

'MARTELO TOWER NO
10
SKENICK'S ISLAND
SKERRIES CO. DUBLIN'

(*Dublin Historical Record*, vol.
LIX, No.2 (autumn 2006), pp
119-34.)

(Also seen in)

WWW.JSTOR.ORG

http://www.jstor.org/stable/30101640?Search=yes&resultItemClick=true&searchText=wheaty&searchUri=%2Faction%2FdoBasicSearch%2FQuery%3Dwheaty%26amp%3Bacc%3Doff%3Bgroup%3Dnone%26amp%3Bfc%3Doff%26amp%3Bwc%3Don&refreqid=search%3A11cd189bd895e313b2006b5bed354f95&seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents



The late archaeologist John Bradley

The images taken by Maynooth University staff, and the uppermost photo appeared in an edition of *The Bridge* in 2005-2006. The second smaller arrow shows Peter Whearity.

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND MAYNOOTH

PRACTICAL ARCHAEOLOGY LS34

DEPARTMENT OF MODERN HISTORY

COURSE TUTOR

Dr JOHN BRADLEY

PROJECT

A SURVEY OF A FIELD MONUMENT

Martello Tower No 10

Shenick's island

Skerries, County Dublin

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No 63154986

DATE DUE

25 JULY 2005

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	2
Illustrations	3
Introduction	4
Part 1- General information and location of monument	6
The exterior of the structure	16
The interior of the structure	26
The top of the tower and parapet	32
Part 2 - A reconstruction	38
How is the monument dated?	40
What other examples can the monument be compared with?	41
What does one learn from an examination of this monument? That cannot be learned from the documentary evidence?	44
BIBLIOGRAPHY	47-8

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Elizabeth Balcombe
Laidman Doak

My nephew
Glenn Guildea
Whose boat brought us to the island?

ILLUSTRATIONS

Map.1	Barony of Balrothery, county Dublin.	5
Map. 2	Duncan's map c. 1821	9
Figure. 1	plan drawing of tower and island	18
Figure. 2	location sheet of Martello towers	42

Exterior photographs

Plate. 1	looking northeast	23
Plate. 2	the front elevation	
Plate. 3	looking north	24
Plate. 4	looking east	

Interior photographs

Plate. 7	ground floor	29
Plate. 8	interior walls	
Plate. 9	domed ceiling	30
Plate. 10	ground floor rooms	
Plate. 11	passageway to outside and door to stairway	31
Plate. 12	fireplace on second level	

Rooftop photographs

Plate. 13	below the parapet	35
Plate. 14	looking into the machicolation	
Plate. 15	looking down the murder-hole	36
Plate. 16	the shot furnace	
Plate. 17	view over the parapet towards Skerries	37
Plate. 18	view from Holmpatrick towards Shenick's island	
Plate. 19	The water well	39

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to carryout a survey of a Field Monument as a requirement of the course LS 34 PRACTICAL ARCHAEOLOGY.

The monument in this instance is Martello Tower No 10, which is situated on Shenick's Island, Skerries, County Dublin (see map 1).

The Field Monument under study, known as a Martello Tower, was built in 1804/5, in response to the threat of invasion by Napoleonic naval fleets.¹

The tower was one of twenty-eight that were built along the coast to the North and South of Dublin City.² Skerries has two of these structures, the one being surveyed (tower No 10) and a second one on the mainland at a place known as Red Island (tower No 11). Each tower was constructed of locally quarried stone, mostly limestone but including granite also.³ Each stood on its own piece of ground, which initially was purchased by the military for the purpose, tower 10, stood on three roods, twenty-five perches⁴ of elevated land at the northern end of the island. These structures were caused to be raised by King George the third at the end of the Nineteenth century, but the land was taken compulsorily under the Defence Act, 44.⁵

¹ The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage, Duchas, the Heritage Service (Fingal area), pp, 20-21.

² Ibid, p, 174.

³ Victor J Enoch, *The Martello Towers of Ireland* (Dublin, 1975).

⁴ Register of Sales of towers, Military Archives, Cathal Brugha Barracks, Rathmines, Dublin.

⁵ Ibid.

Map 1

Map of Barony of Balrothery¹



Civil Survey of county Dublin, Ad 1654-1656, vol. V111, (Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1945).

Part 1 General Information and location of monument

The following information was obtained on Monday 18 July 2005, from
Duchas Archaeological Archives, Department of the Environment, 51
Stephens Green, Dublin. The visit was by appointment.

Sites and Manuscript record No, 033- -

Index Map of County Dublin, 1: 5000 Series, Sheet Grid No, 2652.

Under the heading, Office of Public Works, Paper Survey.

The Monument is described as a Martello Tower / Mato.

Townland: Shenick's Island / 1081.

Parish: Holmpatrick.

Barony: Balrothery East (Poor Law Union).

County: Dublin.

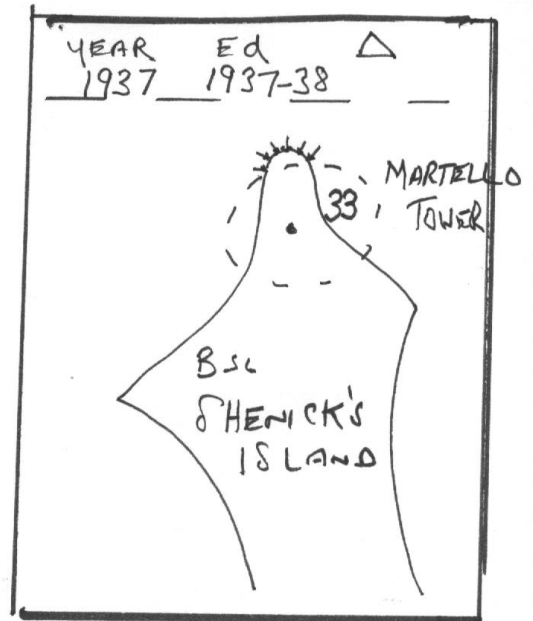
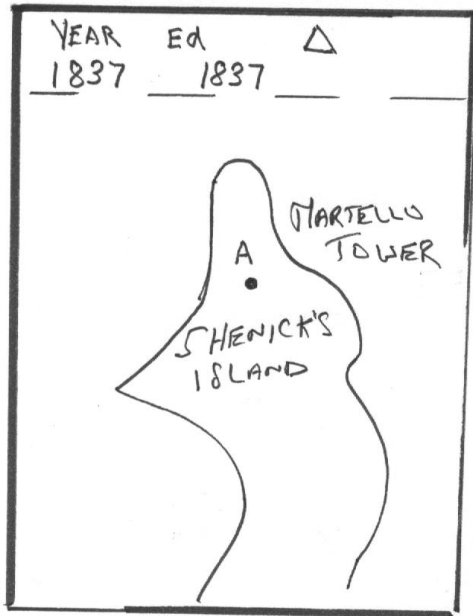
Site: (SMR) No, 033- -

Sheet: Pl: Tr: 5

Altitude, A question mark is the entry in record.

N.G.R.---Co-Ords---Status, no entry made in record

Map Designations



Printed Sources: There were no entries under this heading in the record.

