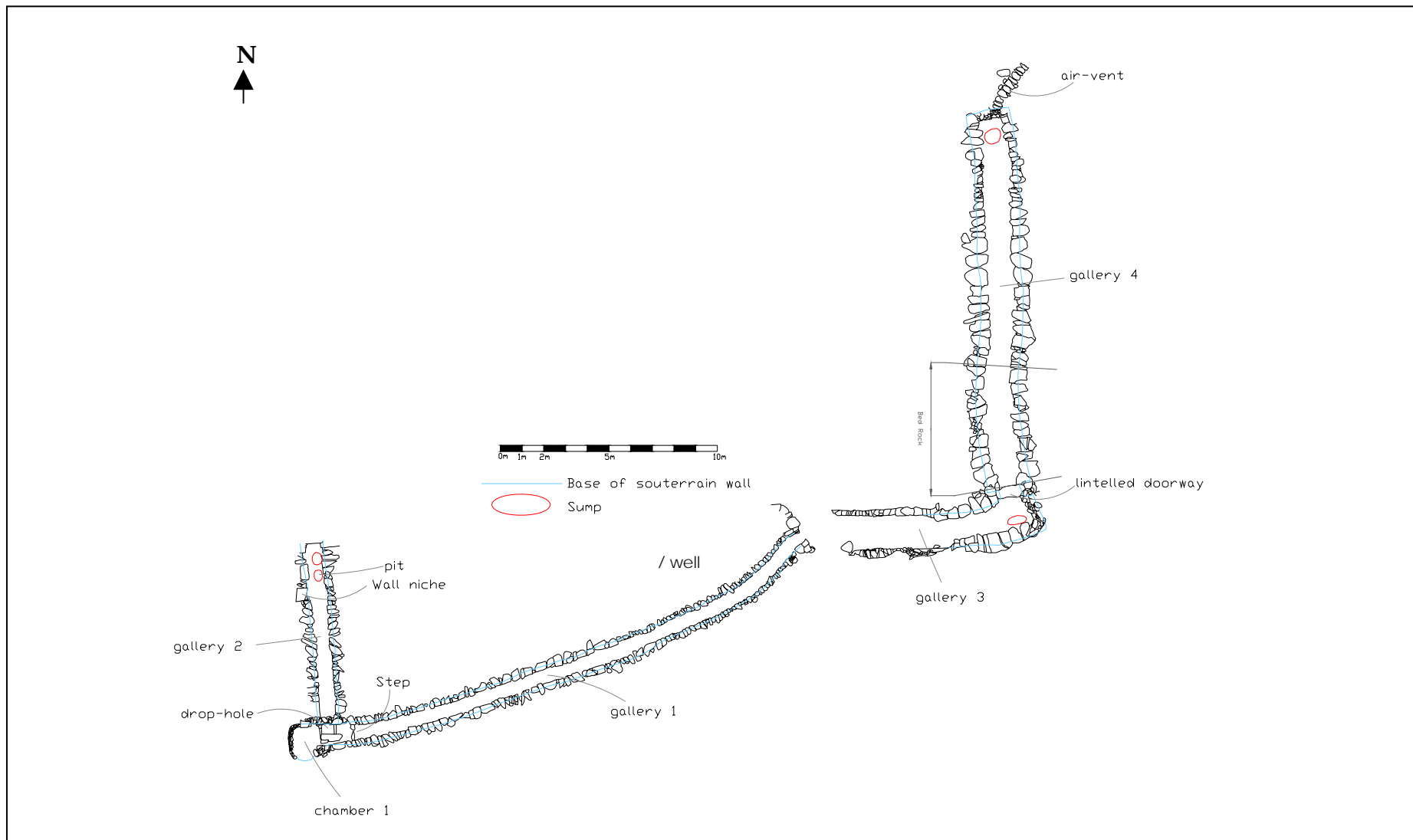


Figure 14. Plan of souterrain with capstones removed, showing structural elements (Grid Point solutions with additions)

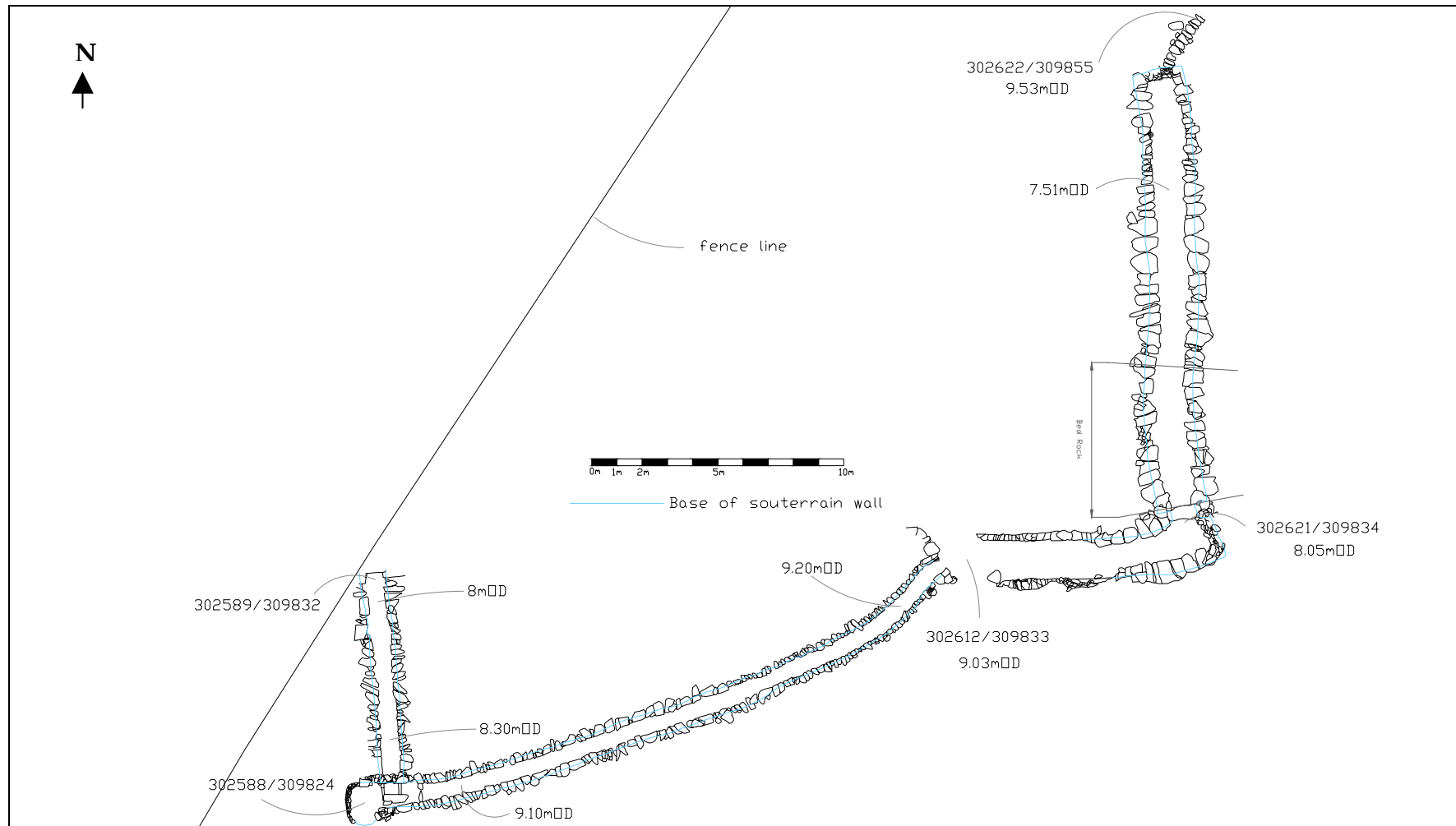


Figure 15. Plan of souterrain with National Grid & Ordnance Datum References (Grid Point solutions with additions)

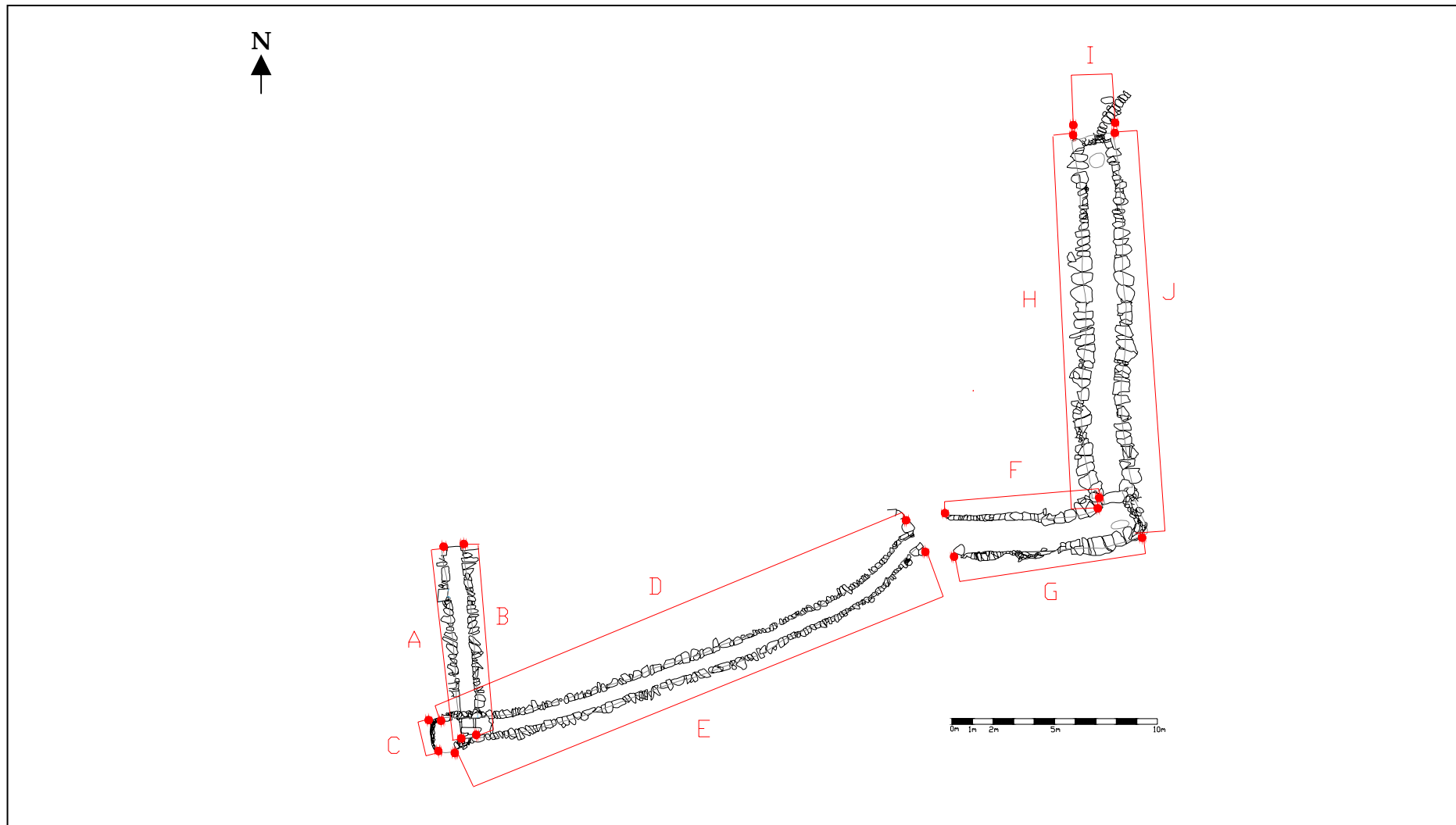
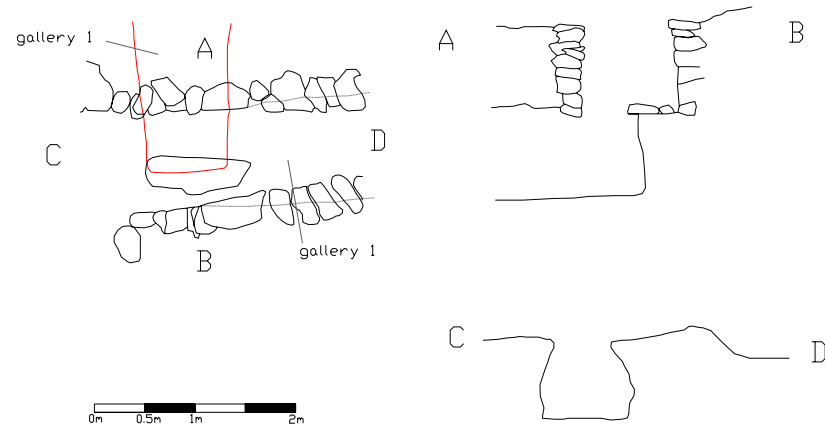
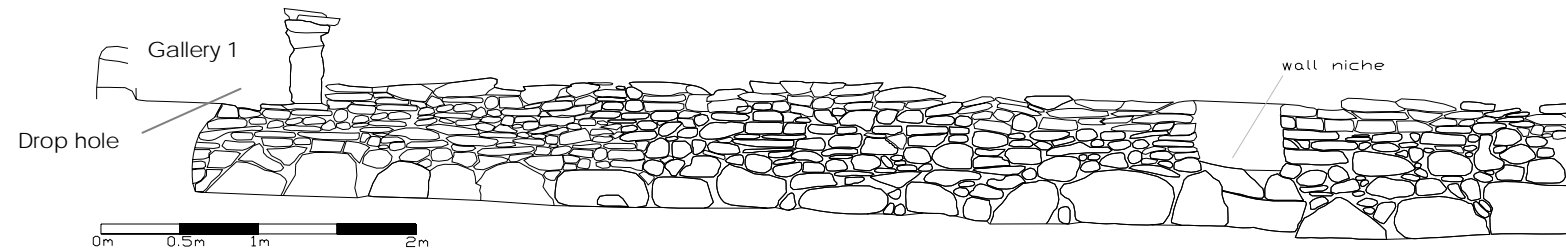


