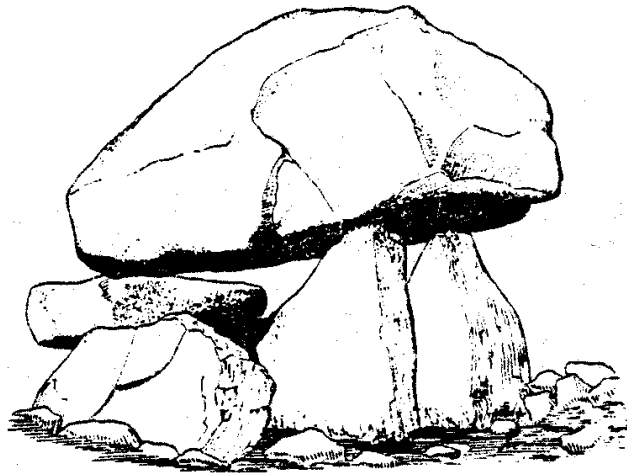


ULSTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY



Survey Report: No. 8

**Survey of Yew Terraces, Castle Ward, County Down
UAS/02/07**

In association with



JUNE WELSH

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First published 2008

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1. Summary

1.1 Location

A site survey was undertaken at a feature known as the Yew Terraces at Castle Ward estate, County Down (SMR number: DOW 031:071), in the Barony of Lecale Lower, townland of Castleward, Irish Grid reference J 57326 49769. The site has also been given the reference NTSMR 131513 by the National Trust.

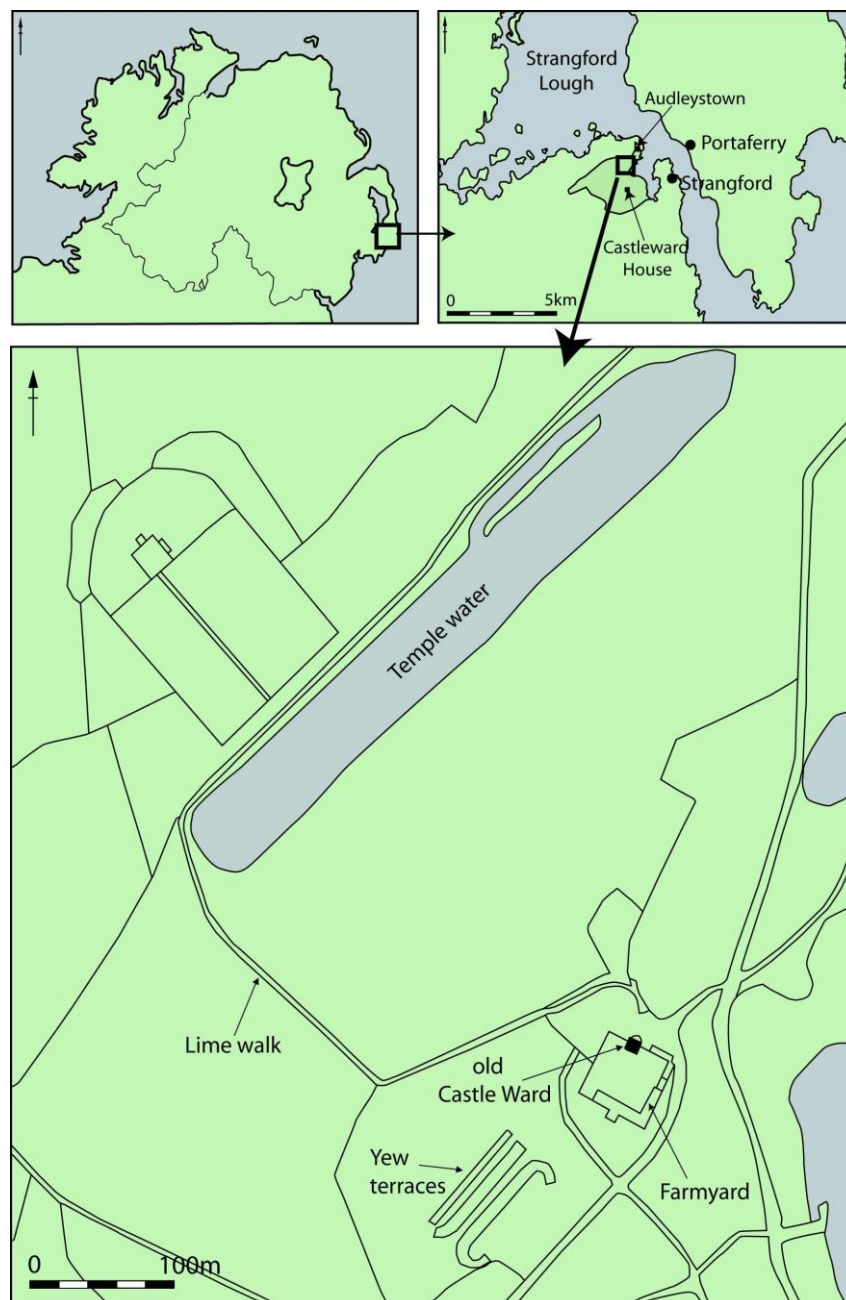


Figure 1: Location maps for Castle Ward, County Down

The Yew Terraces are situated within the grounds of the Castle Ward estate and form part of a wider landscape owned by the National Trust. The survey was the second in a series of planned surveys undertaken by members of the Ulster Archaeological Society during 2007.