Other Sources and Comments: There were no entries made in this column.

Additional information: On a separate piece of paper was typed the following:

OS 5: 12: 2 (788,255) Martello Tower OD 46 32685, 25991.

* Martello Tower * Located at the N end of Shenick's Island. It is well-preserved, squat, cylindrical tower. There is machicolation above the raised doorway in the W. Overlooks the Martello tower on Red Island, 5:33.

Another source of information.

An Roinn Ealaíon, Odheachta Gaeltachta agus Oileán. Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands. (Department of the Environment and Local Government).

The following information is contained on a CD-ROM.⁶

Reg. No. 11311040.

Map type: 1: 5000 metric

Map sheet: 2652

Site: 40

Location name: Shenick's island Martello tower

Address: Shenick's island

Townland: Townparks (BA. E. BY.)

Type: Original type, Martello tower / defence

Date: 1800-1820

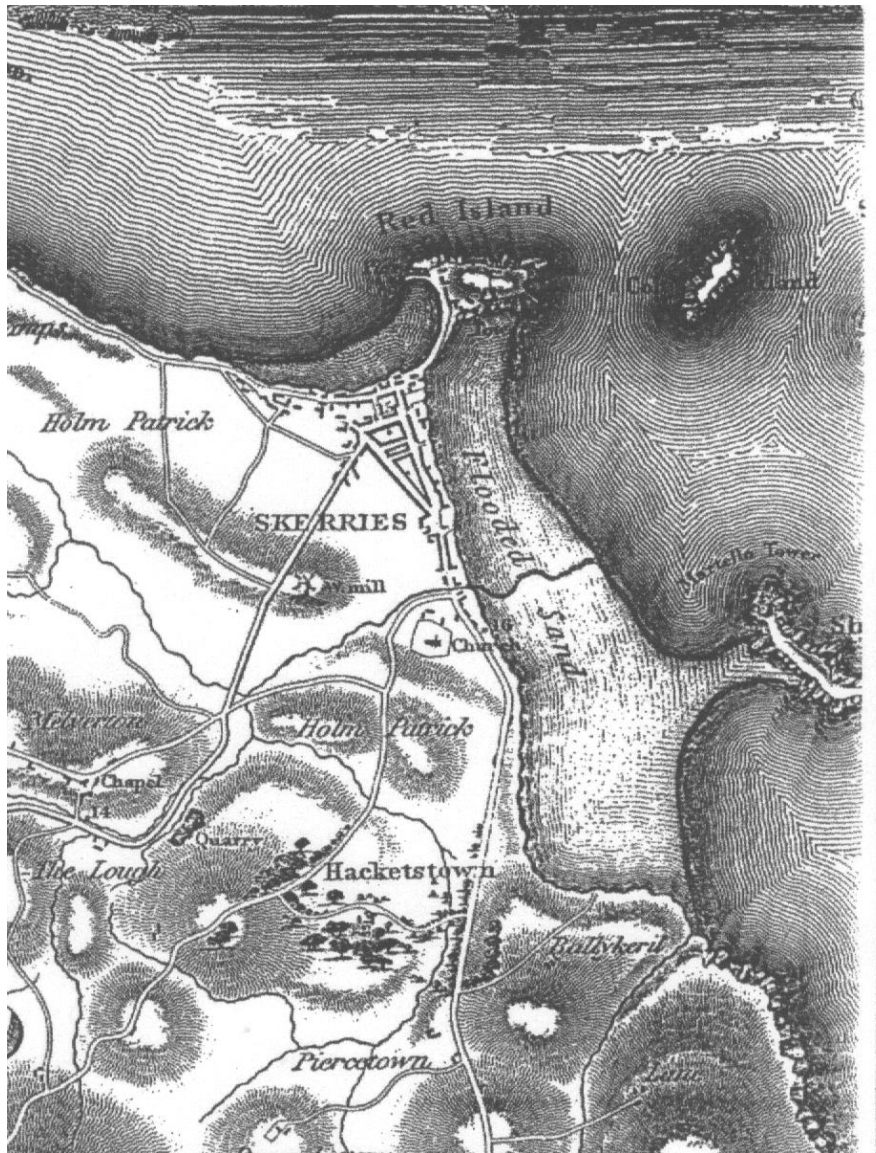
Condition: good

Composition: Martello tower, c. 1810, on a circular plan with tapered profile, having projecting machicolation supported by brackets above entrance

Evaluation: reg no, zero

⁶ The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage, NIAH, Duchas, Dun Sceine, Harcourt Lane, Dublin 2. Database and Map CD-ROMS.

Duncan's Map c. 1821



Map 2

A report in a publication called *Sites and Monument Record of County Dublin* gives the following information.

S.M.R. No as: DU 005-033.⁷

I.G.R.: (B) 0 25 61: Nat Grid 32685/25991⁸

⁷ Geraldine Stout, with others, *Sites and monuments record, County Dublin* (Office of Public Works, Dublin 1988).

⁸ *Ibid.*

Co-ordinates: Latitude 53.580 degrees. Longitude –6.110 degrees.⁹

Visited by: Peter Whearity accompanied by Rory McKenna and Laidman Doak.

Date of Visit: 2 & 10 July 2005 (see logbook).

O.S. Designations:

6- inch sheet, O.S. no 5 (county Dublin).

YEAR: corrected at 1943.

NAME: Ordnance Survey, 1: 10,560 Dublin sheet 5 & 5 a.

Duncan's Map 1821, O.S. 1838.

Larcom's Map 1837 (published 1843).

Printed Sources:

Office of Public Works, *Archaeology in County Dublin*, (Geraldine & Matthew Stout, 1993). The booklet makes reference to a monument on Shenick's Island, page 2.

Duchas, *An Introduction to the Architectural Heritage of Fingal*.

⁹ Search engine 'Google', *Tageo.com*, visited on 13 July 2005.

Hayes Manuscript. Sources for the History of Irish Civilisation.

Articles in *Irish Periodicals*, Vol, 8, Subjects, P-7, p, 549.

No entries were found regarding any Martello towers of county Dublin, only elsewhere in the country.

Military Archives, Cathal Brugha Barracks, Rathmines, Dublin,

A, Register of Sales of Towers,¹⁰ sheet gives the following information.

Station: Shenick's Island, Parish of Holmparick.

Land or buildings: tower No 10, with a road and approach.

Acreable extent of, 0 acres, 3 roods, 25 perches.

Tenure, whether in Fee, or by Lease: Fee.

From whom purchased or rented: Hans Hamilton (purchased).

Date of purchase or lease: Land purchased 1806.

Amount of purchase money: 114 pounds sterling.

Remarks: no entry in the remarks column.

Thom's Directory, 1860, p, 1399.

Off the port are the four-skerry islands, Shenex or Shenick's, the largest contains fifteen acres; on it there is a Martello tower. That nearest Skerries, is Red Island, on which also is a Martello tower; the next is Colt Island, and the farthest off, about a mile from shore, is Innis-Patrick or St Patrick's Island, continued, etc.

¹⁰ This source was made known to the author by Rory McKenna, Hampton Cove, Balbriggan, (Local Historian who has written on the subject of Martello towers).