Figure 16. Plan of souterrain showing wall elevation locations (Grid Point solutions with additions)



**Figure 17. Plan of drophole feature in gallery 1 with sections**



→ North

**Figure 18. Wall A, west wall of gallery 2 (Grid Point solutions with additions)**



Figure 19. Wall B elevation, east wall of gallery 2 (Grid Point solutions with additions)

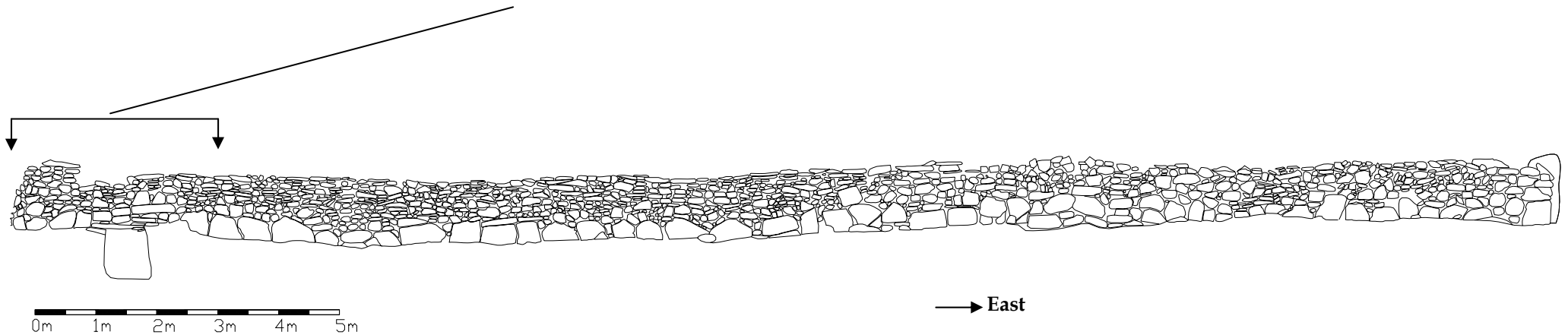
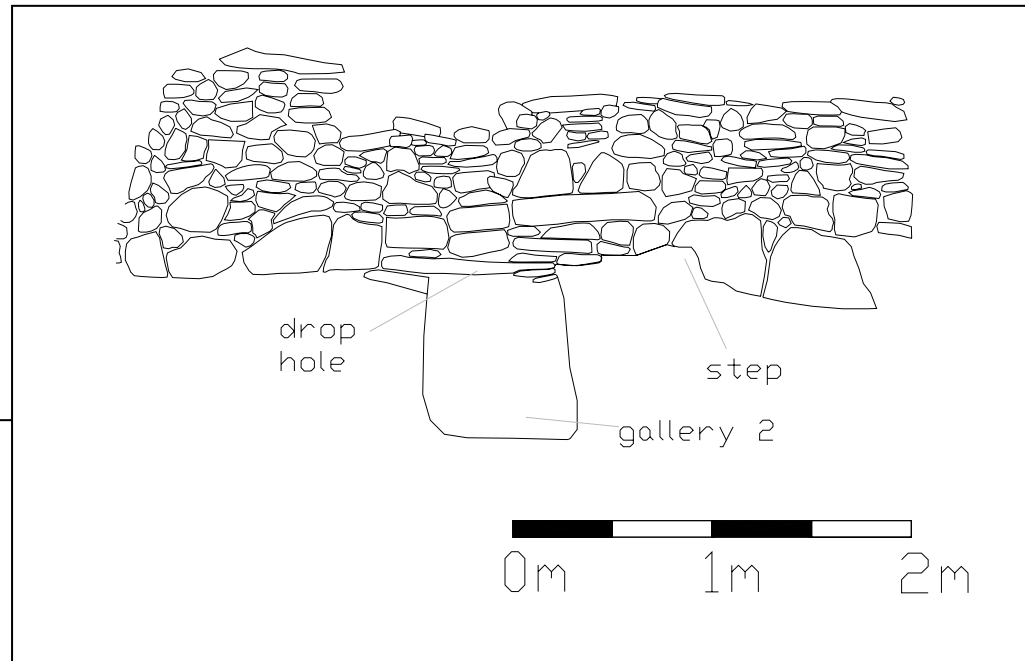


Figure 20. Wall D, north wall of gallery 1, with step and drop hole detail (Grid Point solutions with additions)

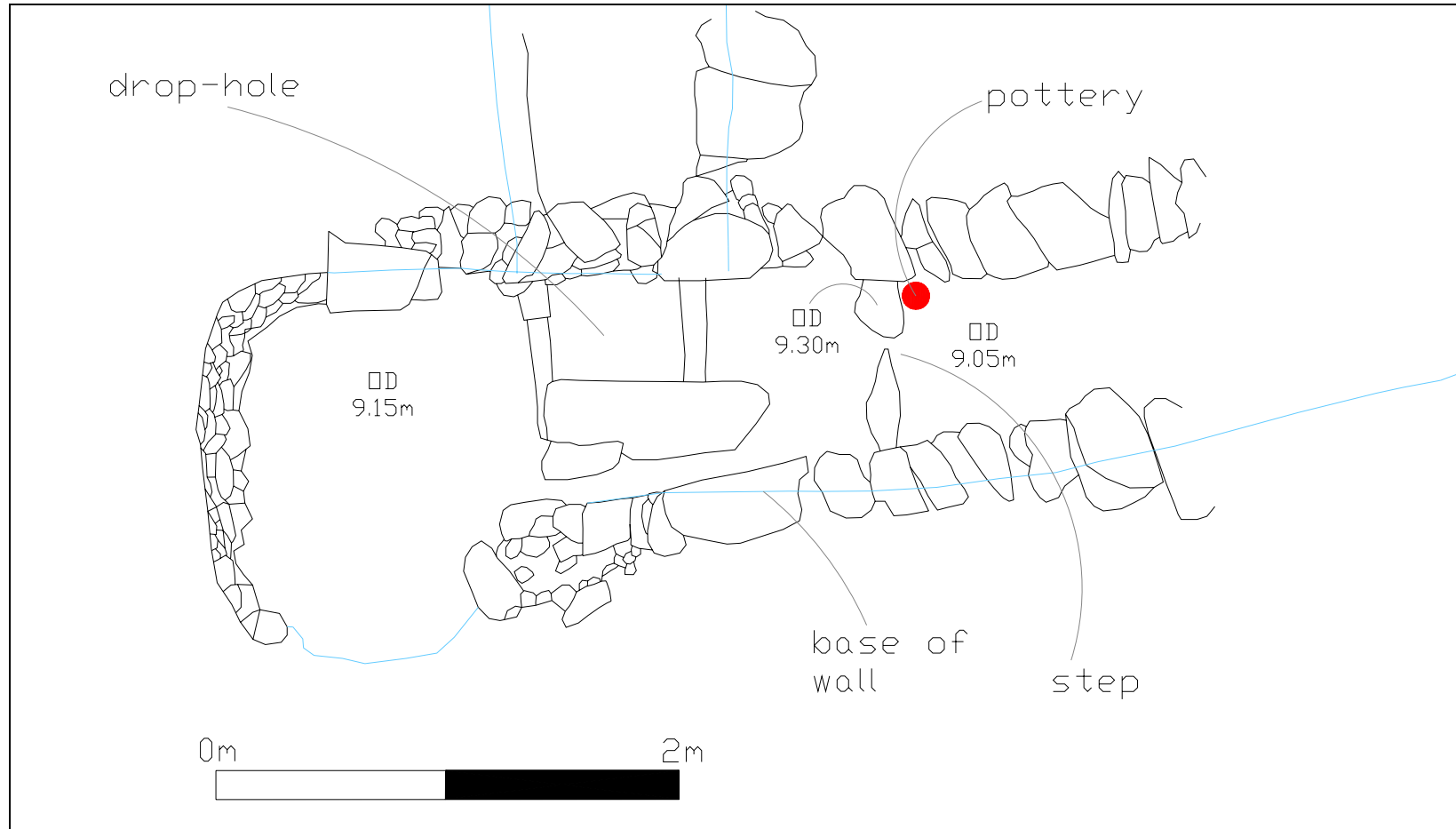


Figure 21. Plan of chamber 1 at west end of gallery 1, showing drop-hole/trapdoor into gallery 2 and location of pottery fragments (10:1) (Grid Point solutions with additions)

