Research Design
for
Archaeological Excavation
at
Chancefield Trenches,
Falkland Estate, Fife
2016



On behalf of Living Lomonds Landscape Partnership

Funded by:

Supported by The National Lottery® through the Heritage Lottery Fund

heritage lottery fund

HISTORIC SCOTLAND
ALBA AOSMHOR

Revision Issued 31-05-16

CONTENTS

1.0 SUMMARY…….....2

2.0 BACKGROUND …..……....2-10

3.0 RESEARCH QUESTIONS……..…..……...10-17

4.0 FULFILMENT OF NATIONAL RESEARCH PRIORITIES..17-19

5.0 LONG-TERM BENEFITS OF THE PROPOSALS.....19-21

6.0 CONTACT DETAILS…….....21

7.0 REFERENCES……21-22

Text and images by Dr Oliver J T O'Grady unless otherwise indicated.

1.0 Summary

1.1 This research design describes the investigative aims and objectives that will guide proposed excavations at Chancefield Trenches (Index No. SM11013). The document sets out how these priorities will provide benefits for specific understanding of the site archaeology, the long-term care of the monument, and puts this in the context of national research frameworks.

1.2 The main objectives of the excavation are to expose a section of the site's morphology and, to characterise and date an area of phasing in the monument's development. The resulting data is intended to improve understanding of the wider monument's historic function and chronology.

1.3 This document has been issued in support of an application for Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) to undertake the excavations and should be read in conjunction with the methodology statement laid out in the accompanying Written Scheme of Investigation.

2.0 Background

2.1 Physical Description

Chancefield Trenches in Fife is located at NT175958 in a triangular-shaped enclosure, the fenced area of an old forestry planation (now felled), on the west side of Falkland Estate at 85m OD (Fig. 1 and Fig. 2). The site's historic landscape has changed dramatically over the last 250 years. The trenches were covered by a coniferous tree planation since the early 19th century, until recent clearance and scheduling in 2004. The monument comprises linear cuttings arranged in two large V-shaped earthworks that form a funnel shape. There are five trenches each around 2.5m to 3m deep and up to 220m in length. The earthworks

overlap and have been truncated by abutting trenches at several locations. In places the features have been cut through natural sandstone.

2.1.1 Winter's plan of the site of 1757 indicates that the trenches may have originally extended further east by up to 45m. North of the site and across a farm track at least two further reduced earthworks are visible extending to the north-east. The upper reaches of the Arraty Burn passes close to the west end of the site. Farmland is to the east.

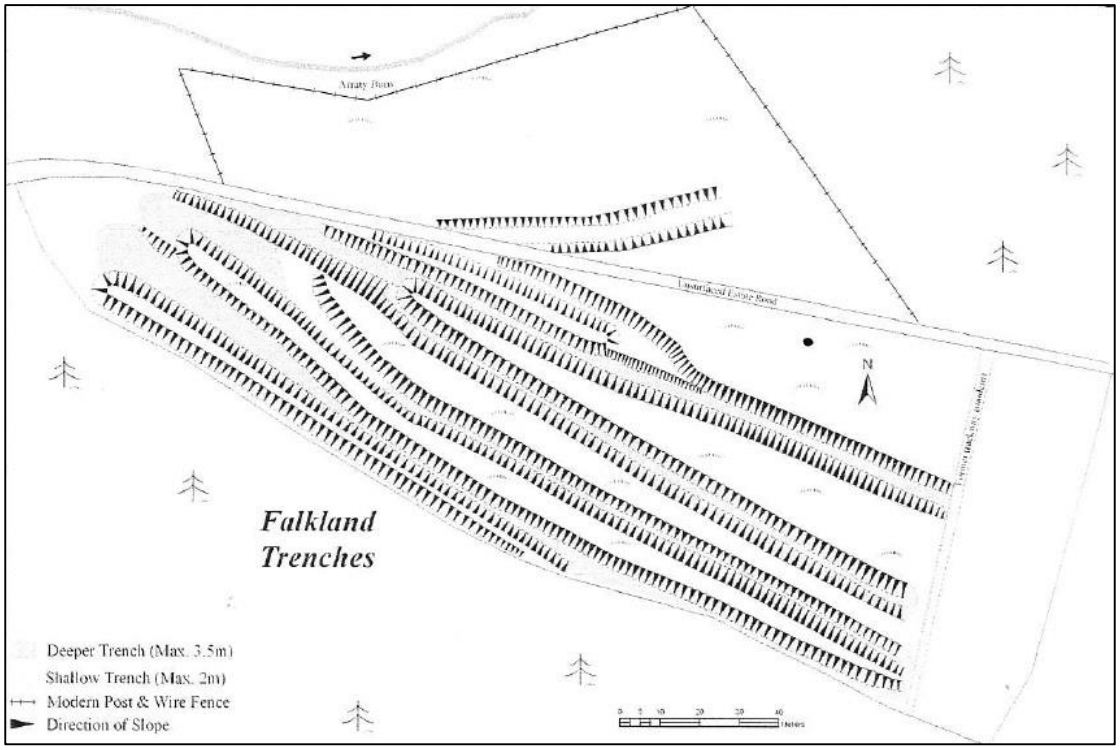


Figure 1. Site plan of Chancefield Trenches – note that minor details of this plan do not appear to correlate with the earthworks as visible on the ground (Courtesy Fife Archaeological Service).