John D'Alton, M.R.I.A., *The history of county Dublin*, (Cork, 1976), p, 221.

A bit of information about the erection of a Martello tower at Loughshinny for the purpose of protecting the haven of Skerries, but saying that there did no appear to be the need for such protection.

Public records Office, Kew, London, *Reference, W.O. 78/4624 186780*.

This relates to a sketch plan of the island and tower, showing the approach road and boundary of the property (see fig 1).¹¹

Victor J. Enoch, *The Martello Towers of Ireland* (Dublin, 1975).

This book deals exclusively with Martello towers.

Paul M. Kerrigan, *Castles and Fortifications in Ireland*, (Cork 1995).

This book also gives great information about Martello towers.

Sheila Sutcliffe, *Martello Towers* (London, 1972).

Rory McKenna, 'Martello Towers and other Coastal Defenders of the 19 Century' in, Skerries Historical Society, *Time & Tide 3* (Skerries, 2000).

Rory McKenna, 'Martello Towers', in, *Balbriggan; a history for the Millennium* (1999).

¹¹ Ibid.

This author has written much about the Martello towers of North county Dublin.

John De-Courcy, *The Liffey in Dublin* (Dublin 1996), pp. 247-48.

General information on Martello towers.

National Archive of Ireland. Griffith's Valuation 1852.

32

RATEABLE VALUATION OF TENEMENTS.
PARISH OF HOLMPATRICK.

No. and Letters of Reference to Map.	Names.		Description of Tenement.	Area.	Net Annual Value.		
	Townlands and Occupiers.	Immediate Lessors.			Land.	Buildings.	Total.
				A. R. P.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s.
1	ISLANDS. COLT ISLAND. (Ord. S. 5.) John Johnston, .	James H. Hamilton, .	Land,	7 2 5	4 0 0	—	4 0
			Total,	7 2 5	4 0 0	—	4 0
1	ST. PATRICK'S ISLAND. (Ord. S. 5.) John Johnston . .	James H. Hamilton, .	Land,	15 1 1	3 12 0	—	3 1
			Total,	15 1 1	3 12 0	—	3 1
1 — a	SHENICK'S ISLAND. (Ord. S. 5.) Patrick Derham, Royal Artillery, .	James H. Hamilton, . Board of Ordnance, .	Land,	15 0 9	8 15 0	—	8
			Martello tower and land attached,	0 1 14	—	7 0 0	7
			Total,	15 1 23	8 15 0	7 0 0	15

The Owner of the island and the Martello tower in July 2005.

Mr Noel McDonagh, 42B, Holmpatrick, Skerries, County Dublin.

Fingal County Council, who has a sewage storage tank there and also uses part of the island as a bird sanctuary, presently holds a lease.

Access:

The island is accessible at low water but wading will be necessary except for rare occasions when very low tides are experienced. However, this method of access to the site leaves only approximately one hour before the tide starts to return towards the shore with the very real danger of being left stranded. In order to have sufficient time in which to carry out the necessary survey, it is preferable if a boat is available.

Siting:

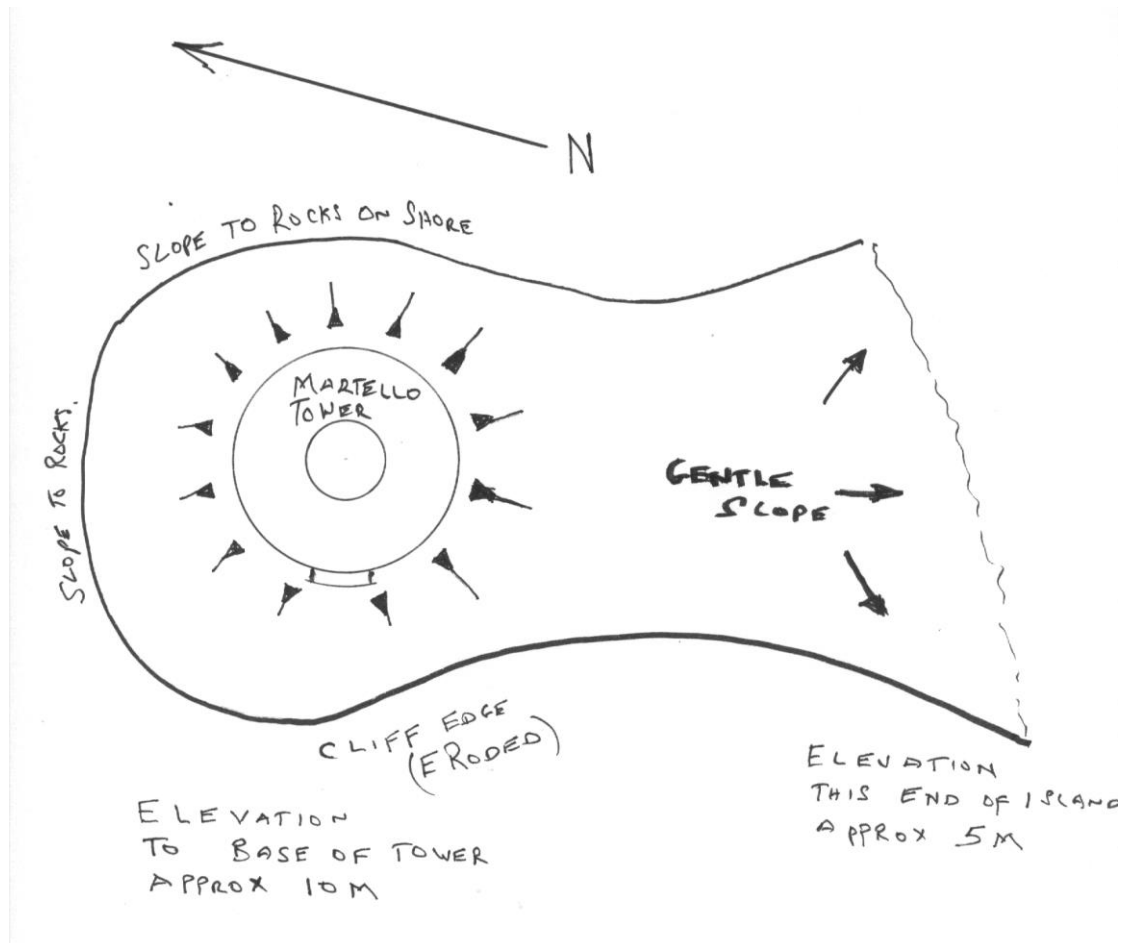
The Monument is situated on an elevated site at the northern end of a small irregularly shaped island (see fig 1) lying three-quarters of a kilometre off the coast at Skerries, County, Dublin.¹² There is no record of the elevation of the tower and a measurement of the slope using a level and plumb bob could not be carried out at this time due to nesting Fulmar's on the cliff edge and its surround.

In the meantime, by examining plate 1. Which shows the island nearly as a cross-section, it can be seen that the height from the beach to the base of the tower is similar as that of the tower itself. Therefore, the elevation to the base of the tower cannot be much more than ten metres or so, and should suffice until an exact measurement can be obtained.