1.2 Aims

In order to enhance the archaeological record of this site, the aims of this survey were to produce accurate plan and profile drawings of the monument, carry out a photographic survey and complete a Condition and Management Survey of the Archaeological Resource (CAMSAR) record form. This information was compiled into a report and copies submitted to the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, to the National Trust and to the archives of the Ulster Archaeological Society.



Figure 2: The Yew Terraces, viewed from the West

2. Introduction

2.1 Background

The survey of the Yew Terraces was undertaken over four days; Saturday 16 and Sunday 17 June, Saturday 30 June and Saturday 28 July 2007. It was carried out by members of the Ulster Archaeological Society in response to a decision taken by the committee of the society to extend an opportunity to members to participate in practical surveys of archaeological monuments that had not previously been recorded. This followed a bequest to the society from the late Dr Ann Hamlin, from which the items of survey equipment were purchased. During discussions with Mr Malachy Conway, Survey Archaeologist of the National Trust in Northern Ireland, it was noted

that many archaeological sites on National Trust property had not been subject to a detailed archaeological survey. It was therefore agreed that members of the society would commence a programme to survey these sites and the Yew Terraces were subsequently chosen to be the eighth of these.



Figure 3: UAS survey team member at work at the Yew Terraces

2.2 Previous archaeological surveys

Thomas McErlean and Terence Reeves-Smyth carried out an investigation of this site as part of a wider survey of the archaeological and historic landscape of the Castle Ward estate. Full details of this survey can be found in McErlean, T. & Reeves-Smyth, T. 1985. *Castle Ward Demesne*, (2 Volumes).

2.3 Cartographic evidence

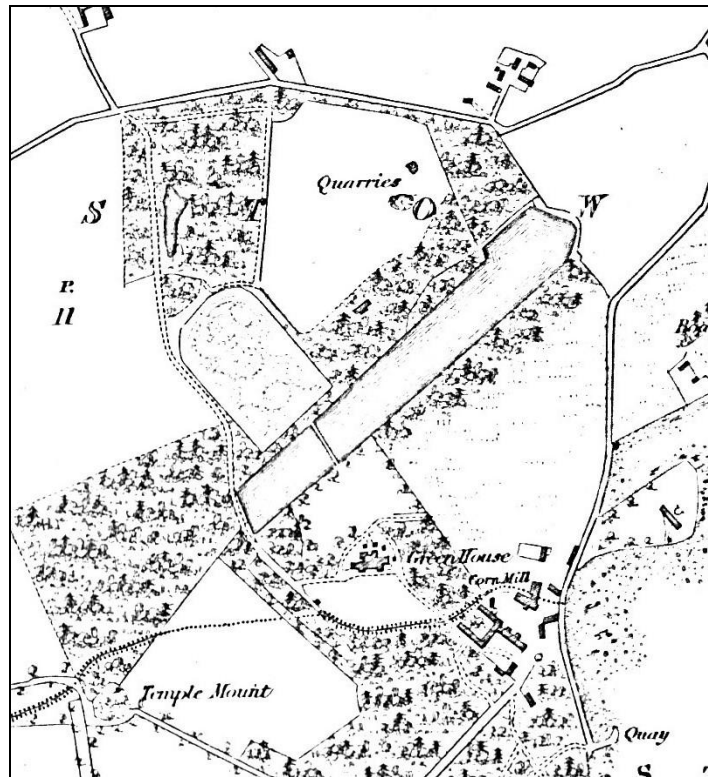


Figure 4: Ordnance Survey, First Edition, 1835

In the 1835 Ordnance Survey, the site of the Yew Terraces is indicated as woodland.