Figure 2. General view of Chancefield Trenches from the north-west.

2.2 History

In the 18th century Miller (1857: 36) erroneously identified the site as the remains of defensive works and at this time the site was marked as 'Old Fortifications' on a plan of the estate and East Lomond hill. This was based on Miller's belief that the earthworks were connected to Roman military activity and the Battle of Mons Graupius. Before the Old Statistical Account of Scotland (OSA) in the late 18th century, there are no earlier direct references to the trenches. The OSA refers to a series of gullies indicative of trackways. Despite this lack of historical evidence, there is place-name evidence and other circumstantial medieval records that suggest a potential link between the site and the nearby Falkland Palace medieval deer park (Gilbert 2014; Taylor 2009).

2.2.1 Winter's plan of 1757 shows the field names 'Deerends' adjacent the west end of the site. To the south a natural gully running down to the west end of the trenches was known as 'Greyhound Den'. On Blaeu's 17th-century map, the Arraty Burn is instead identified with the name 'Burn of Deir', again linking the vicinity of the site to deer and potentially also hunting (Taylor 2009: 237-8).

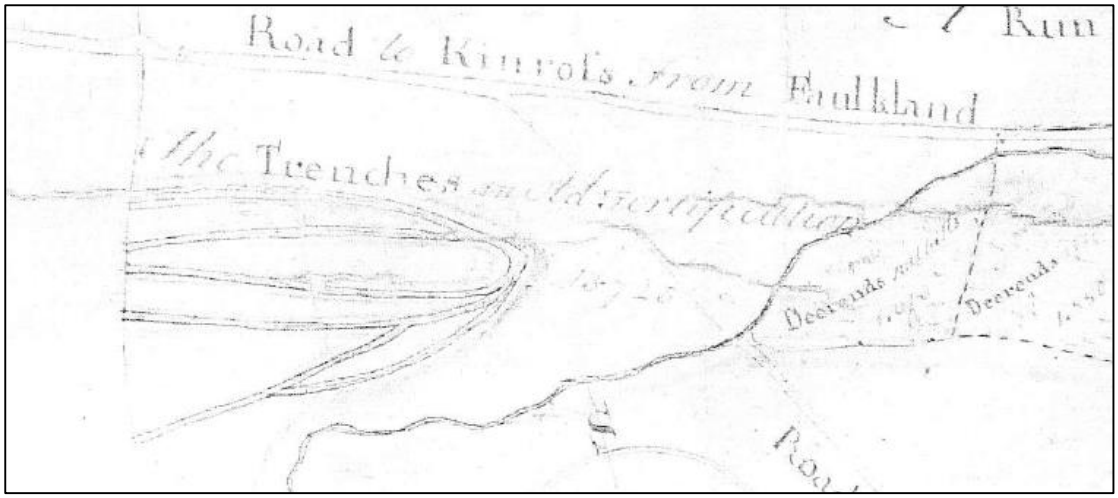


Figure 3. Details from 'A Plan of the Estate of Nuthill, the Property of William Thomson Esq., surveyed by Thomas Winter, anno 1757' (Falkland Estate).

2.2.2 Falkland's deer park was associated with Falkland Palace and was one of the largest royal parks in late medieval Scotland (Gilbert 2014). Falkland Palace is among the greatest surviving Renaissance Palaces in Scotland. This was preceded by a castle, the residence of the MacDuff Earls of Fife (ibid: 79). Before the late 15th century and royal acquisition of the estate, the deer park appears to have legally functioned as a Forest, which could have incorporated an unenclosed hunting ground with an earlier history, through there are no surviving records of this (ibid). A Pictish symbol stone at nearby Strathmiglo showing a deer's head reminds us that deer and perhaps hunting may have been associated with the area since the early medieval period (Index No. SM4017). John Gilbert has recently reviewed the historical documents relating to the park between the 15th and 16th centuries. This has shown that Falkland's park was used to restock other parks in Scotland and that trapping and sorting of deer took place. James IV is recorded to have added a large westward extension to the park into the lands of Cash in 1508. The lands of Cash are located adjacent to the north of Chancefield. Land at Kilgour was emparked by James V in 1539-49, which is also located adjacent the Trenches to the north (Gilbert 2014: 80-2). Taylor (2009) and Gilbert (2014) have individually made cases for the Trenches having potentially

functioned as some form of deer trap used in the sorting or hunting of deer.

2.2.3 As mentioned the site was also referred to in the Old Statistical Account of Scotland, which the RCAHMS 1933 inventory interpreted as indicating the remains of a historic trackway system or holloways. A view also followed by Crawford in 1949 (NMRS no. NO20NW 8). This does not necessarily preclude the sites association with the park pale or a gateway, as such trackways are known to have been associated with deer parks elsewhere (Butler 2012). Others have suggested the site could be some form of exploratory mining works (Pers. Comm. Douglas Speirs).