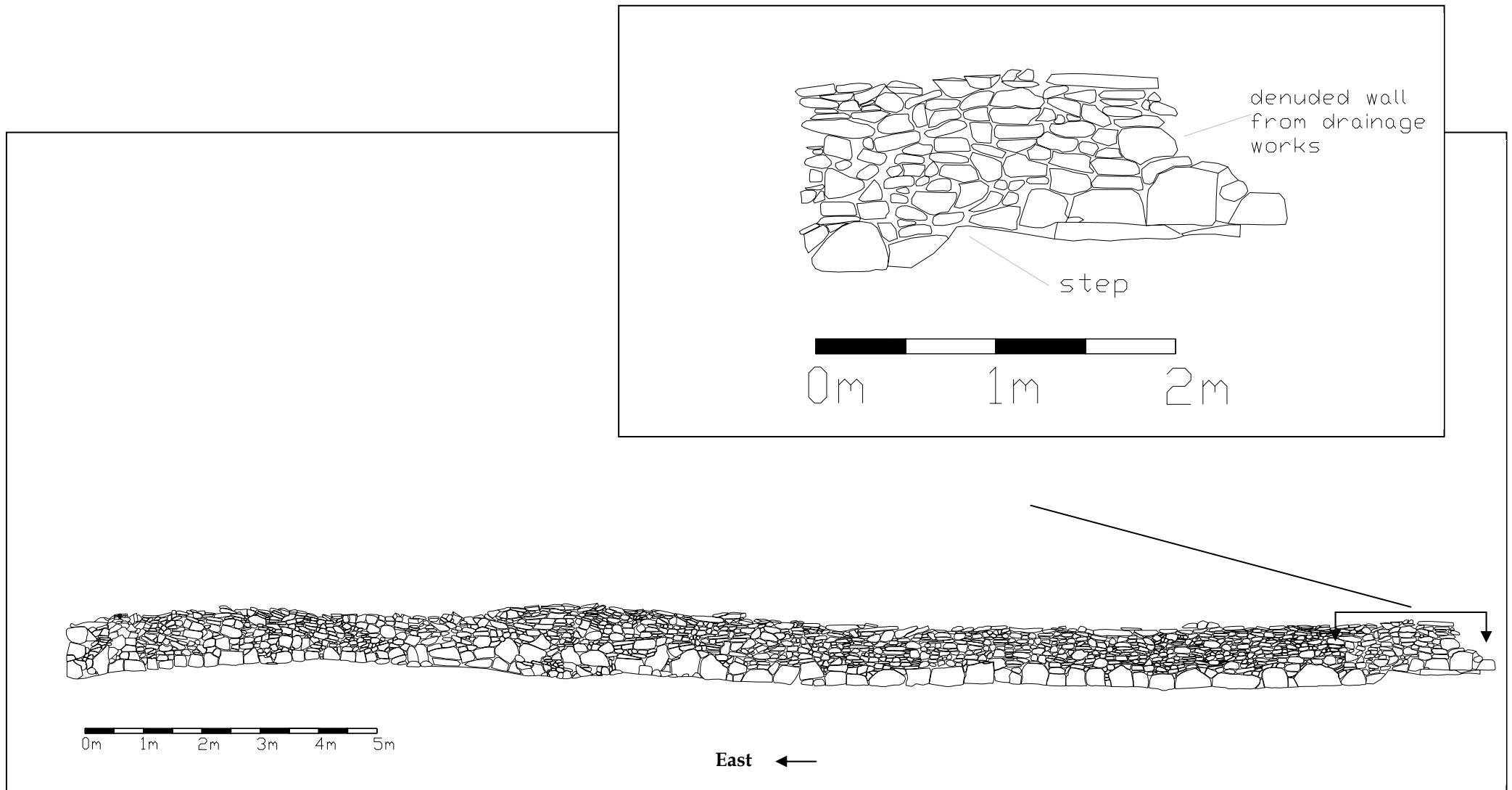


Figure 22. Wall E, south wall of gallery 1 with close up of step (Grid Point solutions with additions)



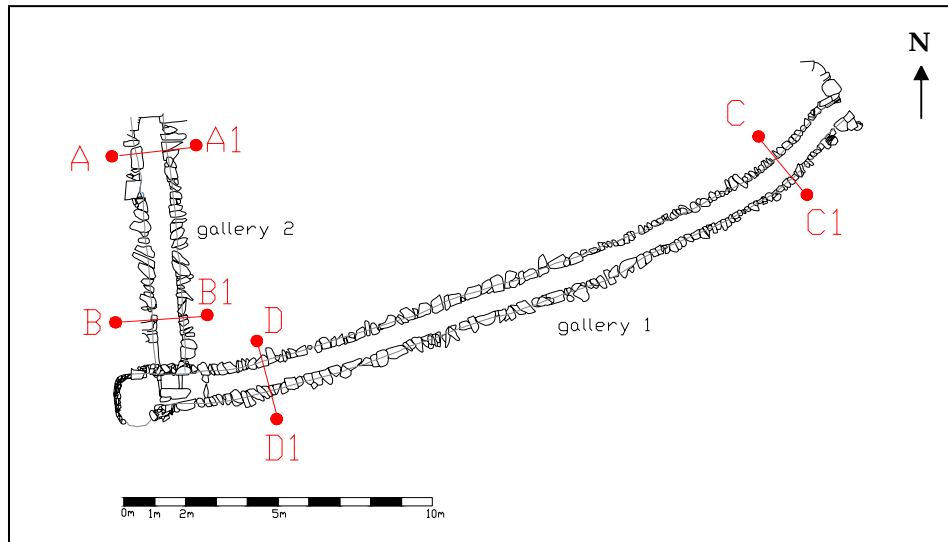


Figure 23. Galleries 1 & 2 showing section locations (Grid Point solutions with additions)

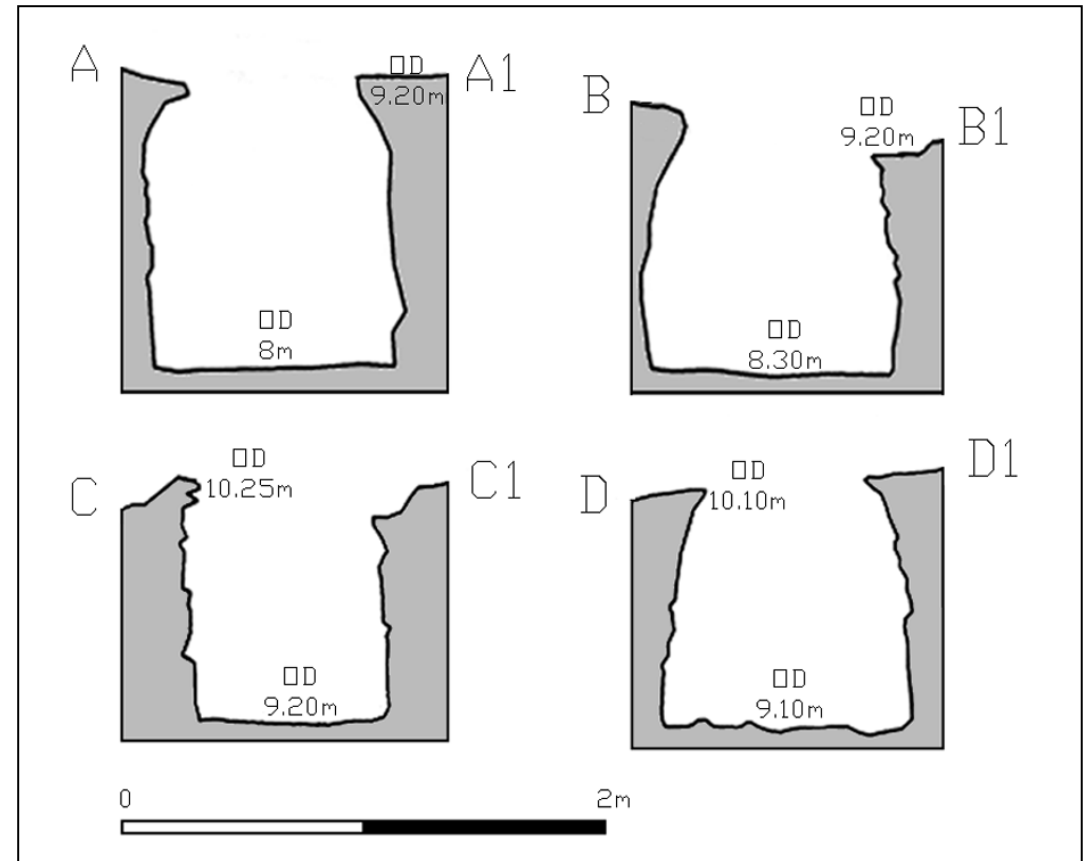


Figure 24. Gallery wall sections (see fig. 21 for locations)