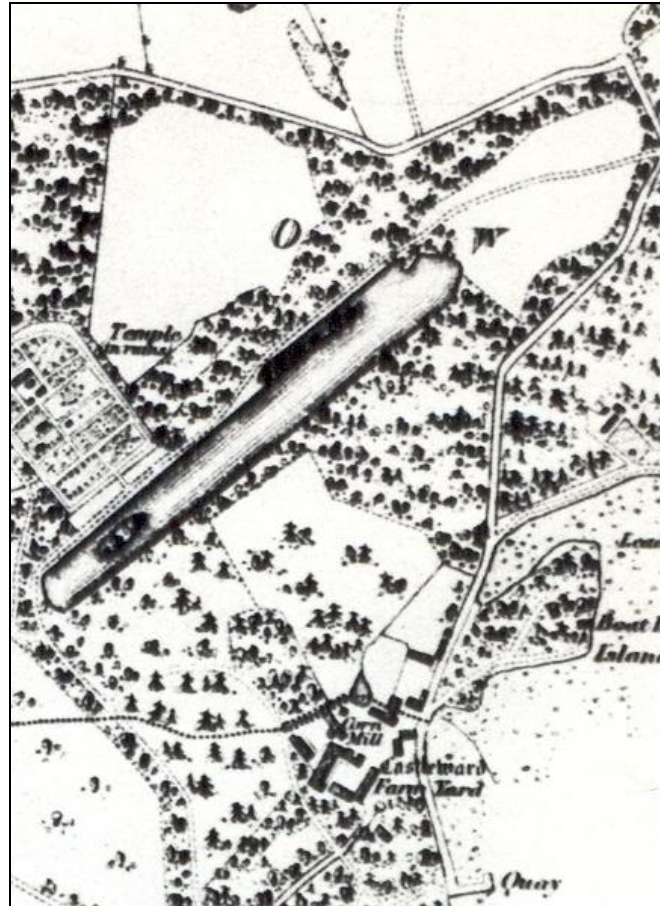


Figure 5: Ordnance Survey, Second Edition, 1859

In the 1859 Ordnance Survey, the site of the Yew Terraces is clearly visible to the south-west of Old Castle Ward, but the three rows of trees are not differentiated as such (figure 5 above). This may be due to the outward appearance of the terraces as continuous tree cover, due to the deliberate pruning of the trees to form a canopy over the terraced walkways, as illustrated in 1860 (see figure 18 below).

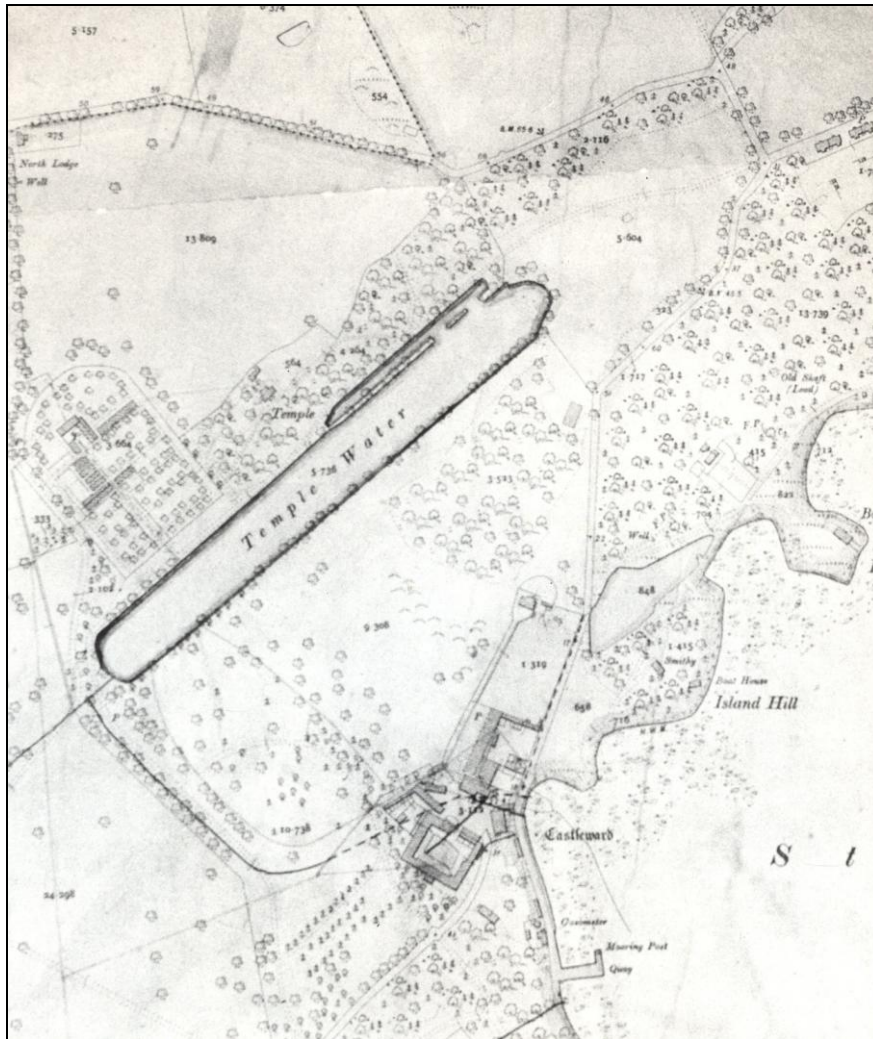


Figure 6: Ordnance Survey, Third Edition, 1902

The three rows of trees forming the Yew Terraces are clearly visible to the south-west of Old Castle Ward in the 1902 Ordnance Survey (figure 6 above), confirming they were well-established by this time.

2.4 Archiving

Copies of this report have been deposited with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, the National Trust and the Ulster Archaeological Society. All site records have been archived by the National Trust at Rowallane, Saintfield, County Down.

2.5 Credits and Acknowledgements

The survey was led by Harry Welsh and other members of the survey team were Michael Catney, William Dunlop, June Welsh, Ian Gillespie, Yvonne Griffiths, Julie Hanse, Barrie Hartwell, Ruth Logue, Anne MacDermott, Sapphire Mussen, Ken Pullin, George Rutherford and Janey Sproule. The Ulster Archaeological Society is particularly grateful to Mr Malachy Conway, Survey Archaeologist of the National Trust, who worked closely with the survey team in choosing the site and facilitating access.