As regards the inclination of the ground on which the tower is positioned, a sketch of a plan drawn by me will give an indication of how things are, but

¹² Paul M Kerrigan, *Castles and Fortifications in Ireland 1485-1945*, (Cork 1995), p, 175.

basically, the ground falls away gently enough until it nears the eroded cliff edge where it falls away precipitously to the sea-shore.



Description

The tower at Shenick's Island is an imposing, squat, circular, stone built structure with an over-hanging machicolation, which looks to the West. I intend to describe the structure in three separate parts, starting with the exterior along with photographs. Secondly, the interior is described, again with accompanying photographs, as is the top of the tower.

The exterior of the structure

See plates 1 to 6

The exterior walls of the circular shaped tower are built of rough stones of all sizes including one huge boulder on the southern lower side. The whole is plastered and rendered with a pebbledash finish, which in parts has fallen away revealing the mortared joints and allowing individual stones to be seen including the big one mentioned.

Looking at the structure from the ground, one can see that its overall condition is remarkable, apart from missing plaster, and a piece of masonry broken from the rim of the machicolation everything is still intact. Most imposing of all the external features is the machicolation; it juts out from the tower in a most impressive way. It has five corbels supporting the upper part of the machicolation, which is 3.2 m wide with a height of 5.73 m under the lower part of the corbels to the ground. The corbels measure 64 cm long by 30 cm wide at the top, tapering to 25 cm at its lower end. The machicolation has two square holes in its outer face and the spaces between the corbels are left clear for the purpose of engaging with an enemy.

The other features is the entrance passage way which is central under the machicolation, the base of which is 2.7 m from the ground and is 77 cm wide by 1.67 m high, and the iron fittings for the door are still protruding from the walls.

Also to be seen from the ground are several openings through the wall into the interior, the larger of these are 400 millimetres square with the remnants of iron bars protruding from the stone like rotten teeth. These openings, some of which are only narrow slits are to allow light and air to enter the interior of the building and light the spiral stairway.

The base of the tower has a circumference of 36.3 m which when divided by 3.142 gives a diameter of 11.5 m but from there the walls taper inwards, the batter angle, at 82 mm per metre (five degrees) until the stringer course of stone is reached at which point the tower is about 1.3 m narrower. The stringer course itself is 7.33 m to its underside.

The height from the ground to the outer edge of the parapet is 8.53 m, and the overall height to the very top of the tower is 9.29 m.

The ground surrounding the tower has a gentle slope for about 3 m before falling away to a more precipitous cliff on the western side and a lesser slope on the other sides (see figure 1).

To the southeast of the tower there is a stone built privy, which measures 1.73 m wide, by 1.94 m long and 2.65 m high. Near the privy, are two granite boundary stones, one still standing and the other lying on the ground, these measured 2 m long by 25 cm square, but only dressed for the top 1 m.

At ninety degrees to the machicolation on either side were two openings, one at 1.85 m to its base and the other just under the stringer course of stone. The dimensions of these holes are 42 cm Square for the lower and 40 cm wide by 30 cm high for the upper ones; these were to allow light and air into the interior.

The orientation of the tower is best described by stating that the machicolation looks to the west, which is away from the direction from which, an attack might come.