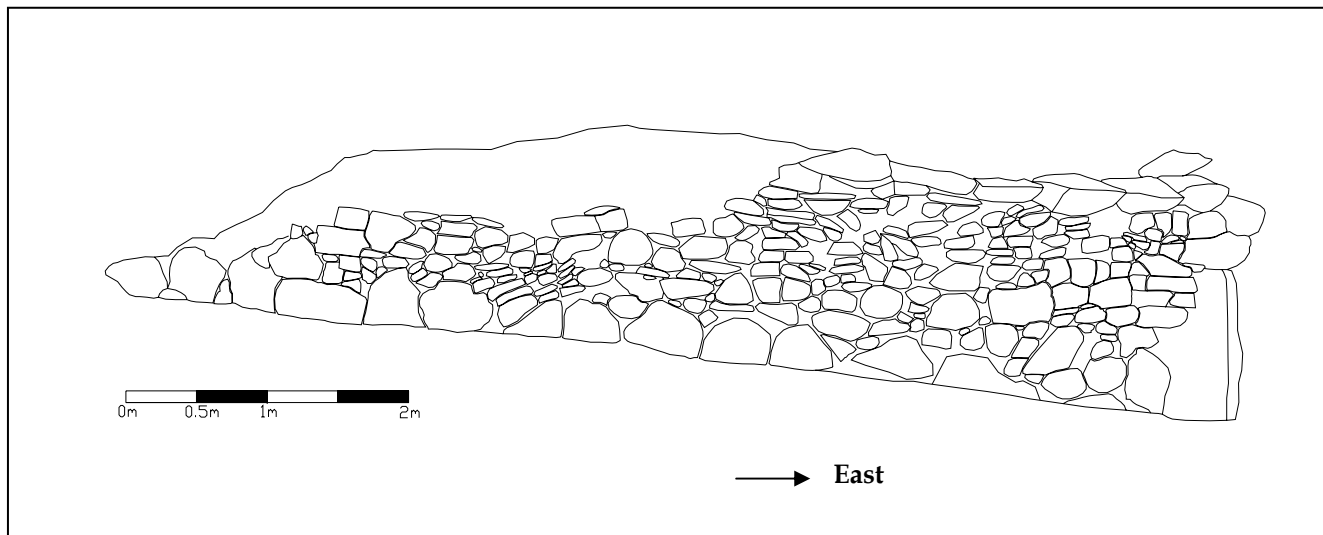
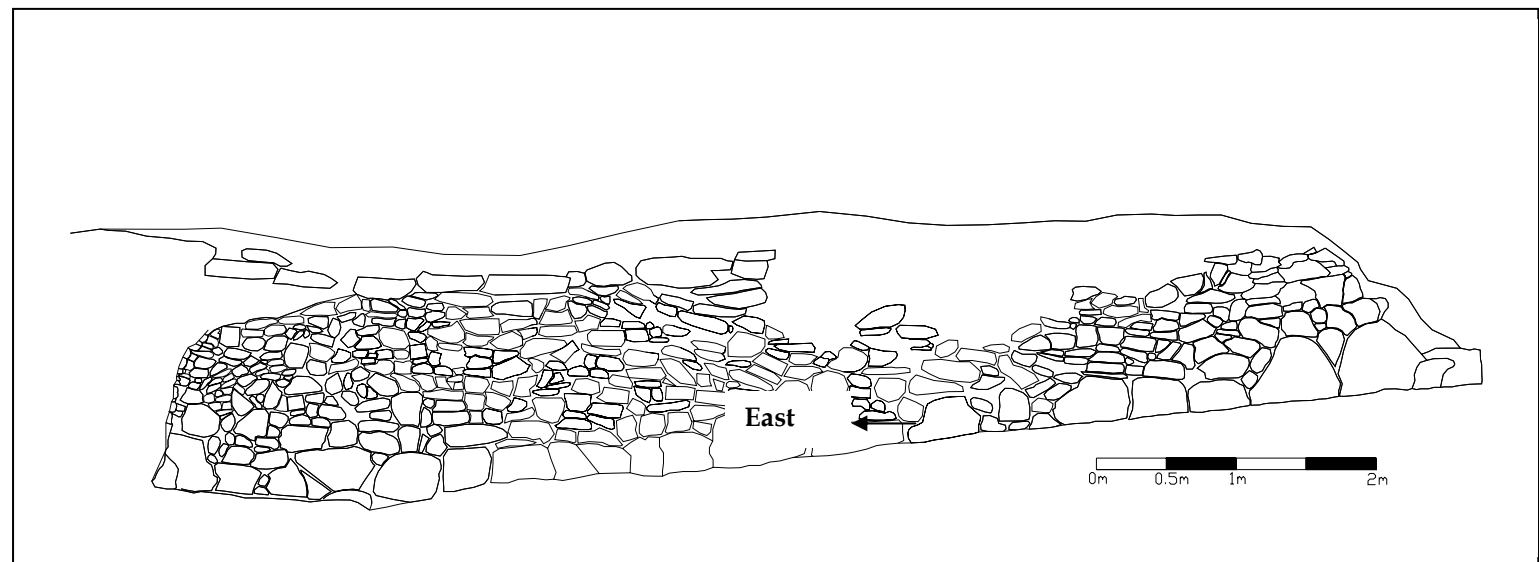


Figure 25. Wall F elevation, north wall of gallery 3 (Grid Point solutions with additions)

Figure 26. Wall G elevation, south wall of gallery 3 (Grid Point solutions with additions)



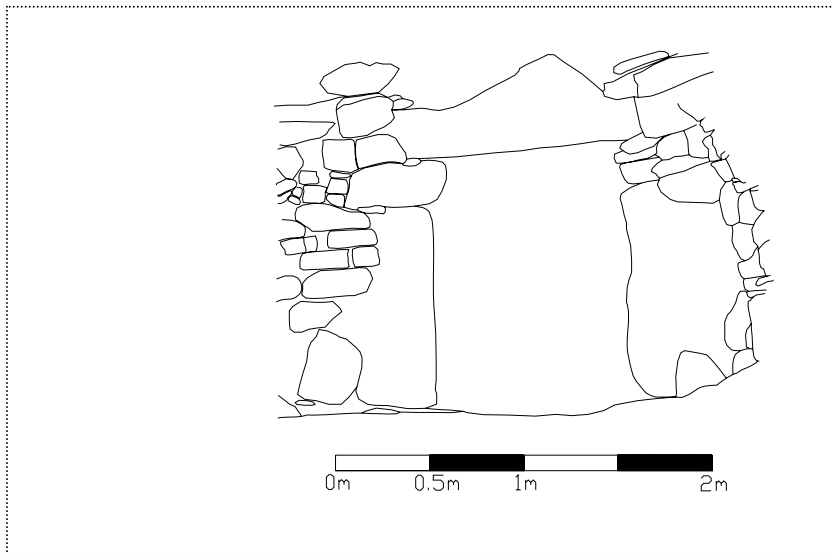


Figure 27. South facing elevation of lintelled doorway at junction between gallery 3 & gallery 4

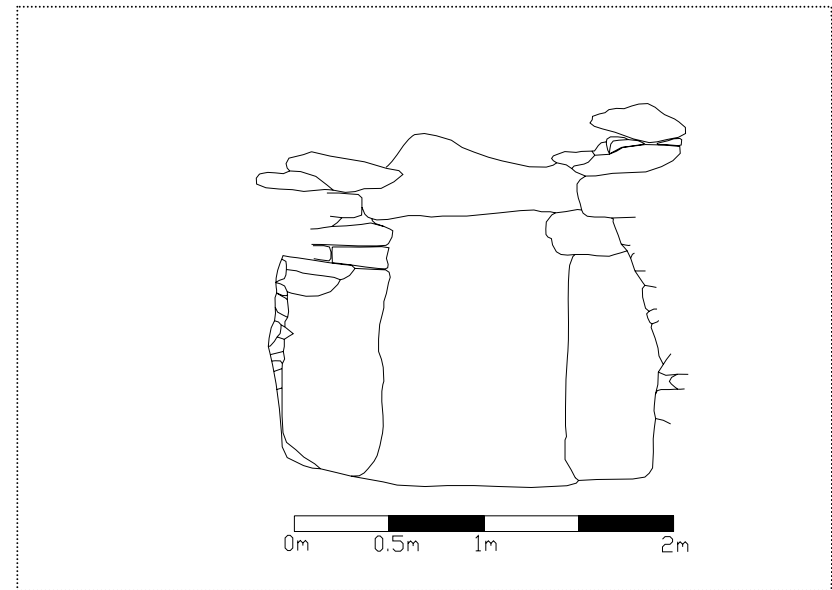


Figure 28. North facing elevation of lintelled doorway at junction between gallery 3 & gallery 4

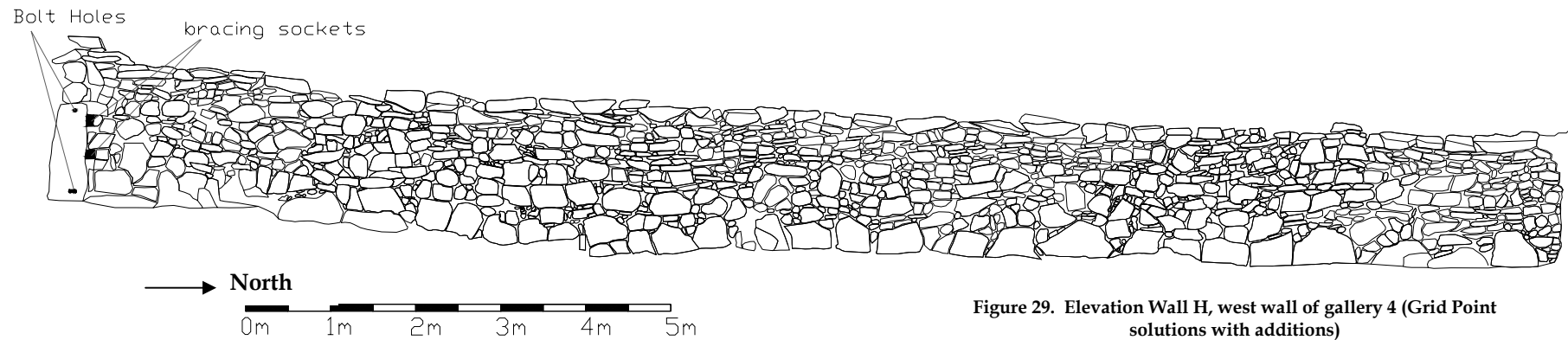


Figure 29. Elevation Wall H, west wall of gallery 4 (Grid Point solutions with additions)

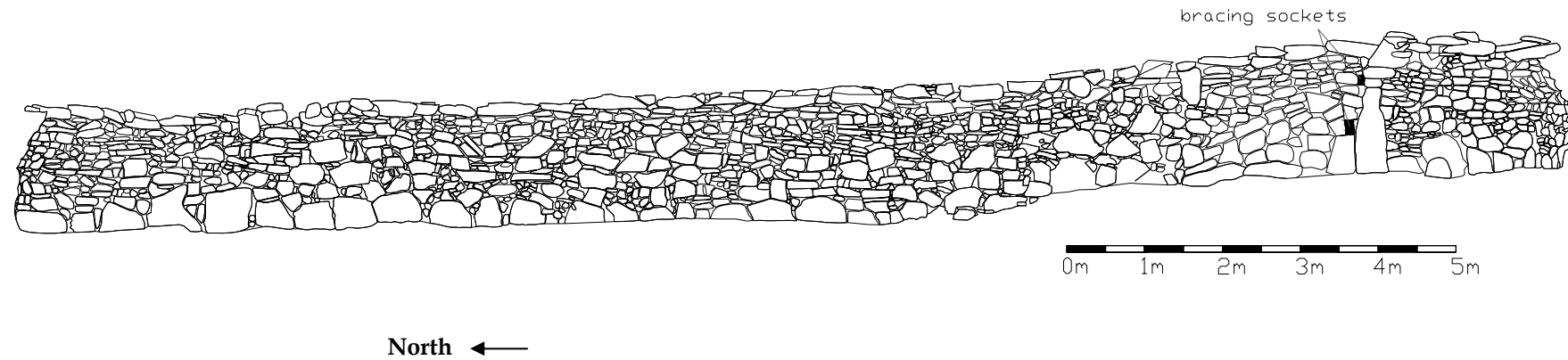


Figure 30. Elevation of Wall J, east wall of gallery 4 with door jamb (Grid Point solutions with additions)

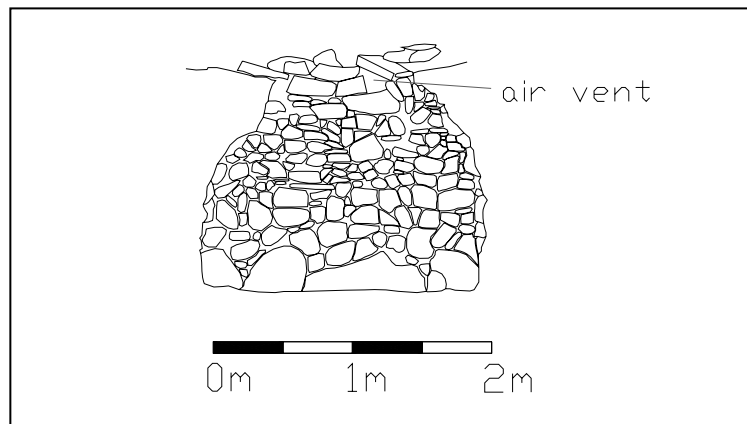


Figure 31. Wall I elevation, north/end wall of gallery 4 (Grid Point solutions with additions)