3. 2007 UAS Survey

3.1 Methodology

It was decided that the survey would take the form of the production of plan and profile drawings, accompanied by a photographic survey and the completion of a Condition And Management Survey of the Archaeological Resource (CAMSAR) form. This report was compiled using the information obtained from these sources, in addition to background documentary material.

3.2 Production of plan and profile drawings

Plan and profile drawings were completed, using data obtained from a field survey. Measurements were obtained by using the society's *Leica Sprinter 100* electronic measuring device. Sketch plans at 1:200 scale were completed on site by recording these measurements on drafting film secured to a plane table and backing up the data on a field notebook for subsequent reference. Field plans were later transferred to a computer-based format for printing.

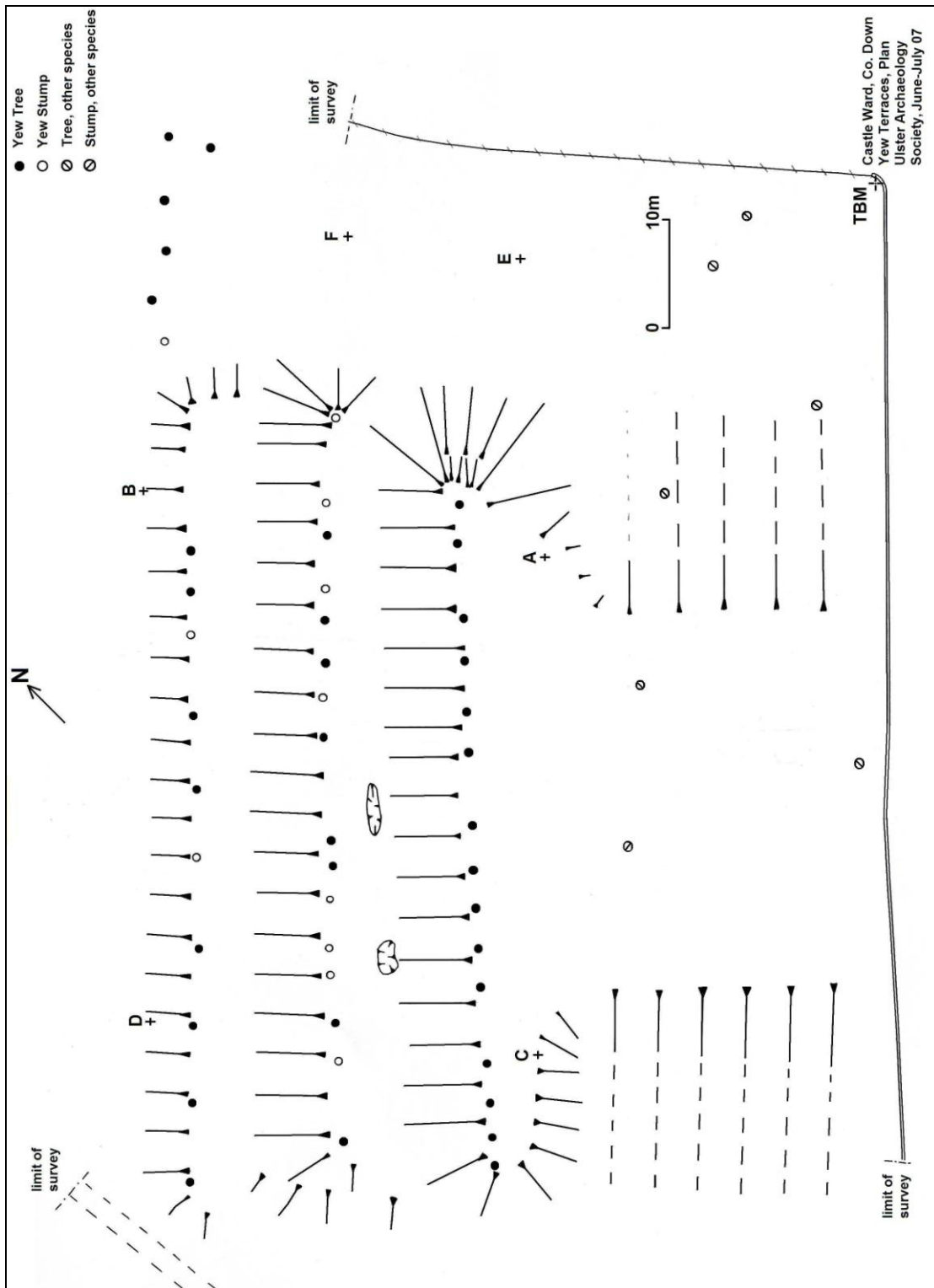


Figure 7: Plan of the Yew Terraces

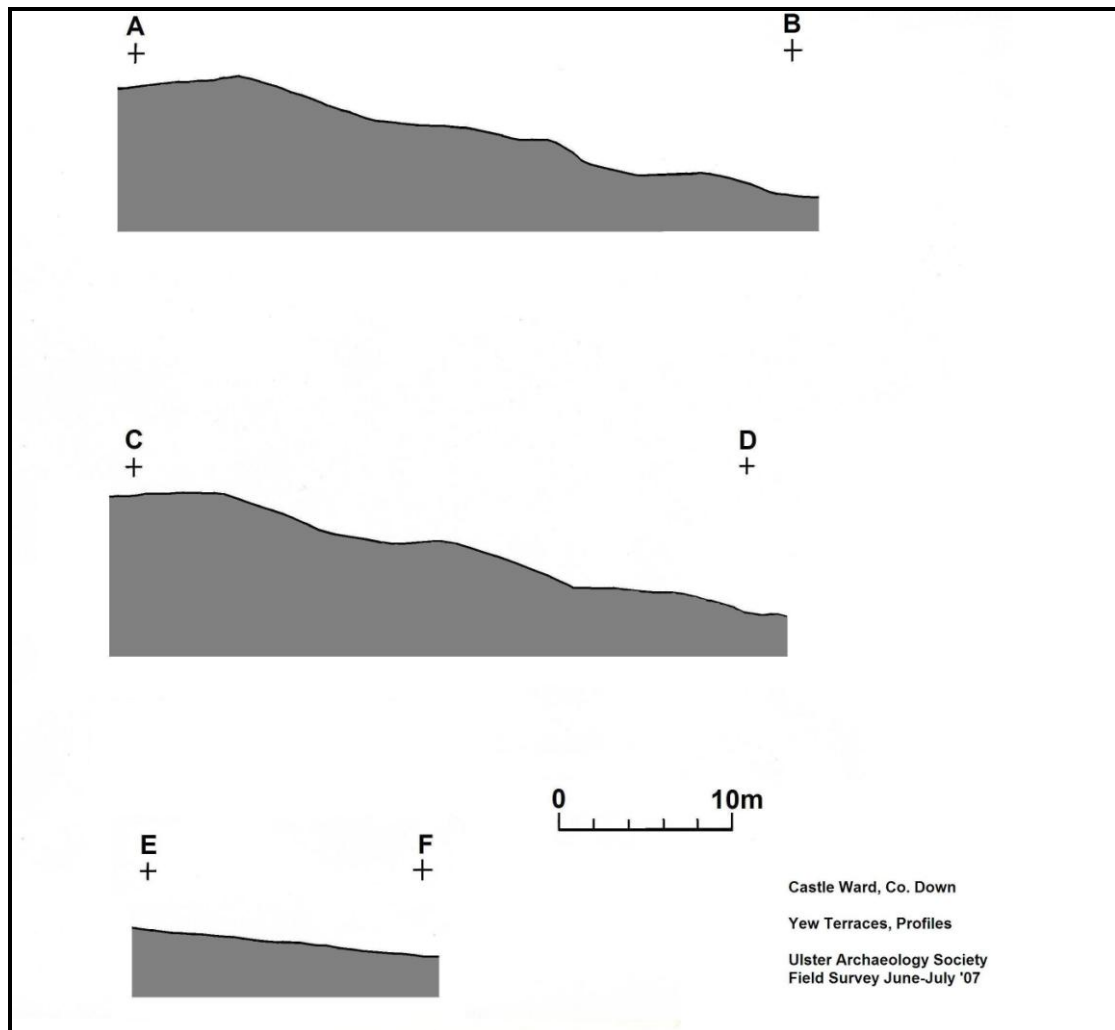


Figure 8: Profiles of the Yew Terraces

3.3 Photographic archive

A photographic record of the site was taken by using a *Nikon Coolpix S1 5.1* megapixel digital camera and a photograph record sheet was employed, corresponding to photographs taken during the site surveys between and 16 June and 28 July 2007. The archive has been compiled in jpeg format and saved to compact disc.