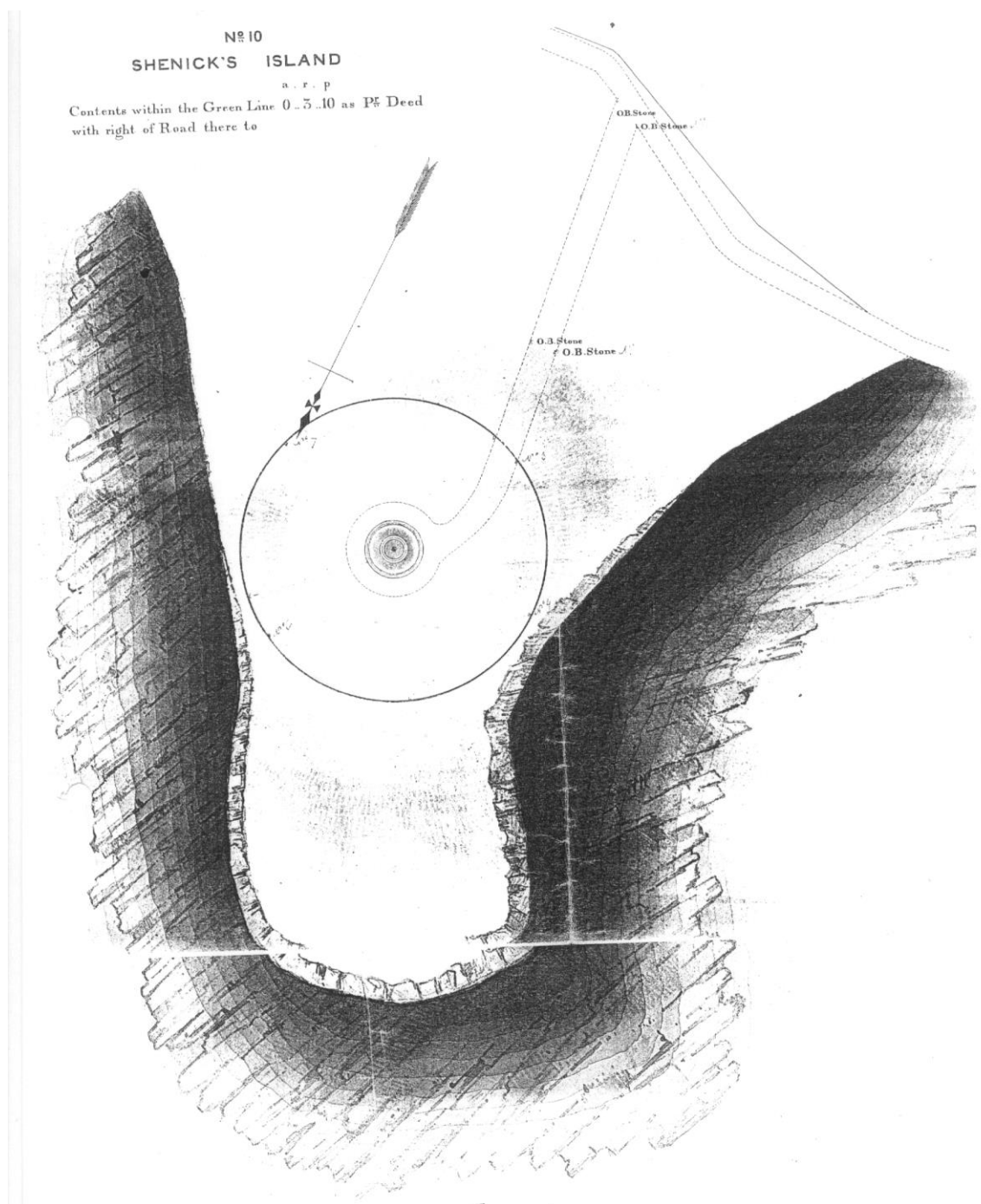
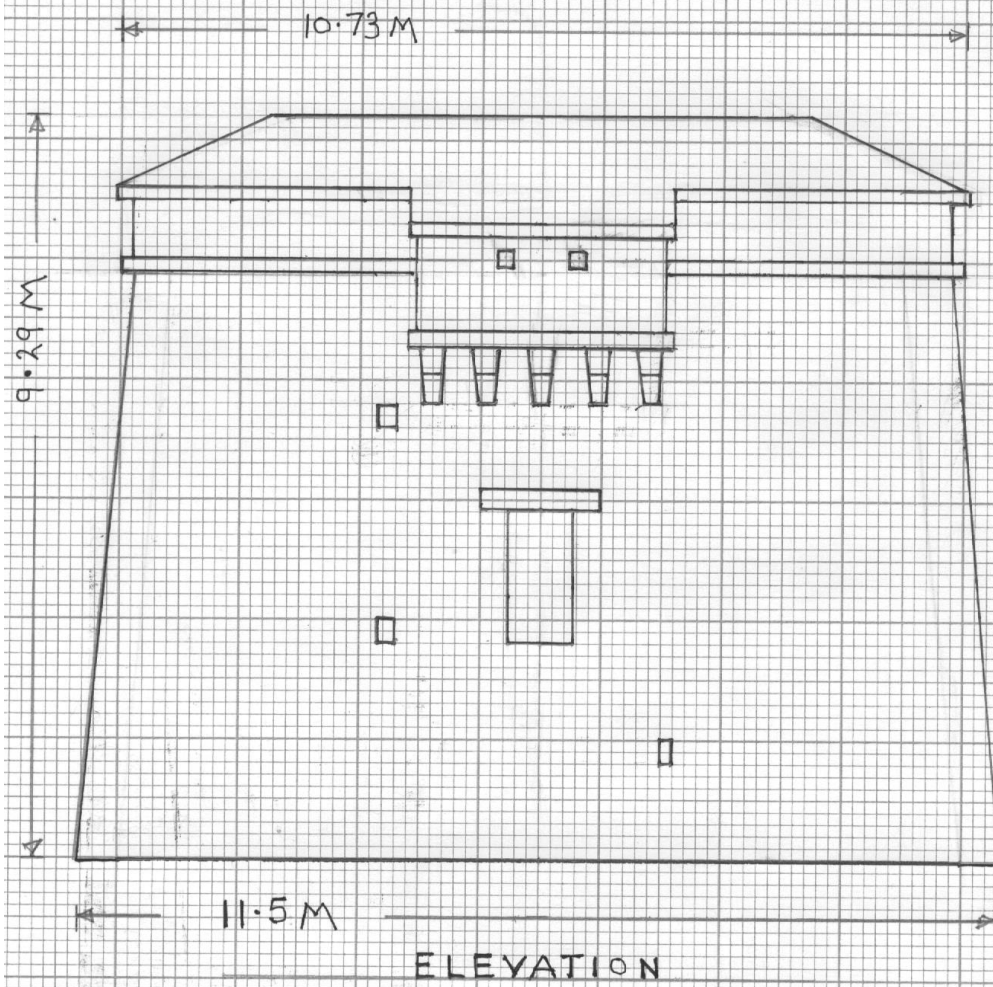
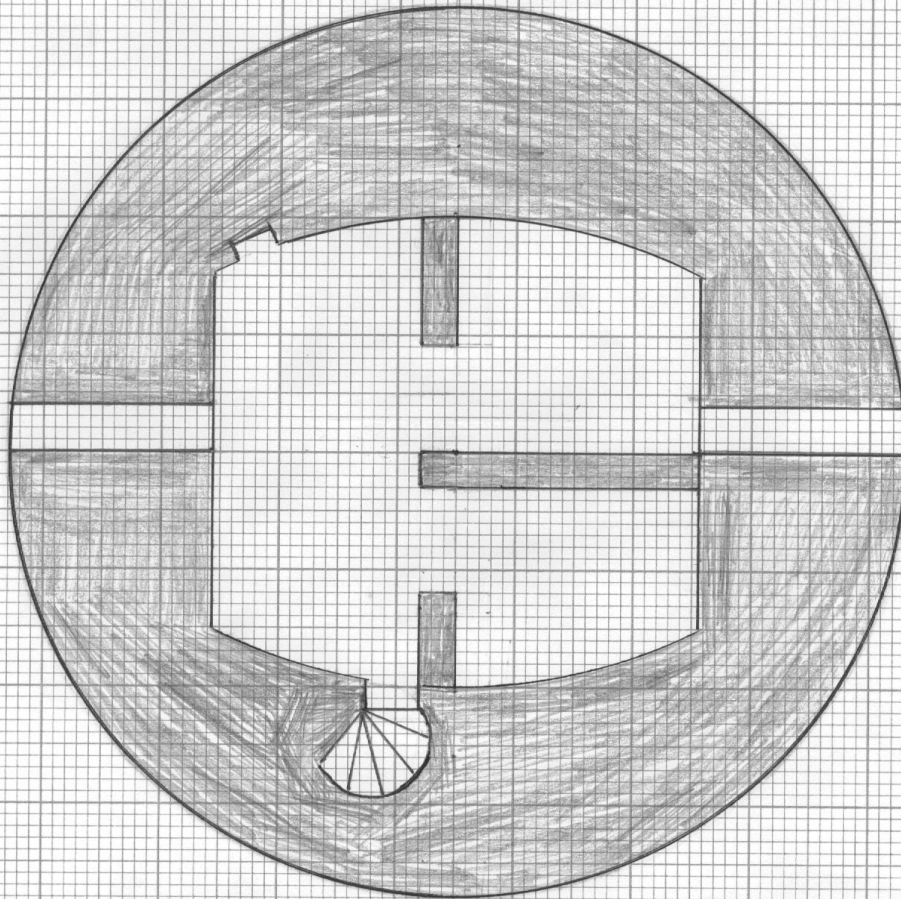