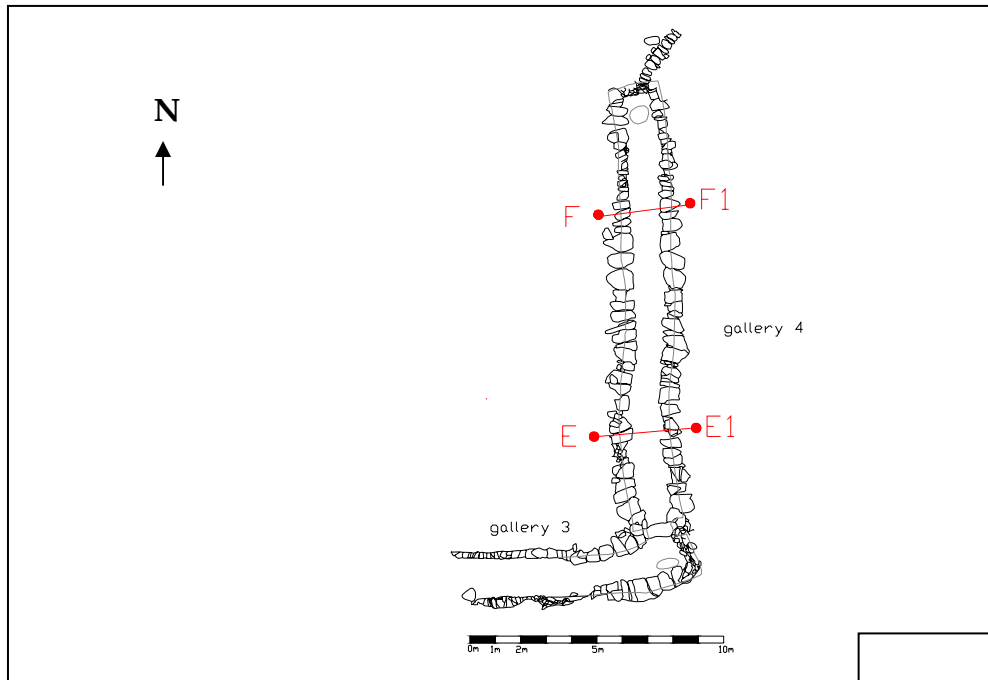
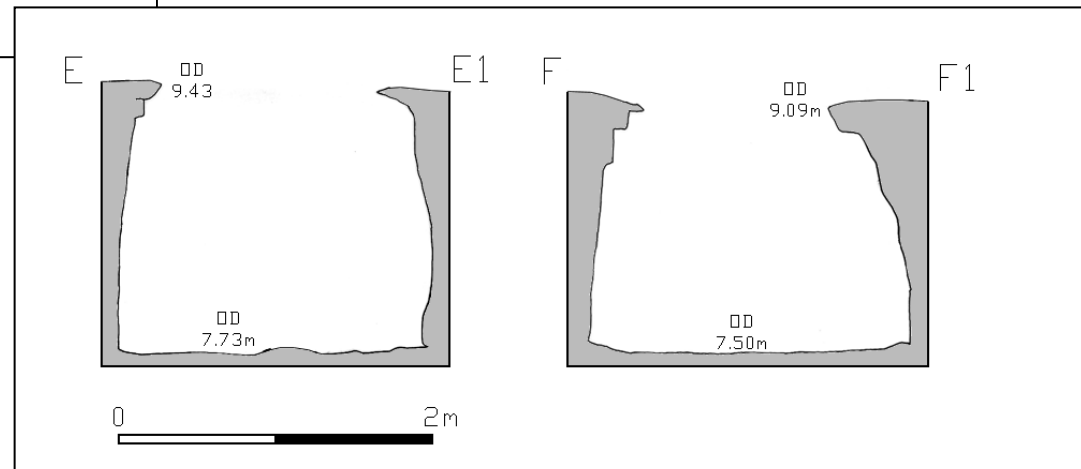


Figure 32. Gallery 4 section locations (Grid Point solutions with additions)

Figure 33. Wall sections in gallery 4, see fig. 32 for locations (Grid Point solutions with additions)



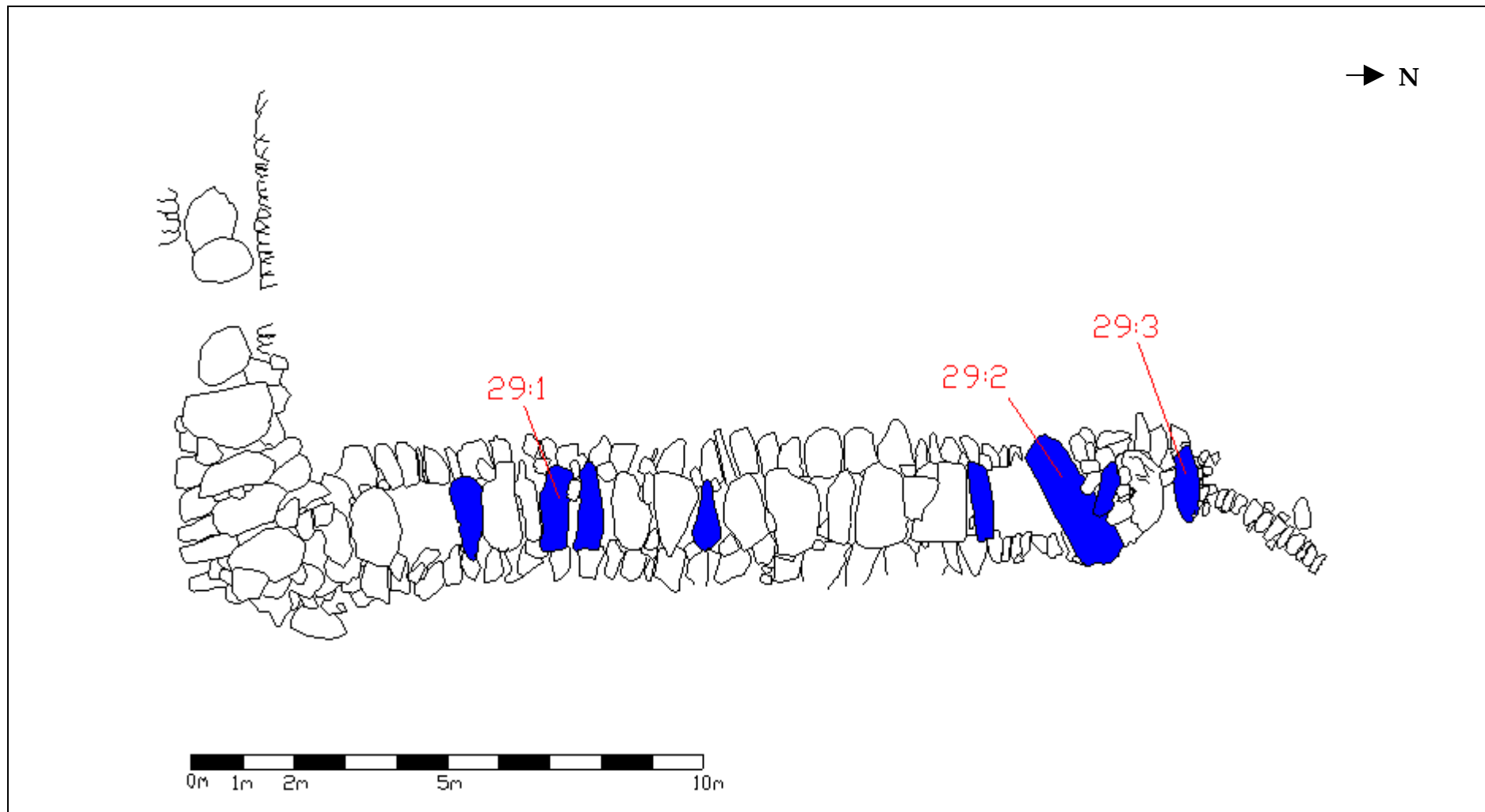


Figure 34. Plan of gallery 4 showing locations of decorated capstones (numbered) & capstones retained by Dundalk Museum (in blue; 9<sup>th</sup> capstone collapsed into gallery) (Grid Point solutions with additions)

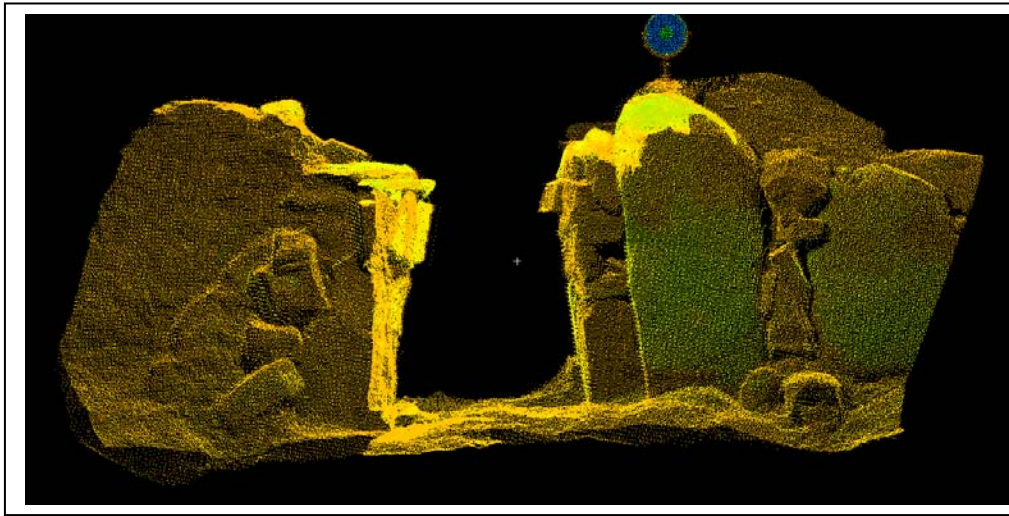


Figure 35. Point cloud image of north facing entrance to gallery 1, from east (Gridpoint solutions Ltd)