Figure 9: View of Upper, Middle and Lower Terraces, viewed from east



Figure 10: View of Yew Terraces, viewed from the north-west



Figure 11: Aerial photograph of Yew Terraces, 1985, *Queen's University Belfast*



Figure 12: Aerial photograph of Yew Terraces, 2008, *Yvonne Griffiths*

A series of aerial photographs were taken in 1985 by Barrie Hartwell of Queen's University Belfast. One photograph captured the Tower House, the Farmyard and also the Yew Terraces (23-4-85-5-7 see Figure 11 above). Another aerial photograph was taken in 2008 by Yvonne Griffiths. This photograph captured much of the formal garden landscape, including the Yew Terraces (see Figure 12 above).

3.4 Completion of CAMSAR form

A Condition and Management Survey of the Archaeological Resource (CAMSAR) form was completed by the survey team on 16 June 2007 and is given in appendix 1 below. As far as is known, this is the first occasion on which this type of record form has been completed for the monument.

4. Discussion

4.1 Introduction

The Castle Ward demesne, currently composed of 840 acres, was purchased by the Wards from the Earl of Kildare in 1570 and was in the sole occupation of the Ward family from the early sixteenth century until 1950, when, following the death of the sixth Viscount Bangor, Speaker of the Northern Ireland Senate, it was accepted by the government in part-payment of death duties and presented to the National Trust with an endowment.