2.3 Archaeology

There are no recorded archaeological investigations at the site other than an earthwork survey completed at the behest of Fife Archaeological Services in the 2000s (Fig. 1).

2.3.1 An upstanding section of the Falkland park pale survives at Cash Wood (Carter 2006: 39), 0.75km from the Trenches, and a possible reduced section of the pale has been identified as cropmarks in fields adjacent Falkland Palace (NMRS no. NO20NE 305). A recent woodland survey has also identified other possible remains of the pale near Dunshalt (Mills and Quelch 2014).

2.3.2 The closest comparators for the Trenches are a series of similar earthworks in low-lying forestry, at Parkmill near Tarbolton in Ayshire (NMRS no. NS42NW 10) and at Fyvie Castle in Aberdeenshire, where a v-shaped arrangement of earthworks are known as Montrose's Camp (NMRS no. NJ73NE 10). Both sites have not been subjected to modern investigation and historically have not been interpreted as features associated with a deer park (Taylor 2009: 239, fig.5).

2.3.3 Further archaeological comparators can be found at English parks. These include 'funnel-shaped' features and holloways. For instance at

Ashdown Forest in south-east England similar features have been found in association with gates through the park pale. Examples at Ashdown all in East Sussex include the funnel-shaped gate at Hendall, holloways at the Chelwood Common gate, and at Oldlands where trackways run along the perimeter of the pale. The Hendall gate is a particularly relevant comparator as it leads to a burn crossing similar to the arrangement at Chancefield Trenches (Butler 2012: 32, fig. 13-14, 33, fig. 15, 34, fig. 16). Examples like this suggest that the Chancefield Trenches could be part of a gate feature, including trackways, leading into the Falkland park western extension, which could have been used to drive deer into the 16th-century park's western extension.

2.3.4 The monument also bears similarities to the remains of historic track-way systems that can be found through parts of upland Scotland. This interpretation of the site has recently been strengthened by the examination of LIDAR data of the area, which reveals similar shaped earthworks under forestry on the opposite bank of the Arraty Burn adjacent the trenches (Fig. 4).

2.3.5 In 2007 a copper alloy mount was discovered at the Trenches as a surface find (Taylor 2009: 240, fig.6). The dating of this object is not clear, but it may have been part of a dress-fitting or official badge, perhaps associated with management of the park, though a post-medieval significance has also be assigned to the find (Fig. 5).

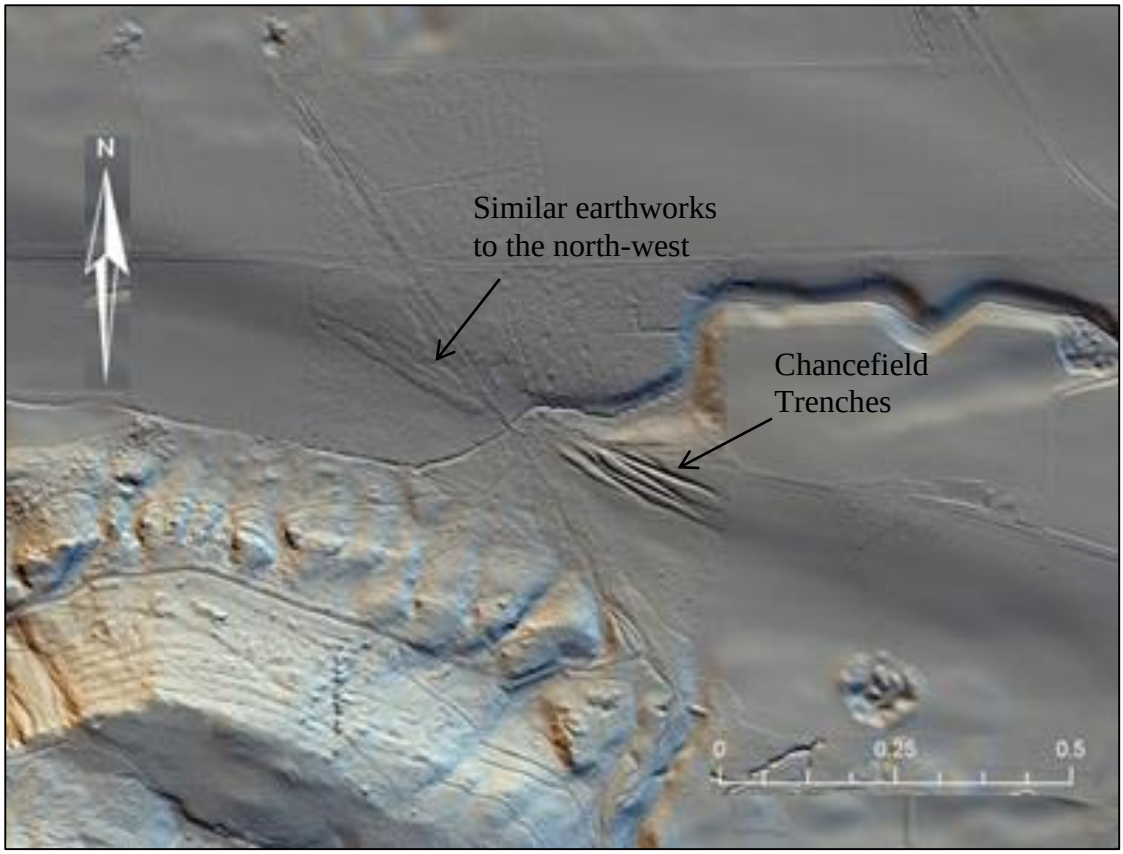


Figure 4. LIDAR data of the site's environs. © Historic Environment Scotland.