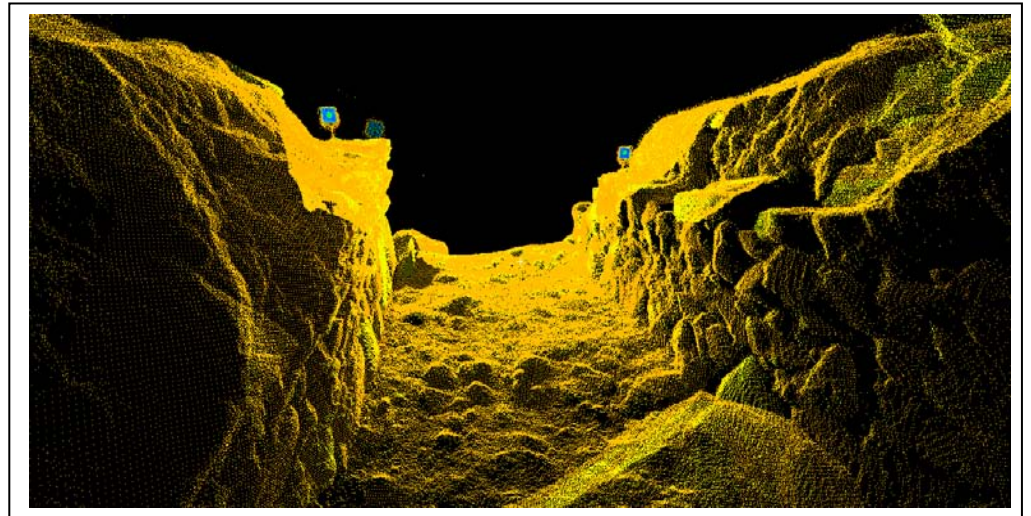


Figure 36. Point cloud view of gallery 3, from east (Gridpoint solutions Ltd)

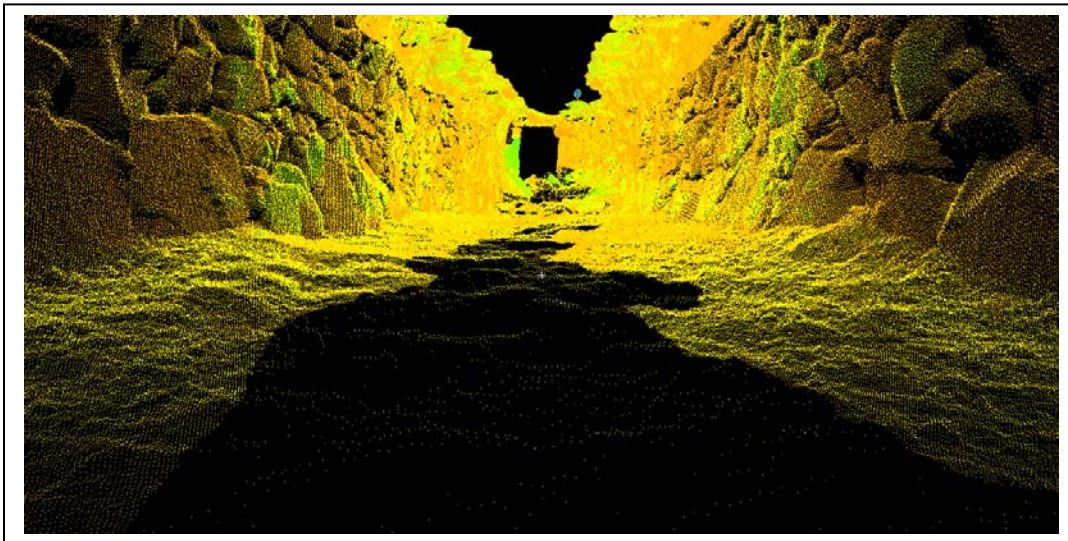


Figure 37. Point cloud view of gallery 4, from north (Gridpoint solutions Ltd)





## 5. Artefacts

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### 5.1 Animal Bone (summarised from Lynch 2005)

Burnt and unburnt animal bone was recovered from the site at Tateetra. The animals represented in the assemblage included horse, cattle, pig, sheep/goat and an oyster shell fragment. Analysis suggested that the animals were used as a food source. The adult horse and cattle bones suggested that these animals were used for food once their use as breeding, milk producing or traction/riding animals had ceased. The presence of an oyster shell indicated a variety in the diet of the souterrain users and the exploitation of the natural nearby maritime resource.

Sheep/goat bone from the trench fill overlying the capstones of galleries 3 and 4 had butchery marks. Other bones recovered from this fill were horse, cattle and pig. In the packing stones immediately beneath this fill further evidence of cattle and pig bones were noted as well as an oyster shell fragment.

The pit in the floor of gallery 2 contained cattle bone fragments.

The bones of horse and cattle were recovered from the floor surface of galleries 3 and 4.

The almost complete skeleton of a young sheep/goat was recovered overlying collapsed material inside gallery 3 overlying the collapsed material in the gallery. This collapsed material contained cattle and sheep/goat bones.

### 5.2 Pottery (summarised from Zajac 2006)

Fragments of pottery from a single pot were recovered from the floor of gallery 2. It appears to be Irish coarse ware known as 'Souterrain Ware'. From analysis it is likely that the walls of

the pot would have been slightly flared at the top. Decoration was in the form of an incised groove, which ran vertically, from the edge of the rim to a cordon of square rosettes punctuated around the neck of the vessel. Decoration was confined to the rim and upper body area of the vessel. The blackened nature of the sides of the pot exterior indicated that the vessel had been placed in a fire at some time and it is likely that the vessel functioned as a container for transfer or storage.

An exact date cannot be assigned to the pot but Souterrain Ware is dated to from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> centuries AD. According to Ryan (1973) there is a stylistic development from plain to decorated vessels. The decoration on the pot would point to the later stages of stylistic development which Zajac suggests may indicate a later date within the Early Christian period, (or early medieval period).

### 5.3 Stick Pin

A copper alloy stick pin (10:2) was located on the floor surface at the east end of gallery 1 near the entrance. Based on O’Rahilly’s typology (1998) the stick pin appears to be a class 11, barely differentiated pin. The date range for this type is between late 11<sup>th</sup> to mid 13<sup>th</sup> century AD. Although the pin cannot date the construction of the gallery, it does show activity at the souterrain at that time.

### 5.4 Stone Bead

A perforated white bead (12:1) was recovered from the packing over gallery 3. There are eight instances of beads occurring at souterrains in Ireland (Clinton 2001, 80). They vary in form from blue glass, amber, polished stone and horse tooth and have a general date of the latter centuries of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium AD (*ibid.*). Due to the small size of beads they can easily be intrusive finds, which makes dating problematic.

### 5.5 Cross-inscribed Stones (summarised from Ó Carragáin 2007)

There were two cross-inscribed slabs reused as capstones at Tateetra. One slab (29:1) contained five equal-armed crosses on five different faces of the stone. The stone measures 1.57m long by 0.50m wide and is on average 0.40m thick. A large cross-motif is present on the broadest face of the stone with small crosslets located on three remaining faces and the upper surface of the stone. There are thin, incised lines extending from the edge of the stone at its broadest face. They correspond to the ogham letters ‘T N’ but the pillar never had a full

inscription. It is suggested by Ó Carragáin that the incisions were made by landowners reinforcing their tenure.

Two oval hollows are found in the narrow face of the stone where the incised lines occur. Oval hollows are known from other cross-slabs and they are believed to have functioned as receptacles for the insertion of wooden horizontal arms. Ó Carragáin believes that the Tateetra hollows are too shallow for this.

The stone is slightly weathered, indicating that it was exposed to the elements for a time. Although originally thought to have been an early altar, the fact that the horizontal arms of the main cross are not parallel with the upper surface of the slab meant that the upper surface would have been sloping. Therefore, Ó Carragáin suggests that the stone was originally a pillar stone with an allusion to an altar.

The second stone (29:2) was a large slab with a small, simple incised Latin cross, located 0.20m from one end of the stone. The stone is 2.70m long by 0.85m wide and has a maximum thickness of 0.17m. The size of the stone has prompted Ó Carragáin to suggest that the stone was a boundary or wayside marker possible delimiting an ecclesiastical territory.

Both stones probably originated from nearby ecclesiastical sites. The adjoining townlands of Killin and Kilcurry contain ecclesiastical sites. In addition to this the recently excavated Early Medieval site at Balriggeran is located c.1km northeast of the site (Delaney and Roycroft 2003). **LI007-011 --**, the site of a holy well, lies 200-300m east of the Tateetra souterrain. Ó Carragáin has suggested that the stones need not have been transported from far away as they may have been isolated satellite monuments. He further notes that minor devotional foci were common in the medieval landscape.

According to Clinton (2001) there are only six recorded examples of cross-inscribed slabs at souterrains in the country. These are at Drumeeny, Co. Antrim (2 slabs); Glencolumcille, Co. Donegal (4 slabs); Aghacarrible, Co. Kerry (1 slab) and Coumeenoole North, Co. Kerry (1 slab). There is a theory (O’Rahilly 1946; Warner 1980) that the use of cross-slabs in the building of souterrains was an attempt to remove the evil associated with being underground. While this possibility cannot be ruled out, at Tateetra it should be noted that none of the crosses on the slabs was clearly visible inside the souterrain. Neither were they placed in strategic locations like chambers or entrances. In this case it would then appear that the crosses were not of primary importance to the builders of Tateetra.

Warner (1979) has noted that the use of cross-inscribed slabs in the construction of souterrains would suggest that they were taken from their original place well after the demise of the ecclesiastical sites to which they belonged. He further notes that the cross-inscribed slabs found in souterrains have dated to the 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> centuries AD but that the demise of ecclesiastical sites started as early as the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD (*ibid.*), which might explain their use at Tateetra. Unfortunately the Tateetra cross-forms cannot be dated closely within the early medieval period (400AD -1100AD) and so they do not provide a useful *terminus post quem* for the construction of the souterrain (Ó Carragáin 2007).

## 5.6 Megalithic Panel (summarised from O'Connor 2007)

A reused stone featuring megalithic art (29:3) was employed as the final capstone at the north end of gallery 3 at Tateetra. It was set on edge over the souterrain (as it appears in plate 35) with the decorated surface facing north. The panel is irregularly-shaped measuring 1.45m long by 0.45m wide by 0.40m deep and is composed of arkosic sandstone. The design comprised lozenge and triangles with nested or boxed penannular 'U' forms, some of which are a pointed 'V' form, with radial lines. It is likely that the design was pecked using a sharply pointed stone implement and a mallet. The irregular shape of the stone combined with the fresh nature of the recently exposed surfaces suggested that the megalithic panel was originally larger and may have been reworked for inclusion in the souterrain. The pinkish colour of the stone may have made it more attractive for use in a megalithic monument.

The motifs and the technique of production are typical of the megalithic art tradition, which is dated to the middle Neolithic period. It is probable that the decorated panel originated from a nearby passage-tomb class monument, although it could be from another type of megalithic structure. The slab was possibly taken from a nearby site across the river, which no longer has an above-ground register (LH007-001---). A broad date range of c.3600-2500 has been suggested for the date and primary use of the stone (O'Connor 2007).

There are six examples of stones in souterrains featuring prehistoric art (concentric circles/cup marks) in Ireland (Clinton 2001). Their primary use is mostly dated to the Bronze Age. Capstones featuring megalithic art are rare but not unknown in Ireland. A recent excavation by Bayley at a souterrain in Newtownbalregan, some 800m southwest of the site at Tateetra, also revealed the presence of a capstone with arguably megalithic art (spiral and trumpet motifs). As at Tateetra, the stone was weathered on its decorated surface (Bayley and Roycroft 2003a). It is thought that the positioning of the capstone at Newtownbalregan was deliberate as the decoration was visible from the inside of the souterrain and it was placed

near the entrance (*ibid.*). The occurrence of the megalithic art at Tateetra appeared to be more opportunistic rather than a deliberate placing, as the decorated face was completely obscured by fill. The art was only noted when the capstone was removed.