Throughout its long history, the demesne has been regularly altered and has become one of the most complete demesne landscapes to survive in Northern Ireland. One of the remarkable features of the Castle Ward estate is how it reflects the gardening fashions of several centuries, from the 1720s to the 1950s. The Yew Terraces, together with the Temple and Temple Water, form a major component of the formal garden layout. This landscape is one of the very few scheduled formal landscapes in Northern Ireland. The absence of evidence to confirm the date of construction of the Yew Terraces leaves a number of possibilities, as follows.

4.2 Association with the Old Castle Ward tower house

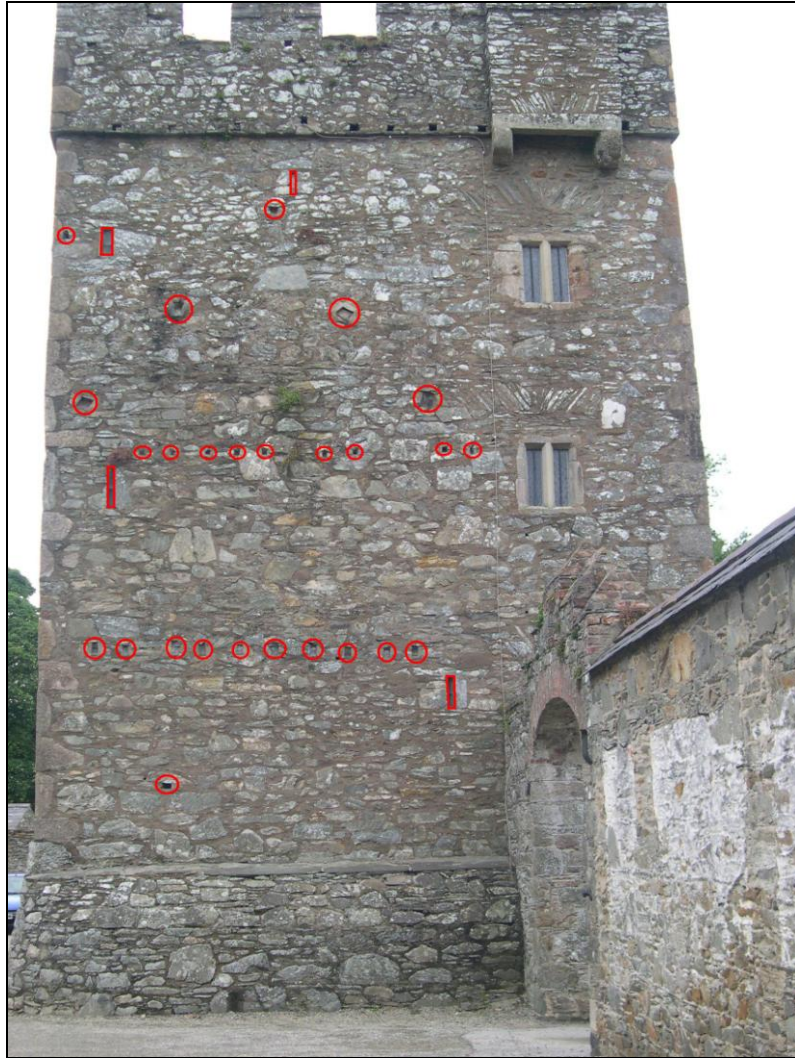


Figure 13: Old Castle Ward wall scars for Jacobean range

The earliest known residence of the Ward family was what is now known as the Castle Ward Tower House, constructed for Nicholas Ward in about 1610 (National Trust 2005). This is one of many such fortified houses in this area, including Audley's Castle, a fifteenth century tower house, built for the Audley family (1420-1450). This building was incorporated into the Castle Ward estate in 1646 and 'used in 1738 as an eye-catching focus of the long vista along Castle Ward's Temple Water' (DOENI 1983, 97-8).



Figure 14: Aerial photograph 23-4-85-V32, 1986, *Queen's University, Belfast*.



Figure 15: View of Old Castle Ward from north-east, with possible adjoining Jacobean house on left

Tantalisingly, both aerial photographs (Figures 11 and 12) seem to suggest the possibility of a closer alignment of the Yew Terraces with the Jacobean house than with the former Queen Anne House. During the course of the excavation of the Queen Anne House in 2008 (Murray, forthcoming), it was discovered that the alignment of the Queen Anne House was east-west, whilst that of the Yew Terraces was south-west/north-east. The Jacobean house may have been an addition to the Castle Ward Tower House and constructed on its east-south-east face.

A similar structural situation occurred at Leamaneh Castle in County Clare, where ‘the eastern portion is a fifteenth-century tower house while the western portion is a seventeenth-century manor house’ (Jones 2004, 148). Associated with the later manor house was ‘a walled formal garden which included a fish pond, a summer house and a “turret walk” along the wall, where one could stroll and view the garden’ (ibid.).