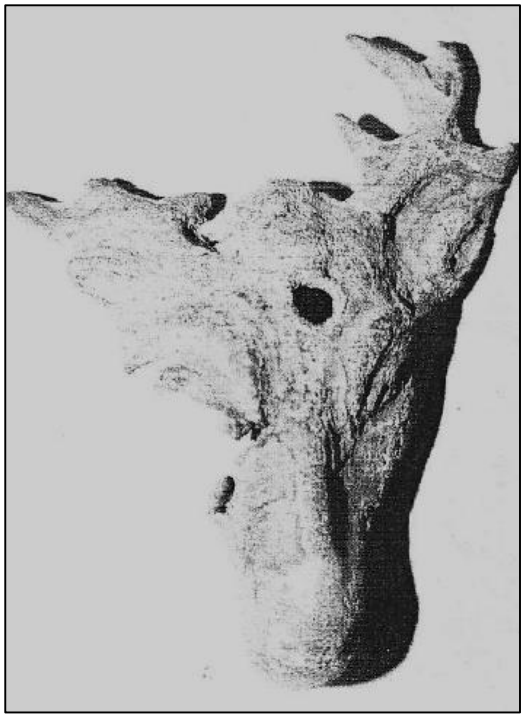


Figure 5. Copper-alloy mount found at Chancefield Trenches (Falkland Estate).

2.3.6 *Geophysical Survey:* In 2014 and March 2016 geophysical surveys were undertaken outside the scheduled area to the east of the site to trace the possible extension of the trenches beyond the known confines. This formed part of a community training exercise for the Living Lomonds Landscape Partnership. This included resistivity and Ground Penetrating Radar surveys, but the initial analysis proved inconclusive due to background geological constraints.

2.4 Regional and National Context

2.4.1 Falkland was one of multiple royal parks in 16th-century Scotland, the other main parks being Stirling, Doune Castle, Holyrood and Linlithgow. The great majority of these like Falkland are linked to important late medieval royal palaces or fortifications. At Stirling the park pale and an associated designed landscape at King's Knot has recently been investigated (O'Grady 2012), but no features comparable to the Chancefield Trenches have been identified at these other key royal parklands.

2.4.2 Other examples of non-royal parks with well-preserved remains include Buzzart Dykes (NMRS no. NO14NW 2), recently excavated by Hall (Hall et al 2013), and Duward's Dyke (NMRS no. NO25SE 2) in Angus. At Kincardine (NMRS no. NO67NE 10.1) are very well-preserved remains of an early royal park associated with William I and Alexander II, which has recently been sampled by excavation, though again this is an upland park unlike late-medieval Falkland's park (Hall et al 2011; Gilbert 1979: 24, 35, 54, 82-5, 215, 219, 356). On the north side of Duward's Dyke is a v-shaped kink in the pale which may be the site of a gate comparable to Chancefield. Recent excavations have shown that the pales of these parks comprise simple earth banks, sometimes with minor stone cores and fence slots or post holes along the top, with small ditches on one side (Hall et al 2011). This regional list is not intended to be a comprehensive, but covers the most recent archaeological work in this area.

2.5 This section has provided a baseline statement about Chancefield Trenches including a physical description, historical and archaeological summaries, and a summary of similar parks and features in Scotland and England. The next section details the research questions that will guide the proposed investigations.

3.0 Research Questions

3.1 Summary

The research agenda of the excavation is focused on understanding the morphology and development of the site, in order to extrapolate a clearer interpretation of the site's function(s). This will increase understanding of whether the site was a focal point for deer management at Falkland during the medieval period.

3.1.1 The research questions have been developed to improve understanding of the site's morphology, function, historical development and cultural significance. It is proposed that these outcomes will benefit the long-term care of the monument and increase public awareness of the site, when measured against the proportionate physical impact on the remains from the proposed trenching scheme (see WSI).

3.1.2 Although the investigation will focus on a single area of the site, this location has been selected to investigate an area of apparently phased earthworks and results will be used to elucidate understand the wider site. Physical impact to the remains will also be minimised by investigating a partially damaged part of the site. An understanding of the earthworks morphology and constructional development will be gained. Further detail will now be provided about the broader context of the research and the specific aims of the proposed investigations before then describing the objectives.