Figure 1

SCALE 1:75

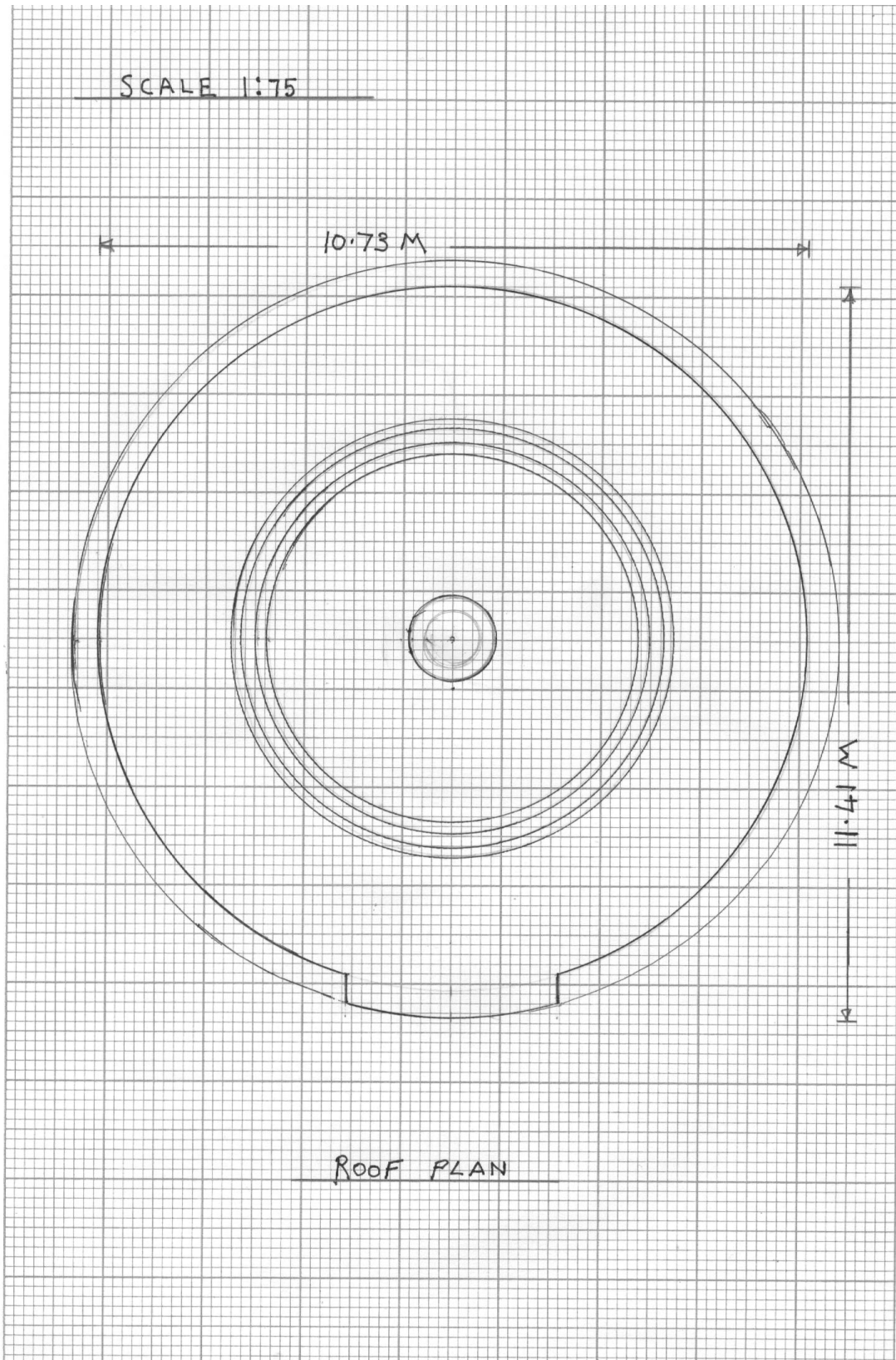


SCALE 1:75



ENTRANCE SIDE

GROUND FLOOR PLAN



EXTERIOR PHOTOGRAPHS

Plate 1 looking north-east

Plate 2 the front elevation



EXTERIOR PHOTOGRAPHS

Plate 3 looking north

Plate 4 looking east



EXTERIOR PHOTOGRAPHS

Plate 5 boundary marker
Plate 6 privy and second boundary marker



The interior of the structure

See plates 7 to 12

Internally, the tower is in very good condition with the ground floor dividing walls still standing along with one wooden floor joist spanning the entire width of the interior space with other timbers lying where they fell. Some of the wooden pegs, which were used in place of nails in the gun- powder room, can still be seen. The internal space is square shaped with two curving and two straight walls opposite each other and rising up to a domed ceiling. The height from the floor to the domed ceiling is 6.4 m at the centre point and 4.4 m at the corners.

The length of the entrance passageway is 2.44 m from outside to inside and this is the actual thickness of the wall throughout the tower. It is so thick that the spiral staircase can be accommodated within it and yet does not make it unduly weak.

Looking into the interior from this passageway the wall immediately under ones feet is curved, as is the wall on the opposite side, the dimension at the centre is 6.09 m while at the corners is 4.5 m. The distance between the two straight sides to the left and right is 6.2 m. The position of the walls show that the space was divided into three rooms on the ground floor, the largest of these is 2.6 m wide by 6 m long. The other two rooms are small, the one nearer measuring 3.0 m wide by 2.3 m long and the second room 3.0 m wide by 3.0 m long. Although it should be mentioned that none of these rooms have four square sides.

On what was the second floor the space appears to have been all one room, and the walls in that portion including the ceiling are plastered unlike those on the ground floor, which were left rough. The remnants of two fireplaces, one on each level is still in place in the left corner from the viewer, and both iron fire grates are still there.

The entrance to the spiral stairway is on your immediate left side when looking in and its 34 steps each with a rise of 15 cm bring one to the top of the tower.

The central wall, which is 39 cm thick, runs 6.09 m across the full width between the curved walls, and built off the centre-line by 40 cm. The space to the viewer's right-hand is divided into two small unequally sized rooms with a much larger room taking up the rest of the space.

The holes for the wooden floor joists can be seen and they ran from right to left across the central wall along with the remains of a wooden wall plate on which the joists were secured.

The height from the floor to the top of the dividing walls and therefore the ceiling height of the ground floor rooms is 2.3m, although, due to the debris on the floor this figure is not exact. The timber joists measured 230 mm high by 75 mm wide by 6.2 m long, plus whatever extra length was needed to enter the wall. The joist holes are spaced at 30 cm apart thereby making fifteen in total. Cut into the walls to both left and right are two square openings 60 X 60 cm, which slope upwards at 37 cm per metre towards the outside where the remains of iron bars can be seen. These openings along with several others appear to have the purpose of allowing light and air to enter. The ground floor is covered with much organic material, probably

brought in by feral pigeons, which were seen flying about, for nesting purposes. Some walls were covered by green slime and water may be entering from a crack in the ceiling on which calcium deposits can be seen otherwise the interior is in good order.

INTERIOR PHOTOGRAPHS

Plate 7 ground floor
Plate 8 interior walls



INTERIOR PHOTOGRAPHS

Plate 9 domed ceiling
Plate 10 ground floor rooms



INTERIOR PHOTOGRAPHS

Plate 11 passageway to outside and doors to spiral stairway ground level room

Plate 12 fireplace on second level



The top of the tower and parapet

See plates 13 to 18

Up on the roof of the structure the masonry looks in great order and there is no sign of the suspected crack seen in the ceiling underneath.

Standing on the roof and looking around, ones attention is drawn to the huge circular stone in the centre with the masonry floor sloping away towards the outer walls. The incline leads towards a gully at the edge of two large steps and then to a single hole which goes into the interior and was intended to take rainwater to a water tank long since gone.

The parapet walls rise up all around to a height of 1.9 m from the lowest incline of the floor, which includes the thickness of the two steps on which a man could look out over the parapet. The diameter between the inner parapet walls is 6.23 m and that of the outer parapet walls 10.73 m. This dimension increases somewhat when measured out over the machicolation to 11.41 m, because the latter juts out the entrance door. The width of the parapet over the machicolation is 2.93, while elsewhere it is 2.25 m. The parapet is faced with both granite and limestone slabs each grouped together but otherwise in no particular order, possibly there was insufficient granite to cover the whole surface with that material. The parapet, at its very top level, the highest part of the tower, after 20 cm of flat stone it then slopes away towards the outer edge at an angle of thirteen degrees from the horizontal. The dimensions given above are those taken along the horizontal line, through the centre of the tower and in a straight line, the angular sizes would be larger.