Figure 16: Leamaneh Castle, County Clare (after Jones, 2004)

4.3 Later historical background 1701-1800 AD

A third house was built around 1710-14 and was surrounded by ‘impressive formal terraces and canals. Temple Water is possibly the largest ornamental garden feature in Ireland to survive from the eighteenth century’ (National Trust 2005). This house has become referred to as the Queen Anne house. It has been suggested that the Yew Terraces, ‘together with the Temple and the Temple Water, form the only

surviving landscape features of the formal garden. There is no dating evidence for their creation; however, as they form a major component of the garden layout, they probably date to the 1720s' (McErlean & Reeves-Smyth 1985, p. 38).

About 1760, Bernard Ward commenced work on the fourth and present Castle Ward (National Trust 2005). It has been described as 'one of the most bizarre of all Georgian country houses, reputedly designed by an unknown architect to reflect the different tastes of its owner Bernard Ward and his wife Anne' (Tinniswood 1991, 227-8). It is a unique house, partly Gothic and partly Classical in design. The Queen Anne house was demolished at some time between 1846 and 1859.

4.4 The Castle Ward Yew Terraces

The Yew Terraces consist of three parallel linear rows of yew trees, aligned approximately north-east/south-west. They are situated to the south-west of the Farm Yard and face towards the Lime Walk and the site of the Queen Anne house.

Advantage has been taken of the sloping ground to form three level terraces...at the edge of each terrace, a row of English yews has been planted, which [sic] each tree spaced approximately 7.5 metres apart. Today, 12 trees remain in the top row, 13 in the middle and 9 on the bottom. At the eastern end, a few yews planted informally carry on a continuation of the bottom row. It seems highly probable that there were originally equal numbers of trees in each row, perhaps consisting of 14 or 15 trees. Each terrace is approximately 62 metres long. The top terrace consists largely of the natural ground level, while the two below are totally artificial. They stand approximately 2.5 metres above each other. (McErlean & Reeves-Smyth 1985, p. 38)

4.5 Yew trees and problems with dating

The yew 'is associated with immortality, renewal, regeneration, everlasting life, rebirth, transformation and access to the Otherworld and our ancestors. The yew is thought to have descended from *Palaeotaxus rediviva*, which was found imprinted on Triassic era fossils laid down more than 200,000,000 years ago' (Kindred 1997, 1). The entire tree is poisonous, wood, bark, needles and seeds. The only part which is not poisonous is the fleshy part of the seed. It is often found in churchyards and formal gardens.

Many attempts have been made to date yew trees, but several factors militate against any form of accuracy. These include the fact that while yew trees produce annual growth rings, many become hollow during their lifetimes. In addition, yew trees can regenerate or lie dormant for periods of time. However, age estimates have been produced, which provide 'rough estimates, and in no way give accurate data' (Meredith 2007, 1).

Girth (feet)	Age (years)
3	60
6	120
9	180/242
12	300
16	600
19	800
23	1000

Figure 17: Yew tree dating formula (after Meredith 2007, 1)

In addition to problems with dating yew trees generally, the trees currently located in the Yew Terraces bear little resemblance to those depicted in a painting by Mary Ward in about 1860, as can be seen in Figure 18.



Figure 18: Mary Ward's painting of the Yew Terraces, c. 1860.

The trees depicted in 1860 appear to have been shaped and maintained in such a manner as to provide a sheltered walkway. Barrie Hartwell of Queen's University Belfast has suggested this may have been used by the ladies of the time, as a private means of gentle exercise outdoors. By 1985 aerial photography revealed that the Yew Terraces had become heavily overgrown (See Figure 12). Evidently, the National Trust undertook a programme of maintenance, involving the Yew Trees. Figure 13 demonstrates just how radical that process has been.

It is evident that the Yew Terraces remain an enigmatic part of the varied landscape at Castle Ward.

5. Recommendations for further work

In order to obtain more definitive dating material for the monument, the National Trust may in the future wish to consider limited excavation. It is also a cause for concern that the public are free to amble through this area of the Yew Terraces, without realising their importance. There are no signs to specifically highlight the presence of the Yew Terraces, or that this is an important protected landscape. The National Trust may wish to consider providing such signs.

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Illustrations

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- www.lismorecastle.com. Accessed 30 November 2007.