3.2 Rationale and Aims

3.2.1 The theoretical rationale for the project draws on the work of Oliver Creighton on the multi-functional role of medieval power centres as focal points within wider designed landscapes of lordship, medieval communities and in establishing royal authority (Creighton 2005). Moreover John Gilbert's analysis of parks in medieval Scotland has argued for the complex legal definition of forests and parklands, which could incorporate a wide-range of land management processes and established from the early medieval period onwards, though primarily focused on royal conspicuous consumption and luxury (Gilbert 1979, forthcoming). This research will also be guided by Dingwall's assessment of medieval parks and parklands in Scotland as 'a neglected heritage' (Dingwall 2007). Seen in this context, Falkland Park and the Chancefield Trenches are attractive candidates for having been created and developed as part of a hunting ground that had its origins before the late medieval period. This can be seen as part of wider strategies by late medieval lords to integrate and adopt the accoutrements of sites of ancient lordship, including old hunting grounds and established landscapes of governance. The legacy of this process at Chancefield may have been the redevelopment of an established boundary feature or important route-way in the landscape. This process of reuse and adaption may have been instrumental in forming the diverse and ambiguous remains that survive at Chancefield. The project will also compliment and draw on expertise from nationally important research by the University of Stirling and Derek Hall on the 'Medieval Deer Parks' project (see Hall et al 2011).

3.2.2 *Key Research Aims:*

i) To characterise the morphology and chronological development of the earthworks in order to increase understanding of the site historic function. This new information will assist future management and public interpretation of the monument.

ii) To assess whether the Trenches were purposefully cut or recut, as part of a late medieval deer park feature, or were formed through gradual processes of erosion, such as by weathering and footfall as part of trackway. This will be achieve by characterising the site's morphology, phasing and date.

iii) To advance study of medieval hunting, deer management and designed landscapes.

3.2.3 *Primary Research Questions*

i) What can the morphology and archaeological sequence of deposits at of the earthworks tell us about the development of the site as a medieval deer funnel, trap or park gate?

ii) Was the profile of the trenches v-shaped, u-shaped, irregular or rutted at the base? And if phased or recut, is there evidence that the profile morphology of the site changed, a change which could indicate that the site was originally a trackway that was reused during the late medieval period for the purposes of managing deer?

iii) What is the chronological sequence of the earthworks structural development and phasing?

3.2.4 *Secondary Research Questions:*

i) What is the preservation of paleo-environmental remains such as animal bone at the Trenches and does a sequence of fill deposits survive at the site?

ii) Is there evidence for the enclosure of the Trenches such as post holes or fence slots between the gullies?

3.2.5 *Tertiary Research Questions:*

i) Is there material culture evidence for hunting activity at the site?

ii) What is the extent of disturbance to the archaeological remains from vegetation growth?

3.3 Objectives

3.3.1 This section describes set objectives for the proposed investigations which will achieve the key research aims and primary questions outlined above. This section should be read in conjunction with the Written Scheme of Investigation. The trench will focus on a part of the site where apparent phasing between earthworks can be investigated.

3.3.2 *Trenching Scheme*

i) The key research aims and primary questions will be answered by excavating a single trench, which has been carefully targeted to maximise the amount and value of the archaeological information produced (Fig. 6). This targeted methodology is made possible by the results of previous topographical survey and a recent historical review of the site (Fig. 1; Gilbert 2014; Taylor 2009).