Inside the parapet walls again, can be seen the inner iron rail on which the gun carriage ran, but the outer rail which sat on one of the steps is missing, presumably taken away when the gun was removed. A note, the existing inner rail was made in two halves before fitting into position and presumably the outer rail was made in similar fashion for ease bringing to the site.

Taking a line through the centre of the tower, using the middle of the machicolation and the entrance door as a datum, and giving it the designation 90 degrees. Then to one side the entrance to the machicolation, which is off the centre, line is at 100 degrees. On the other side, the door to the spiral stair way is at 75 degrees and the area where the shot oven is located is between 60 and 30 degrees, Using the compass and taking a reading from it and relating it to the datum line then north is at 45 degrees from the centre of the machicolation.

Other dimensions are, the diameter of the spiral stair way is 1.36 m, the entrance into the machicolation is 70 cm wide by 1.37 m high, the entrance to the stairs is 87 cm wide by 1.37 high, the two entrances to either side of the shot oven are 54 cm wide by 1.37 m high and one is open at the top. The murder hole, which is 73 cm wide by 62 cms long, and is reached by four steps leading down into the area over the so-called murder hole. The front wall of the machicolation is 54 cm thick and punctuated by two square holes 18 cm through the wall, probably these were intended for hoisting materials up into the tower.

Around the periphery of the inner parapet walls hang six heavy iron rings 15 cm in diameter, spaced concentrically around the wall at the mid level, their function was to hold the gun carriage in place.

The central massive circular stone block, with a 60 mm diameter iron bar protruding from the top and around which the gun carriage rotated. This block measured 78 cm in diameter and sat 39 cm off another circular stone, 1.22 m diameter and 15 cm off the floor level, it appears that these heavy stones may be held down by leaded iron bars and these can be seen at the surface.

The oven for heating the gun- shot (large cannon balls) is in remarkable condition and the irons in the fire grate are still intact, although somewhat corroded now, but considering the maritime environment with its salty air, perhaps it's something extraordinary that the iron survived until now.

The view over the parapet is excellent, giving a full 360 degrees of observation to both lookout and gun over the immediate area of coast and sea.

ROOFTOP PHOTOGRAPHS

Plate 13 below the parapet

Plate 14 looking into the machicolation



ROOFTOP PHOTOGRAPHS

Plate 15 looking down the murder-hole
Plate 16 the shot furnace



TWO ALTERNATE VIEWS

Plate 17 view over the parapet towards Skerries
Plate 18 view from Holmpatrick towards Shenick's Island



Part 2

A Reconstruction

What did the monument look like originally and how was it modified over time?

When the Martello tower on Shenick's Island was built in 1804/05, it would have been something of a phenomenon, an island which hitherto had nothing but scutch grass growing on it, suddenly had a huge stone tower emanating from its highest point, what must the locals have made of the sight? Definitely, surprise and amazement would have been the order of the day, would they have known about the Napoleonic war, not much perhaps.

The structure was built using rubble limestone, which was probably quarried locally; there were several small quarries on the outskirts of the town then. The outside of the building was coated with plaster and pebbledash, and the pebble looks like that found on the shoreline in the immediate vicinity of the tower. The entrance was on the landward side and its opening was fortified by a double planked wooden door, covered with iron sheeting on its exterior.¹³

Over the entrance was as an imposing machicolation with five corbels and their associated openings for launching an attack on an enemy at the door.

Inside the tower, the first floor provided living accommodation for the small garrison, while the vaulted ceiling supported the gun platform above.¹⁴ On the ground floor, there were three rooms, unequal in size where the gunpowder and shot were kept. The upper or second floor was not divided and was used for the living and sleeping quarters, it had a fireplace as did the ground floor,

¹³ Paul M. Kerrigan, *Castles and Fortifications in Ireland*, (Cork 1995), p, 169.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

but the walls here were plastered and this room had the luxury of the high domed ceiling. On the roof was the gun carriage, which carried a single 24-pounder cannon¹⁵, capable of firing a red-hot ball up to one one and a third kilometres in a 360-degree arc.

As regards how the monument was modified over time, the answer is, hardly any at all, of course the timber constituents have dissolved away but this tower, probably due to its inaccessibility and lack of a reliable water supply, has remained relatively unscathed by the interference of man. As regards a water supply, there is a well on the southeast corner of the island but it is difficult to imagine how it could be relied upon in dry conditions on such a small island.

Plate.19 The water well



¹⁵ Rory McKenna, 'Martello Towers and other Coastal Defenders of the 1800s', in, *Skerries Historical Society*, paper No. 202, (Skerries, 1997).

How is the monument dated?

In answering this question there is no difficulty whatsoever, the land for the tower was taken under the *Defence Act, 44, King George 111*, at the beginning of the nineteenth century. After the outbreak of war between the French and British in May 1803, the military authorities were soon engaged on an ambitious programme of defence works. An estimate for 67,000 pounds sterling was budgeted for the building of towers and batteries on the east coast from Bray to Balbriggan. It was thought as early as 1795, by the Earl of Carhampton, that the coastline at Skerries was vulnerable to a landing by the French and that something should be done to stop this from happening.¹⁶

Thus, the timeframe was between 1795, when the idea was first mooted, and 1802/03, when money was set aside for the work, and 1804/05, when the tower was erected at Shenick's island.¹⁷

¹⁶ Paul M. Kerrigan, *Castles and Fortifications in Ireland*, (Cork 1995), p, 167.

¹⁷ Cathal Brugha barracks Archive, *Return of all lands and tenements (including clearance rights) purchased or leased for more than 21 years in the United Kingdom and Channel islands, List of purchase of land for Martello towers*. P, 23.