## 5.7 Wood Identification & Dates (summarised from Stjuits 2006 & Beta Analytic 2006)

The wood analysis from Tateetra yielded a total of eight wood species. They were alder, hazel, spindle tree, ash, ivy, apple-type, sloe and willow. The most frequent wood species was hazel with the other types being of minor importance. Oak was completely absent which may suggest that oak did not form part of the landscape in the surroundings of the site, and thus maybe had almost disappeared from the area. The wood was more than likely collected from dry-land sources by either collection from the forest floors or selecting degraded wood pieces.

There were six samples submitted for dating purposes. Charcoal collected from the floor of gallery 1 returned a date of 970-1040 cal AD. Charcoal from the pit in the floor of gallery 2 was dated to 1030-1250 cal AD. Charcoal from the floor of galleries 3 and 4 returned dates of 1040-1260 cal AD.

Relatively early dates were returned from two phases of collapsed material in gallery 3. They were 640-770 cal AD and 780-990 cal AD.

The surface pit to the north of the souterrain returned dates 1220-1300 cal AD.

## 5.8 Summary

Although there is no firm evidence to date the construction of the souterrain at Tateetra the artefactual evidence recovered from the souterrain indicates that it was in use from the late-10<sup>th</sup> to mid-13<sup>th</sup> centuries. There are slightly earlier dates from the floor of gallery 1 (late 10<sup>th</sup> to mid-11<sup>th</sup> century) than those from the floor of galleries 3 and 4 (mid-11<sup>th</sup> to mid-13<sup>th</sup> century) indicating that the smaller portion of the souterrain was in use from an earlier date than the larger portion. However, it is clear from the position of the denuded entrance area at the junction of galleries 1 and 3, that all galleries were in use simultaneously and this is borne out by the fact that the pit from gallery 2 returned similar dates from those recovered from galleries 3 and 4. In addition to this, the Souterrain Ware from gallery 1 has been dated to the latter stages of the Early Christian (or Early Medieval) period.

The early dates from the infill layers in gallery 3 are puzzling given that the infilling would have occurred after the gallery had fallen out of use. The dates returned for the floor of galleries 3 and 4 were AD1040-1260 but the infill and collapsed material in gallery 3 returned two dates ranging from AD640-990. It is possible that the soil from the collapsed and infill material came from earlier displaced occupation layers from the associated surface settlement, which has either not survived or is located beyond the edge of the excavation.

## 6. Discussion

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The distribution of souterrains in Ireland is uneven, with an estimated 3000-3500 occurring throughout the country (Clinton 2001). They are confined mainly to the northeast, south/southwest and the west of the country, with the heaviest concentrations found in Cork and West Kerry, North Clare/South Galway and Antrim and Louth. Ninety five percent of souterrains are mostly dry-stone built. Other methods of construction include earth-cut, rock-cut and wooden built structures. A combination of two or more of these methods of construction is also known. Structural features of souterrains include air-vents; recesses/niches; sumps and wells; steps; creeps and pits.

Based on the dating of associated artefacts found in souterrains, they can be dated from the latter half of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium AD to early in the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium AD. A number of finds are associated with souterrains in the County Louth area. The more common finds include ogham stones; cross-inscribed slabs; souterrain ware; stick/ringed pins and beads. The inclusion of these finds point to an early medieval date for souterrains. Radio-carbon and dendrochronological dates also support this time frame. Edwards highlights that souterrains were in use during the Viking invasions, citing the dendrochronological date of AD822± 9 from a timber souterrain at Coolcran, Co. Fermanagh (1990, 32).

Souterrains are found in association with enclosed sites such as ringforts and unenclosed sites such as hut sites with up to sixty percent of souterrains in Ireland associated with open settlement (Clinton 2001). Thirty percent of souterrains in Louth are associated with enclosures, with a significant majority therefore associated with open settlement sites (*ibid.*). Limbert (1996) has highlighted the high occurrence in Galway and Louth of souterrains with unenclosed settlement. Lynn (1994) suggests that rectangular houses, occurring later in the early medieval period, after the main phase of ringfort construction, 'could explain why many souterrains appear to be unenclosed' (1994, 92).

The souterrain at Tateetra could be considered to be a typical example, having 4 galleries, 1 circular chamber, air-vent, drop hole, entrance features and a wall niche (Hayes 2005; 2006). A number of sumps/wells and pits were also discovered. The souterrain was uncovered on the east side of a low grass covered mound but no associated settlement was uncovered during the excavation, although it may have been located beyond the line of the roadtake and excavation area. Equally, there was no enclosure noted during the test trenching stage of the archaeological resolution for the Dundalk Bypass. It may be that the souterrain is located outside the enclosing element of an associated settlement, as was the case at the Newtownbalregan souterrain, 1km south of the site at Tateetra (Bayley & Roycroft 2003b). However, the souterrain may be associated with an unenclosed settlement.

## 6.1 Morphology

The souterrain at Tateetra was roughly U-shaped in plan. It was drystone-built and measured approximately 67m in length incorporating a circular chamber, 4 galleries, two doorway entrances featuring boltholes, a drop-hole, a step, 3 sumps, a pit, a wall niche and an air-vent. Gallery 1 consisted of a restricted (small) passage and a circular chamber with a drop-hole located east of the chamber giving access into gallery 2, another restricted passage. The step feature located just east of the drop-hole probably represented an adjustment in the internal floor level in order to accommodate the drophole into gallery 2. A similar arrangement was found at the Donaghmore souterrain, Co. Louth (Rynne 1960). If the step at Tateetra was constructed for this purpose it would suggest that both galleries were contemporary. The rise in floor level may have also served to keep the area around the drophole dry. The recorded chamber at Tateetra was circular with slight corbelling on the upper courses. It was not a beehive chamber as is typical of those chambers in the greater Meath area (Clinton 2001, 120). A line of capstones covered the roof of the chamber at Tateetra. Gallery 2 terminated in a collapsed portion of the souterrain, which appeared to be another chamber. The presence of a wall niche in close proximity to a pit and sump in gallery 2 is interesting. It could have been used as a shelf for some activity associated with the pit.

Gallery 3 was heavily denuded at west. Most of its length was infilled and a number of collapsed capstones were located in the passage. On excavation, gallery 3 and gallery 4 consisted of larger unrestricted passages with a lintelled doorway and jambs giving access to gallery 4. Unrestricted passages are mainly confined to northern parts of Ireland, in particular the northeast group of souterrains (Clinton 2001, 108). Examples include Donaghmore, Co. Louth and Loughcrew, Co. Meath.



The lintelled door feature between galleries 3 and 4 consisted of opposing jambstones with opposing bracing sockets on gallery 4 walls, to the north of the doorway. Socket holes were present on the north side of the southern door jamb also. Excavation in this area did not reveal the remains of an actual door although it is highly probable that one existed. The positioning of the bracing sockets in gallery 4, as with the bracing socket at the junction of galleries 1 and 3, indicates that the souterrain was locked or blockaded from the inside. This indicates that the primary function of the souterrain was probably refuge rather than storage (see section 6.3 below).

## 6.2 Entrance

No definite entrance feature was noted during the excavations at Tateetra. An entrance, possibly ramped, was more than likely present at the east end of gallery 1 but the subsequent natural infilling in this area has obscured the evidence. A bracing socket to the south of a probable door jamb was noted just north of the east facing entrance to gallery 1. A corresponding door jamb at the west end of the north wall of gallery 3 was absent. It may be that damage in chamber 1 destroyed any trace of an entrance. The collapsed chamber at the north end of gallery 2 located beyond the road line, was unexcavated, and may contain another entrance.

Despite the incompleteness of the archaeological evidence for the entrance a number of entrance types can be ruled out from the excavated evidence at Tateetra. There was no shaft entrance, no pit drop or stepped entrance. It is possible that there was a hatch entrance at Tateetra, whereby the simple method of a removable roofing lintel or capstone was in use. There may have been a ramped entrance to the east of gallery 1 given the presence of a door feature but the denuded nature of the west end of gallery 3 precludes a definite answer.

## 6.3 Function

The function of the souterrain at Tateetra appears to be primarily refuge. There are two major theories on the function of souterrains in Ireland, refuge and storage. The storage argument has been attributed to less complex souterrains with ramped or stepped entrances (Clinton 2001). The easily accessible nature of souterrains in Scotland prompted Warner to support the storage view but he did note that it was an inadequate explanation with regard to Irish souterrains (1979, 129). Limbert suggests an economic context into which the souterrain fits, by arguing that the storage function assigned to the souterrain renders it 'an element of early medieval agricultural intensification' (1996, 259).

Warner sees the ringfort and souterrain as an Irish invention in response to a particular problem within a particular socio-economic structure (1980, 96). He believes that the warring tribes had stabilised somewhat by the 8<sup>th</sup> century AD, allowing the construction of permanent habitation sites (ringforts and open settlement) but neighbouring raids were still in operation which necessitated the retention of the initial line of defence, the ringfort, and the need for a secondary defence for the non-combatant inhabitants, the souterrain. Buckley (1986) suggests that concentrations of souterrains reflect the centres of tribal power such as the *Dál Riata* in north Antrim and north-east Derry and further suggests that there was an increased need for defence as the tribes were arguing over control i.e. the kingship of the *Ulaid*.

From the available literature it is obvious that the function of a souterrain should be discussed on a site-by-site basis drawing on structural elements particular to the souterrain. It is in this regard that the refuge function has been attributed to the souterrain at Tateetra.

There are a number of structural elements, which support the refuge view. Probably the most obvious elements are associated with the doorways to the east of gallery 1 and in gallery 4. In both cases the locations of bracing sockets and in gallery 4, the bolt holes, are clearly defensive in nature. The doors would have to have been secured from the interior of the souterrain. The presence of an air-vent at the end of gallery 4 would mean that there was a fresh supply of air for occupants that had locked themselves into gallery 4.

A second defensive element would be the restrictive (small) size of galleries 1 and 2. There is no standing headroom in either of the passages so movement would have to be undertaken in a crouched position. Equally, the presence of a drop hole or trapdoor at the west end of gallery 1 into gallery 2 is not conducive to free-movement within the souterrain. If there is an entrance into the souterrain from the unexcavated end of gallery 2 then the drop hole would have been easily defended by occupants in gallery 1. If the entrance to the souterrain is from gallery 1 the drop hole still provides an impediment, although Clinton (2001, 126) believes this form of a trap door sealed off from without was not an effective internal defence.

The presence of a wall niche and pit could suggest a secondary storage function for the souterrain, although it is more likely that these features were used as such during a period of refuge. The restrictive nature of gallery 2 and the fact that it may have been entered from gallery 1 through the drop hole would rule out a primary storage function as this would have been an awkward way to gain access to and from stored goods. If, on the other hand, the pit and niche was accessed from the north end of gallery 2 it is positioned too far along the gallery to be convenient for access.

## 6.4 Summary

The souterrain at Tateetra is a drystone-built structure with a total length of 67m incorporating 4 galleries and a circular chamber. Structural features within the souterrain include a drop hole, a step, a wall niche, an air-vent, 3 sumps/wells, 1 pit, and 2 doorways featuring locking arrangements.