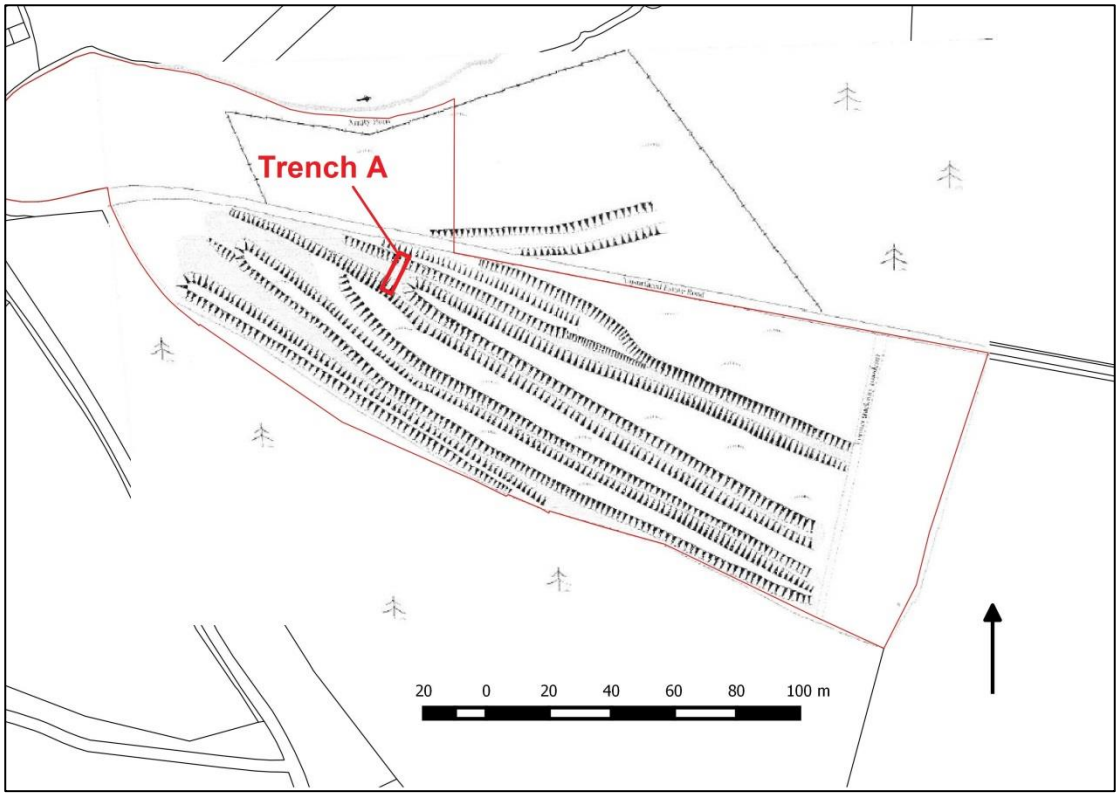


Figure 6. Plan showing the location of the proposed trench* (Background Fife Archaeological Service / OS mapping).

© Crown copyright and database rights 2015 Ordnance Survey 100023385.

* The trench location shown in this plan has been corrected from the incorrect location shown in earlier versions of this Research Design; however the proposed siting of the trench on the ground has remained the same.

ii) Trench A

This trench will be positioned to investigate a complete profile across a gully and reveal its phased relationship with an adjoining second gully that appears to be truncated by the former (Fig. 7):

- Size: 2m x 12m.
- Location: The middle of the north side of the site (Fig. 6).
- Purpose:

  1) To investigate the morphology and sequence of deposits in two abutting earthworks.

  2) To reveal a complete profile across one of the earthworks.

  3) To retrieve samples that can be used for dating and paleo-environmental analysis of the site.

4) To record the morphology and chronological sequence of recuts and phasing within the earthworks.

- Mitigation: Located to avoid disturbance of the best preserved parts of the site.
- Intended Outcomes:

  1) A detailed and high quality record of the stratigraphic sequence that is uncovered by the trench.

  2) Increased understanding of the site morphology.

  3) Improved understanding of the site's historic function and development.

  4) Improve long-term care of the monument.

  5) Enhanced public understanding of the site.

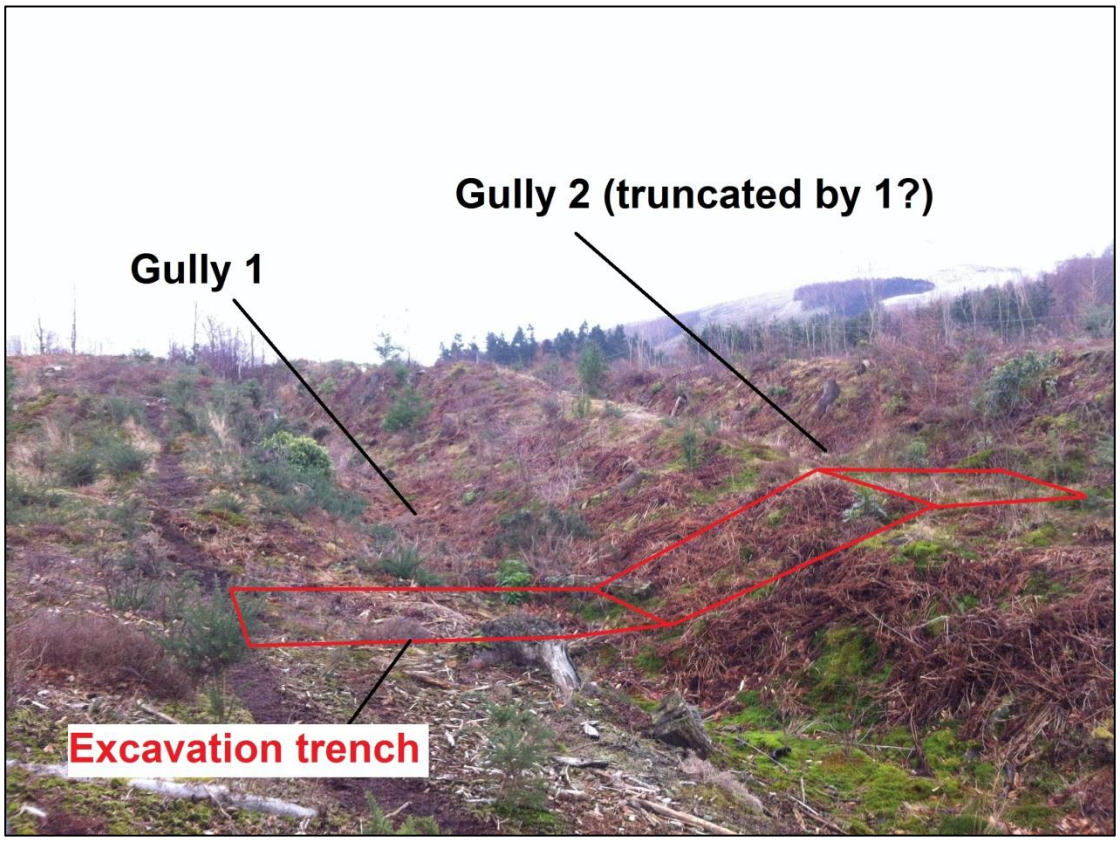


Figure 7. Location of proposed trench A taken from the north-west.*

* The plan shown in Fig. 6 has been amended from earlier incorrect versions to show the exact location which is visible in this photograph.