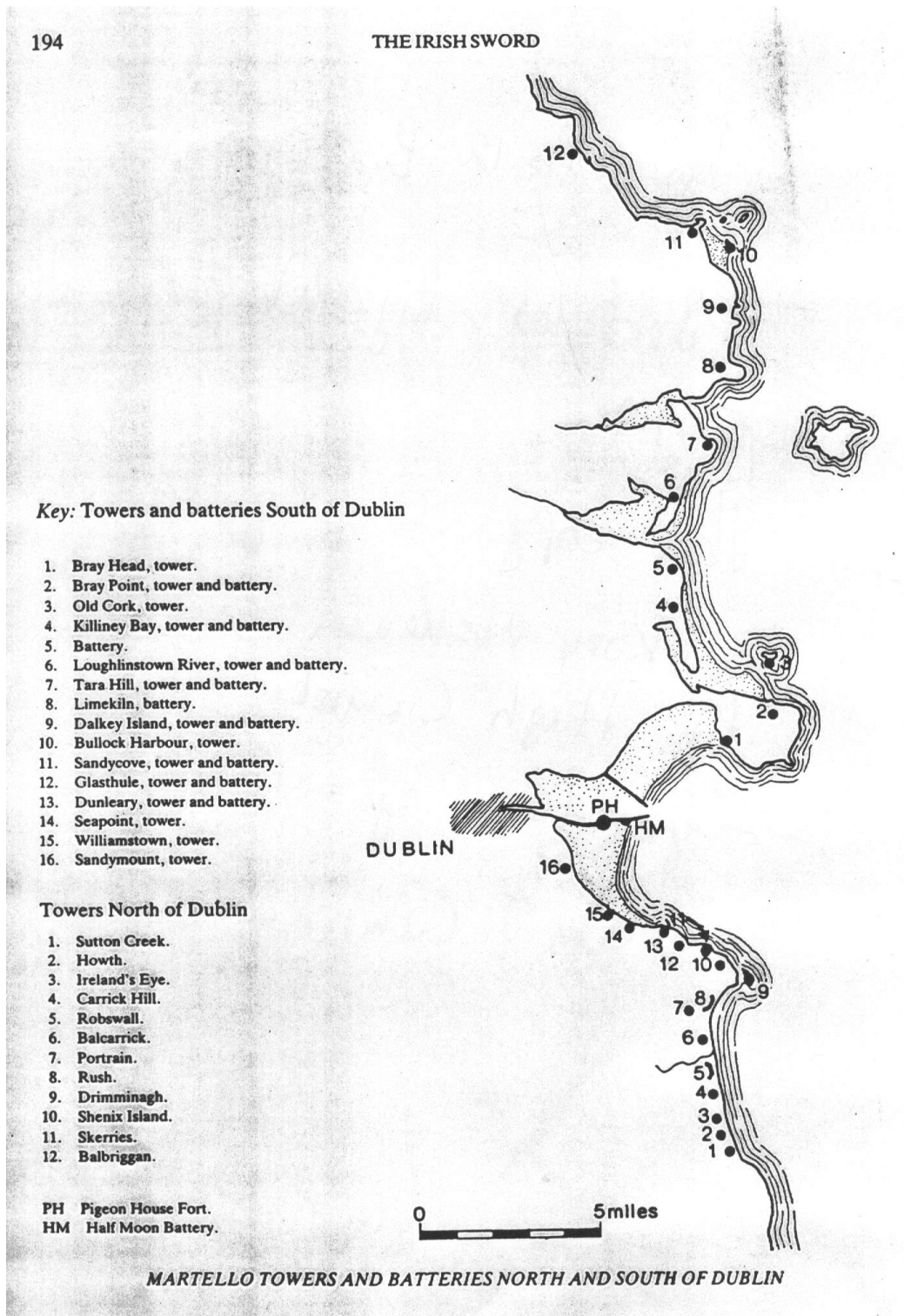
What other examples can this monument be compared with?

When it comes to providing examples of this monument with others, there are many to choose from. However, it would be wrong to think that all are the same because this is not the case; each is different in its own way. Figure. 2, shows the positions and the designated number of each one along the east coast of Ireland.

For the purposes of this study the towers at Red island (No. 11) and at Drumanagh, Loughshinny, (No. 9) and at Balbriggan, (No. 12) may be used as comparators.

Some of the more notable differences to be seen are as follows.

1. A difference in the quality of stone used in the building of the exterior and on the parapet of those towers. For example, No 11 has cut limestone blocks, finely finished and no plaster on its exterior, whereas No 10 was built with rubble type stone and rendered with plaster and pebbledash. It may be that the paucity of use of granite on No 10 may have been because it is not produced locally, the nearest supply being at Dalkey.
2. The interior arrangements of the rooms and staircase and other things like fireplaces are totally opposite between No 10, and No 9. The former has the stairs on the left hand side while looking in from the entrance, while Drumanagh is on the right.

Figure.2¹⁸

¹⁸ Paul M. Kerrigan, 'Minorca and Ireland-an architectural connection: the Martello towers of Dublin Bay' in, *The Irish Sword*, No.15, vol.15 (1983), p. 194.

3. Another difference may relate to the capacity of the internal water tanks, those at towers No 11 and 12, were larger, (1200 gallon), while at No 10, the tank size appears to have been considerably smaller, (350 gallon),¹⁹ but why this should be so is a mystery.

These are just some of the more obvious major differences, which spring to mind, and there are probably less obvious ones to be found.

¹⁹ Rory McKenna, Local Historian, Balbriggan, interviewed by me on 10 July 2005.

What does one learn from an examination of this monument that cannot be learned from the documentary sources?

No matter how good the documentary sources are, there is no substitute for getting out into the field and seeing for ones self the actual physical conditions on the ground so to speak. They say that a picture paints a thousand words and nothing in the documents prepares one for the sheer physical size of a Martello tower looming up close in front of your eyes. The structures are massively built and even though they were built in relative haste, no compromises were allowed in the quality of the materials or workmanship employed.

Another thing that is hard to fathom from documents is how well the monument has stood the test of time and weather it has suffered from the interfering hand of man. Also, although the documents may be excellent, how up to date are they, in the Ireland of today when the earth-moving equipment can do so much work in a matter of hours, only a visit to the site will confirm that all is well there.

In the case of the towers in the vicinity of Skerries, county Dublin, the documentary sources are relatively poor in information, therefore one must visit the site itself to gather the necessary information. A few points may be made to ascertain what the essential differences between documentary sources and an actual field trip to the site can be made here.

An example of what can be learned within minutes of arriving at the site is the complete absence of any destructive forces other than nature being at play here. Unlike at Balbriggan tower, where the top part was removed for house

building, leaving it disfigured and looking unsightly. Shenick's tower did not suffer the fate of that at Drumanagh, either, where anti social elements broke down the interior walls to make more room for their drinking parties and also sprayed the interior with aerosol paint, leaving graffiti everywhere on the walls.

The tower at Red island was modified and partially built into a dwelling house thereby despoiling the structures integrity in a major way. The Shenick's tower, on the other-hand, has been mostly left as it was, and although it was lived in for brief periods during the summer months in the past, no structural alterations appear to have been carried out. From fig.1, which shows how the sites boundaries and approach roads were laid out at the time of construction, an examination now reveals a totally different picture. The roads are nowhere to be seen, and many of the boundary stones (granite) are now fallen, although these are presumably still on the site under soil, as some are still standing. The documentary sources do not mention that the remains of a very fine cut stone privy are still there although now minus a roof. These, and other pieces of information such as those points made below, all go towards filling in the blank spaces in the jig-saw which in turn helps to bring into focus the entire picture of the monument known today as the Shenick's island Martello tower.

1. Firstly, is the monument still in existence and is it where it is supposed to be according to the documents?
2. Is it in any imminent danger from interference from farmers, developers, etc?

3. Does the actual physical state of it relate to what the documents say and if not, is it better or worse?
4. Can anything extra be added to the documentary evidence already available as a result of ones visits to the site?

To conclude, in the case of the Shenick's island tower, it would appear that there was ample room for additional information to be gathered from field trips and hopefully this information can at some stage in the future be added to those sources, thus increasing the data-base on the monument in question.

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