Galleries 1, 2 and chamber 1 were smaller than galleries 3 and 4. It is unknown whether this represents two phases of construction and it is tempting to suggest that the smaller portion of the souterrain was constructed initially with the larger portion constructed later, once the settlement became more established. There are slightly earlier dates from the floor of gallery 1 (late 10<sup>th</sup> to mid-11<sup>th</sup> century) than dates from the floor of galleries 3 & 4 (mid-11<sup>th</sup> to mid-13<sup>th</sup> century AD). However, with the absence of secure dates for the actual construction of the passages, the theory of two phases of construction remains conjecture.

Three decorated capstones were recovered from the excavation, one featuring megalithic art and two cross-inscribed slabs. Associated finds included a copper alloy stick pin, a perforated bead and fragments of pottery. These finds, as well as supporting radiocarbon dates indicate that the souterrain was in use from the late 10<sup>th</sup> to mid 13<sup>th</sup> centuries AD.

The souterrain appears to have been constructed using locally available stone, save for the granite slabs used in the doorways. The nearby Cooley Mountains are the closest source of granite in the area. The decorated stones were probably taken from nearby sites and their re-use in the souterrain appears to represent an opportunistic occurrence rather than a deliberate ritual placement. The finds appear to be consistent with the general date of souterrains in Ireland, which is the latter half of the first millennium to the early part of the second millennium AD. There was no associated settlement located during the excavation but it is most probably located beyond the limit of excavation. Structural aspects within the souterrain, most notably its restrictive nature coupled with the interior locking arrangement employed at doorways, indicates a primary function of refuge.

## 7. Sample & Find List

### 7.1 Samples

*Samples were only taken and numbered of those contexts that yielded sample material in the excavation. The sample numbers below are prefixed by the site excavation licence number: A010/001, followed by the context number and then by the sample number of that context.*

Sample No	From Context	Material	Purpose of sample	Result of Analysis
1	[c14]	Soil	Environmental	No ecofacts/archaeol-botanical remains recovered during sieving
2	[c7]	Charcoal	ID/Dating	Hazel; apple; willow identified Hazel dated: cal AD 780-990
3	[c10]	Charcoal	ID/Dating	Hazel; alder identified Hazel dated: cal AD 970-1040
4	[c11]	Charcoal	ID/Dating	Hazel; ash identified Hazel dated: cal AD 1220-1300
5	[c17]	Charcoal	ID/Dating	Hazel; apple; spindle tree identified Hazel dated: cal AD 1030-1250
6	[c21]	Charcoal	ID/Dating	Hazel; apple; willow; sloe; ivy identified Hazel dated: cal AD 1040-1260
7	[c14]	Charcoal	ID/Dating	Hazel; willow identified Hazel dated: cal AD 640-770
8	[c21]	Animal Bone	ID	Horse; Cattle
9	[c14]	Animal Bone	ID	Cattle; Sheep/Goat
10	[c1]	Animal Bone	N/A	Not submitted- unsealed context: topsoil
11	[c12]	Animal Bone	ID	Cattle; Pig; Oyster
12	[c3]	Animal Bone	ID	Horse; Cattle; Pig; Sheep/Goat;
13	[c17]	Animal Bone	ID	Cattle
14	[c24]	Animal Bone	ID	Sheep/Goat

### 7.2 Finds

*The finds numbers below are prefixed by the site excavation licence number: A010/001, followed by the context number and then by the find number of that context.*

**A010/001: context number: finds number**

## Pottery (analysed by Zajac; appendix 13.2)

Find No.	Description	Analysis
10:1	63 sherds: 5 decorated rim sherds 6 decorated body sherds (below rim) 23 Undecorated body sherd 17 undecorated body sherd (near vessel base) 12 abraded fragments	Single souterrain ware vessel

## Metal

Find No.	Description	Analysis
10:2	Copper alloy stick pin	11 <sup>th</sup> to mid 13 <sup>th</sup> centuries AD

## Stone (Appendices 13.3 & 13.4)

Find No.	Description	Analysis
12:1	White paste? Bead	8 <sup>th</sup> to 10 <sup>th</sup> centuries AD
29:1	Capstone Cross Slab (5 crosses)*	Early Christian altar table or boundary marker (Ó Carragáin 2007)
29:2	Capstone Cross Slab (1 cross)*	Early Christian public monument; boundary marker (Ó Carragáin 2007)
29:3	Capstone Megalithic art*	'Megalithic art' panel possibly from a passage tomb (O'Connor 2007)

\* removed directly to Dundalk Museum (arranged by Niall Roycroft Project Archaeologist)

## 8. Conclusions

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The partial excavation, recording and reinstatement of a souterrain discovered during drainage works associated with the construction of the Dundalk Western Bypass at Tateetra, Dundalk, Co. Louth was undertaken from October to December in 2004. There were no above ground indications of the site during topsoil stripping, monitoring or during the testing phase of the projects.

The souterrain consisted of 4 galleries and a chamber. Galleries 1, 2 and chamber 1 were smaller than galleries 3 and 4. It is unknown whether this represents two phases of construction as the west end of gallery 3 was heavily denuded and had infilled naturally. It is obvious from the bracing socket at the east end of gallery 1 that all galleries were in use at the same time as the location of the doorway gives access to gallery 3 and gallery 1. The entrance to the souterrain was more than likely located in this area but its exact nature is unknown as the evidence has been obscured. In addition, another entrance to the souterrain may be located beyond the roadtake in the unexcavated northern end of gallery 2, which terminated in a chamber.

It is likely that the souterrain was constructed late in the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium AD, and its continued use into the early 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium AD is evidenced by the artefacts and dates returned. The incorporation of a megalithic panel and cross-inscribed stones in the souterrain is an interesting discovery and is quite rare in the archaeological record. Analysis of the artefacts and radio-carbon dates obtained indicates that the souterrain was in use from the late 10<sup>th</sup> to the early 13<sup>th</sup> centuries AD. The primary function of the souterrain, from the excavated evidence appears to have been refuge.

The excavation of this souterrain at Tateetra is an important addition to the archaeological record as an element associated with early medieval settlement. It is especially interesting as

it forms part of a landscape with newly discovered, high status, early medieval sites at Newtownbalregan and Balriggeran. Clearly this region functioned as a central focus of activity in the early medieval period. The amalgamation of the data from the recently excavated sites along the M1-Dundalk Western Bypass will provide vital information on the history of this period in addition to the study of the early medieval period on a national level.

The entire archaeological dimension of this project was funded by the client.

## 9. Non-Technical Summary

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### 9.1 Introduction

This report details the partial excavation and recording of a souterrain at Tateetra, Dundalk, Co. Louth. The partial excavation and reinstatement was necessitated due to the proposed Dundalk Western Bypass, the construction of which would impact the site.

### 9.2 Context list

A context method of recording the archaeology was used at Tateetra. This method uses a numbering sequence for the archaeological features found. Each feature or each element in a feature is numbered one to infinity. The context list then is a full list of all the numbers allocated during the excavation (section 2 of the report).

### 9.3 Stratigraphic Sequence

Section 3 of the report visually shows the numbers allocated during the excavation and the relationships between them in the form of the “matrix”. These relationships are also described in words.

### 9.4 Interpretation of Stratigraphy

Section 4 attempts to explain what the site at Tateetra was and what it was used for. This is not always possible and sometimes functions of some features remain conjecture. A dating sequence for the site is an important consideration at this point and it is attempted to show the use of the site over time.



## **9.5 The Artefacts**

Section 4 summarises the analysis of the artefactual evidence from the site at Tateetra (all of which appear as an appendix to this report; section 13).

## **9.6 Discussion**

A wider perspective of the sites is taken in section 5 of this report. The importance of the excavation is also discussed.

## **9.7 Sample and Find List**

This is a numbered list of the samples taken during the excavation for the purposes of analysis. It also includes a list of the artefacts recovered during the excavation.

## **9.8 Conclusions**

The report concludes with a brief summation on the purpose of the excavation, and its conclusions based on the specialist analysis.

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## 11. Signing-Off Statement

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**Archaeological Firm:** ÆGIS ARCHAEOLOGY LIMITED

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**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
For AEGIS ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

**Dated:** August 2007

## 12. Archive Index Sheet

<b>Project</b>	M1 DWB - Tateetra Souterrain Partial Excavation			
<b>Site Names/Reference/</b>	Site No: 135; Tateetra 1			
<b>Licence numbers</b>	A010/001			
<b>Contractor</b>	AEGIS ARCHAEOLOGY LTD			
<b>Field director</b>	Avril Hayes			
	Items (quantity)	Boxes/files (quantity)	Checked/indexed/ cross-referenced/filed etc	Further work to do
<b>Field Records</b>				
Site plan	2	1 roll	Yes	
Site registers/indexes	16	1 file	Yes	
Site diary/ notes	1	1 file	Yes	
Context matrix	1	1 file	Yes	
Report	2 interim reps (rep refs 255-1.15 & 255-1.16 1 preliminary (rep ref 255-1.17)	1 file	Yes	
Summary	1		Yes	
Survey/levels data (origin information)	levels taken on site marked on plans			
Borehole logs etc	n/a			
Context sheets	32	1 file	Yes	
Trench record sheets	n/a			
Wood Sheets	n/a			
Skeleton Sheets	n/a			
Worked stone sheets	n/a			
Sample sheets used yes/no	Yes 12	1 file	Yes	
Other sheets (Specify)	n/a			
Single context & Multi context plans (totals rather than sheets)	18	1 roll	Yes	
Other plans (sketches, non-context plans etc)	n/a			
Sections/elevations	10	1 roll	Yes	
Timber drawings	n/a			
Stone drawings	89 capstones	1 roll	Yes	
Images monochrome	n/a			



Images colour (slide)	318	1 box	Yes	
Images digital	383	2 CDs	Yes	
Image/photo index	10	1 file	Yes	
Methodology	1	1 file	Yes	
SECURITY COPY (whole or part) If so what type?	1 external hard drive 3CDs (drawings) 3CDs (site archive incl. photos)	1 box	Yes	

	Items/ Fragments (quantity)	Boxes/files (quantity)	Processed/cleaned /sorted/checked/ indexed/x-ray/stored appropriately etc	Further work
<b>Finds and Enviro. Archive</b>				
Accessioned/special finds (specify types, especially wet finds or dry finds)	Bead (1) Stickpin (1)	1 box	Analysed	
Chert/flint	n/a			
Pottery (specify periods)	Early med (40 frags)	1 box	Analysed	
Ceramic Building Material (specify types eg daub, tile)	n/a			
Inscribed stones	3		Stored in Dundalk Museum	
Metalwork (specify types eg bronze, iron)	Copper alloy (stickpin)	See above	Analysed	
Glass	n/a			
Slag	n/a			
Human bone (specify type eg cremated, skeleton, disarticulated)	n/a			
Animal bone	356 frags	1 box	Analysed	
Enviro bulk (specify number of samples and total number of litres sampled)				
Enviro monolith (specify number of samples and number of tins per sample)	n/a			
Name	Avril Hayes			
Title	Licence Holder			
Date	27/08/07			

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