3.4 Alternative trenching outside the scheduled area?

3.4.1 *Earthworks to north of SM area:*

Excavations at the linear earthworks to the north-east of the scheduled area will not be an appropriate replacement for the proposed trenching scheme as these do not have the same potential to answer the set research aims:

- The earthworks are reduced linear banks and located on the opposite side of the farm track adjacent the Trenches.
- The banks are aligned at a different trajectory to the Trenches and are of a significantly different form to suggest that the features do not represent the same monument type.
- Based on examples from English park gates, the banks outside the scheduled area may represent a reduced section of the deer park pale that connected to the gate or funnel feature from the north-east or simply a pre-Improvement field boundary. If this is the case, although investigation of the banks may have the potential to reveal more about the medieval pale enclosure and indirectly the possible gate-feature, this would not however *directly* increase understanding of the specific form and cultural significance of the main Trenches as a deer funnel or park gate within the Scheduled Monument.

3.4.2 *Field to the east of the SM:*

The potential for the continuation of the Trenches to the east and for the presence of buried archaeological remains within the adjacent arable field has been highlighted by 18th century records of the site (see 2.1.2 above).

- However, recent geophysical survey in this area has proved inconclusive, in part due to geological background unconducive to clear results.
- As such any investigation in this area would need to take the form of an untargeted archaeology evaluation, with no guarantee of producing an adequate answer to the set research questions

and requiring substantially more resources to undertake (not supported by current funding budget).

- Such evaluation works are also likely to have significantly less public benefit then the proposed scheme within the Scheduled Monument and have less potential to increase understanding of the Trenches' cultural significance.

4.0 National Policy and Fulfilment of National Research Priorities

4.1 The Scottish Historic Environment Policy

i) (AMAAA 1979 pt.1 sec.2 / SHEP 3.16) The proposed works on the scheduled monument are devised to be the minimum level of intervention to answer the research aims and will be consistent with conserving the cultural significance of the monument.

ii) (SHEP 3.19) The long-term preservation of the monument will remain secure due to the limited extent of the excavations affecting the Scheduled Monument. The works will generate clear public benefits both locally and nationally to outweigh potential impact on the cultural significance of the monument. These public benefits will include improved understanding and interpretation of the monument, which will also help inform future vegetation management at the site and in turn inform improvements to public access. The research will also assist public understanding of this currently understudied site-type and produce local economic benefits once the works are completed through increased foot-fall to Falkland Estate.

iii) (SHEP 3.20) The proposed excavations are carefully considered, based on good background research and authority in Scottish medieval archaeology. The trenching scheme is designed with sensitivity to the monument, is well planned and will be professionally executed under the direction of qualified and experiences archaeologists.

iv) (SHEP 3.22) The archaeological excavation will be based upon the detailed research strategy described in this document, is adequately resourced (see

Financial Statement), and will use appropriately skilled and experienced archaeologists with a satisfactory record of the completion and publication of projects. The preparation and execution of the excavations on the scheduled monument is being and will be undertaken by professionals with appropriate qualifications, skills and experience (see associated staff CVs and WSI for further details).

4.2 SCARF Research Priorities Advanced by the Project

i) *SCARF 2.8.2 From North Britain to the idea of Scotland: Tribes, Kingdoms, States?*

"Examining other regional foci and considering how and why they rise and fall should be promoted. The development of regional frameworks investigating other areas is to be endorsed in order to develop a more rounded picture of the trajectory of power across Scotland. Studies into the nature of the interaction between polities, and how this is materially manifested, should be encouraged."

ii) *SCARF 2.8. From North Britain to the idea of Scotland: Tribes, Kingdoms, States?*

"Alignment with RCAHMS programmes, such as Historic Land-use Assessment (HLA), to ensure research starts with best understanding of the research area is a key starting point to approaching past territories. This should incorporate comparisons between prehistoric and protohistoric distributions. Understanding and mapping the changing parochial structure would aid our research into both the distribution of churches, ecclesiastical organisation and the structure of landownership and rural settlement."

iii) *SCARF 2.8.4 From North Britain to the idea of Scotland: Tribes, Kingdoms, States?*

"Settlement hierarchies, morphology and aspects of material culture, must be built into regional maps of land use and settlement in order to answer questions of clan, kinship and the emergence of a Highland-Lowland divide."

iv) The investigations will also complement and enhance established nationally important research by the University of Stirling 'Medieval Deer Parks' project (Hall et al 2011) and by John Gilbert (2014, forthcoming). Mr Derek Hall, Professor Richard Oram, Dr Piers Dixon and John Gilbert are in contact with the project director and are providing additional expertise for further development of the research. The project and Falkland Estate are also in active contact with NTS at Falkland Palace to explore collaboration on the project. The Living Lomonds LP will support dissemination of the results through a popular booklet and it is hoped also an academic article in the *Tayside and Fife Archaeological Journal*.