APPENDIX A

CAMSAR FORM

NISM No. DOW 031:071		Grid Reference J5732649769		Townland Castle Ward																																	
Landuse Cat. 12	Structural Cat.	Site Type N.T. Estate	Protection	Altitude																																	
Field Boundaries (e.g. contemporary/intrusive later/owners attitude towards monument i.e. disregard)																																					
Site description/ notes Yew Terraces in N.T. Castle Ward Estate. 3 terraces with 3 rows of trees. Quite steep-sided. Overlooking a lower area, which rises up again facing the terraces. This area is where Queen Anne House is? Some outlying yew trees near terraces.																																					
<table border="1" style="width:100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th colspan="3">Landuse</th> <th colspan="2">Around Site</th> <th rowspan="2">Comments</th> </tr> <tr> <th>On Site</th> <th>Present</th> <th>% site</th> <th>Previous</th> <th>Present</th> </tr> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td rowspan="3"> Top Row = 12 trees, 2 stumps Middle Row = 8 trees, 8 stumps Bottom Row = 8 trees, 2 stumps </td> </tr> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> </table>						Landuse			Around Site		Comments	On Site	Present	% site	Previous	Present						Top Row = 12 trees, 2 stumps Middle Row = 8 trees, 8 stumps Bottom Row = 8 trees, 2 stumps															
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On Site	Present	% site	Previous	Present																																	
					Top Row = 12 trees, 2 stumps Middle Row = 8 trees, 8 stumps Bottom Row = 8 trees, 2 stumps																																
Fencing Site Fenced? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Y/N Condition (e.g. recent/broken) Modern fences (wood and wire), stone wall, unbounded on 2 sides. Type of fence Distance of fence from edge of monument																																					
<table border="1" style="width:100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td rowspan="2">Remains</td> <td colspan="2">Is the site visible?</td> <td colspan="2">Archaeological site?</td> <td colspan="2">Survival</td> <td colspan="2">Condition</td> </tr> <tr> <td>①</td> <td>2 3 4</td> <td colspan="2">Y/N/?</td> <td>①</td> <td>2 3 4 5 6</td> <td>①</td> <td>2 3 4 5 6</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="9"> Comments (e.g. human interference and management) Some trees are missing, with just stumps remaining. Managed by the Estate, grass cut, fencing maintained. </td> </tr> </table>						Remains	Is the site visible?		Archaeological site?		Survival		Condition		①	2 3 4	Y/N/?		①	2 3 4 5 6	①	2 3 4 5 6	Comments (e.g. human interference and management) Some trees are missing, with just stumps remaining. Managed by the Estate, grass cut, fencing maintained.														
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Comments (e.g. human interference and management) Some trees are missing, with just stumps remaining. Managed by the Estate, grass cut, fencing maintained.																																					
Surface Problems (e.g. ploughing, trampling, planting, scrub growth: localized/widespread)																																					
Sub-Surface Problems (e.g. rabbits, badgers, subsidence: localized/widespread)																																					
<table border="1" style="width:100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th colspan="6">Damage Sustained</th> <th rowspan="2">Observations</th> </tr> <tr> <th colspan="2">Past</th> <th colspan="2">Recent</th> <th colspan="2">Future Risk</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Category</th> <th>Extent</th> <th>Category</th> <th>Extent</th> <th>Category</th> <th>Extent</th> <td rowspan="3"> Risks minimised due to property belonging to National Trust. </td> </tr> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> </table>						Damage Sustained						Observations	Past		Recent		Future Risk		Category	Extent	Category	Extent	Category	Extent	Risks minimised due to property belonging to National Trust.												
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Recorder R.L. Date 16/6/07.																																					
Ulster Archaeological Society																																					

APPENDIX B

PHOTOGRAPH RECORD FORM

Site: Yew Terraces, Castle Ward, County Down

Date: 16 June 2007

Film no.	B/W Print	Colour print	Colour slide	Digital image (m.pixels)
				5.1

Make and model of camera...*Nikon Coolpix SI & others*

Frame no	Direction viewed from	Details
272	North	Lower Terrace
273	North	Lower Terrace
274	N/NE	Middle Terrace
275	N/NE	Middle Terrace
276	N/NE	Middle Terrace
277	East	Upper Terrace
278	North	Upper Terrace
279	SE	Upper Terrace
280	East	Upper Terrace
281	South	Upper Terrace
282	East	End of Upper Terrace
283	SW	End of Upper Terrace
284	SW	Upper Terrace from boundary of site
285	South	Edge of terraces from end of Upper Terrace
286	SW	Middle Terrace
287	SW	Middle Terrace
290	W/SW	Lower Terrace
291	SW	Lower Terrace
292	SE	Lime Tree Walk
293	SE	Lime Tree Walk
294	SE	Lime Tree Walk
295	SE	Lime Tree Walk (2)
296	West	View of site and tower house
297	W/NW	View of site and tower house
298	NW	View of site and tower house
299	North	View of site from Queen Anne House site
300	North	View of site from Queen Anne House site
301	North	View of site from Queen Anne House site
302	North	Lower Terrace
303	North	Break of slope at Eastern end of terraces
304	NNW	View of terraces

305	NW	Break of slope at Western end of terraces
306	SE	View down terraces and Lime Walk
307	NW	View from Middle Terrace to Lime Walk
308	SE	Break of slope Upper Terrace
309	NW	Path & tunnel
310	SW	Site from elevated viewpoint to Temple Water
311	SW	Site from elevated viewpoint to Temple Water
312	SW	Site from elevated viewpoint to Temple Water
313	SW	Upper Terrace
314	South	Upper Terrace
315	SE	Upper Terrace
316	SE	Upper Terrace
317	SE	Upper Terrace
323	East	Old Castle Ward
	SE	Depression feature
	NE	Depression feature
	North	Western 'steps'
	North	Central 'steps'
	NE	V-shaped feature
	NE	End of terraces
	SW	Possible entrance