5.0 Long-term Benefits of the Proposals

5.1 The excavation will provide new archaeological information about this currently under studied type of site and will help increase specific understanding of the site's cultural significance. There will be an advancement of knowledge about the site's developmental history in the context of national research frameworks. The results will help refine understanding of the site's cultural significance that will in turn generally assist decision-making regarding future management of the monument.

5.2 This new information will also help to enhance future interpretation of the site, and public understanding and appreciation of the monument. Improving public understanding and appreciation of the historic environment of the Lomond Hills area is key long-term aim of the Living Lomonds Landscape Partnership project *Discover the Ancient* Lomonds. The excavation report and findings will be disseminated through online media and popular publications (e.g. information leaflets and an A5 booklet). An peer-reviewed journal article will also be prepared for publication in The Tayside and Fife Archaeological Journal. A brief entry summarising the results will be prepared for Discovery and Excavation Scotland.

5.3 The technical excavation work will be undertaken under the supervision of professional archaeologists. This will ensure production of a high quality record and mitigate the potential for accidental damage by unskilled volunteers (see WSI).

5.4 To ensure the widest possible public awareness and educational benefits to the local community, the excavations will be undertaken in a high profile and engaging manner. Up to 100 volunteering days will be made available over two weeks, with a maximum of 10 volunteers on-site at any one time, assisting the excavation in subsidiary roles, shadowing the archaeologists, processing finds and helping to give site tours. This will provide wider benefits for local public engagement and learning about the monument.

5.5 Working with partners at Falkland Estate and the National Trust for Scotland (Falkland Palace), classes from local secondary schools will be involved in creative writing workshops themed around the history of the deer park and given the opportunity to visit the excavations and learn about how archaeologists work. This will provide wider local community benefits in education and engagement with archaeology.

5.6 The archaeologists will work in close contact with the estate land managers to ensure appropriate management of access to the site, that health and safety standards are maintained throughout the project, and that the trench is promptly backfilled. This will help to further encourage the land managers in the long-term care of the monument.

6.0 Contact Details

6.1 Enquires and requests for further information should be address to:
Dr Oliver JT O'Grady FSA Scot MA MPhil

OJT Heritage (trading name) | Heritage Consultant

Almond Cottage, Glenalmond

nr Perth, Scotland, PH1 3RX

Mobile: +44 (0)7821155677

Tel: +44 (0)1738 880257

7.0 References

Butler, C. 2012 ‘Tracing the Pale of the Ashdown Forest Deer Park’, unpublished technical report (accessed online 26/02/2016).

Creighton, O. 2005 *Castles and Landscapes: Power, Community and Fortification in Medieval England*, Equinox.

Dingwall, C.H. 2007 ‘Deer Parks in Scotland – A neglected heritage’, in *The History, Ecology and Archaeology of Medieval Parks and Parklands*, ed. I.D. Rotherham, *Landscape Archaeology and Ecology*, vol. 6 (September 2007), 25-8.

Gilbert, J.M. 1979 *Hunting and Hunting Reserves in Medieval Scotland* (Edinburgh).

Gilbert, J.M. 2014 ‘Falkland Park to c1603’, in *Tayside and Fife Archaeological Journal*, vol. 19 – 20, 78-102.

Gilbert, J.M. forthcoming ‘Falkland Park’, information booklet, LLLP.

Hall, D., Malloy, K. and Oram, R. 2011 ‘‘A Hunting We Will Go?’ Stirling University’s Medieval Deer Parks Project’, in *Tayside and Fife Archaeological Journal*, vol. 17, 58-67.

Miller, Lieut-Col. 1857 ‘An inquiry respecting the site of the Battle of Mons Grampius', *Archaeol. Scot.*, vol. 4.

Mills, C.M. and Quelch, P. 2014 ‘Falkland Palk: Historic Woodland Assessment Survey’, unpublished technical report.

O’Grady, O.J.T. 2012 ‘King’s Knot, Stirling: Radar Profile Survey’, unpublished data structure report.

RCAHMS 1933 *The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments and Constructions of Scotland. Eleventh report with inventory of monuments and constructions in the counties of Fife, Kinross, and Clackmannan*, Edinburgh.

Sinclair, Sir J. 1791-99 *The Old Statistical Account of Scotland*, Edinburgh.

Taylor, Simon, 2009, ‘The Trenches at Falkland, Fife: a Legacy of Royal Deer-Management?’, in *Carmarthenshire & Beyond: Studies in History and Archaeology in*

Memory of Terry James, ed. Heather James and Patricia Moore (Carmarthenshire Antiquarian Society, Carmarthen), 235–44.