

Address of Site: Convent Field, Ham Lane, Lewes. TQ41710956

Date: 4th September 2017

Excavation conducted by:
Steve Corbett, Eva Corbett, Rob Davis & Bob Williams

Weather: Wet

Summary:

A 1m x 1m test pit was dug in an area identified by a geophysical survey (David Staveley 08/17).

The first 15cm excavated may have been dressed at some time as part of the playing field.

The next 5cm consisted of more coarse components, 3 – 5 % flint and chalk. This increased after 5cm to 75% flint, chalk and mortar. This was a solid surface and may have been a compacted floor or yard surface.

A 50cm x 50cm sondage was dug to a depth of 30cm in the south east corner of the test pit and showed that the floor surface had an average depth of 7cm. Below this the soil was dark and firm and contained no coarse components or finds.

No further excavation was carried out and the test pit back filled.

Finds:

Finds consisted of:

001 - Modern CBM, Flint, Slate, Glass & Coal.

002 – Clay pipe, CBM, Pot & Flint

003 – Bone, CBM, Pot & Flint

004 - None

Date: 4th September 2017

Prepared by Steve Corbett ENHAS

A GPR survey on Convent Field, Lewes

by David Staveley

Introduction

The author was asked to survey an area of Convent Field, Lewes, ahead of its use as a bonfire site by one of the bonfire societies. The site is cut into the edge of a spur of land on the south side of Lewes, abutting the floodplain of the River Ouse. Unfortunately, some sports furniture had been left on the southern part of the site, so that part of the site has not been surveyed.

Lidar



EA 2m DTM, partially transparent hillshade over pseudo-colour height map

Methodology

The survey area (60m E-W and 55m N-S) was set out and recorded using a Javad Triumph-LS RTK netrover. The areas were then surveyed walking N-S with lines spaced 0.5m apart and to a depth of 30ns using an Utsi Goundvue 3A cart with a 400MHz antenna. The data

was processed using ReflexW with Dynamic Correction, Background Removal, Gain and Bandpass filters applied. Estimated depths are given based on a wave velocity of 0.8m/s, in turn based on curve fitting of point hyperbolae from the survey area. Enveloped timeslices of interesting layers are given to illustrate the results.

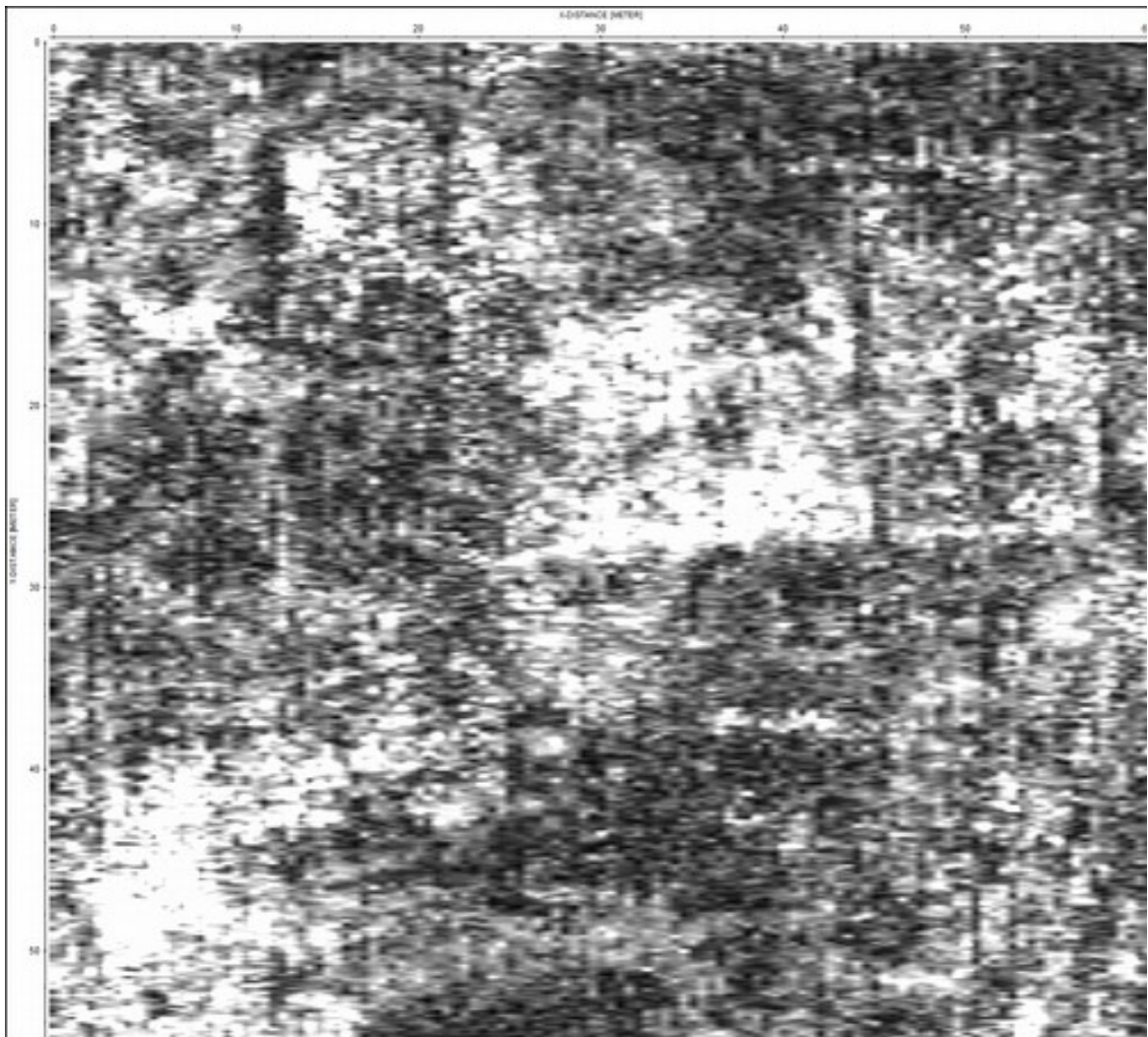
Results



Timeslice at 1ns (~5cm)



Timeslice at 4ns (~15cm)



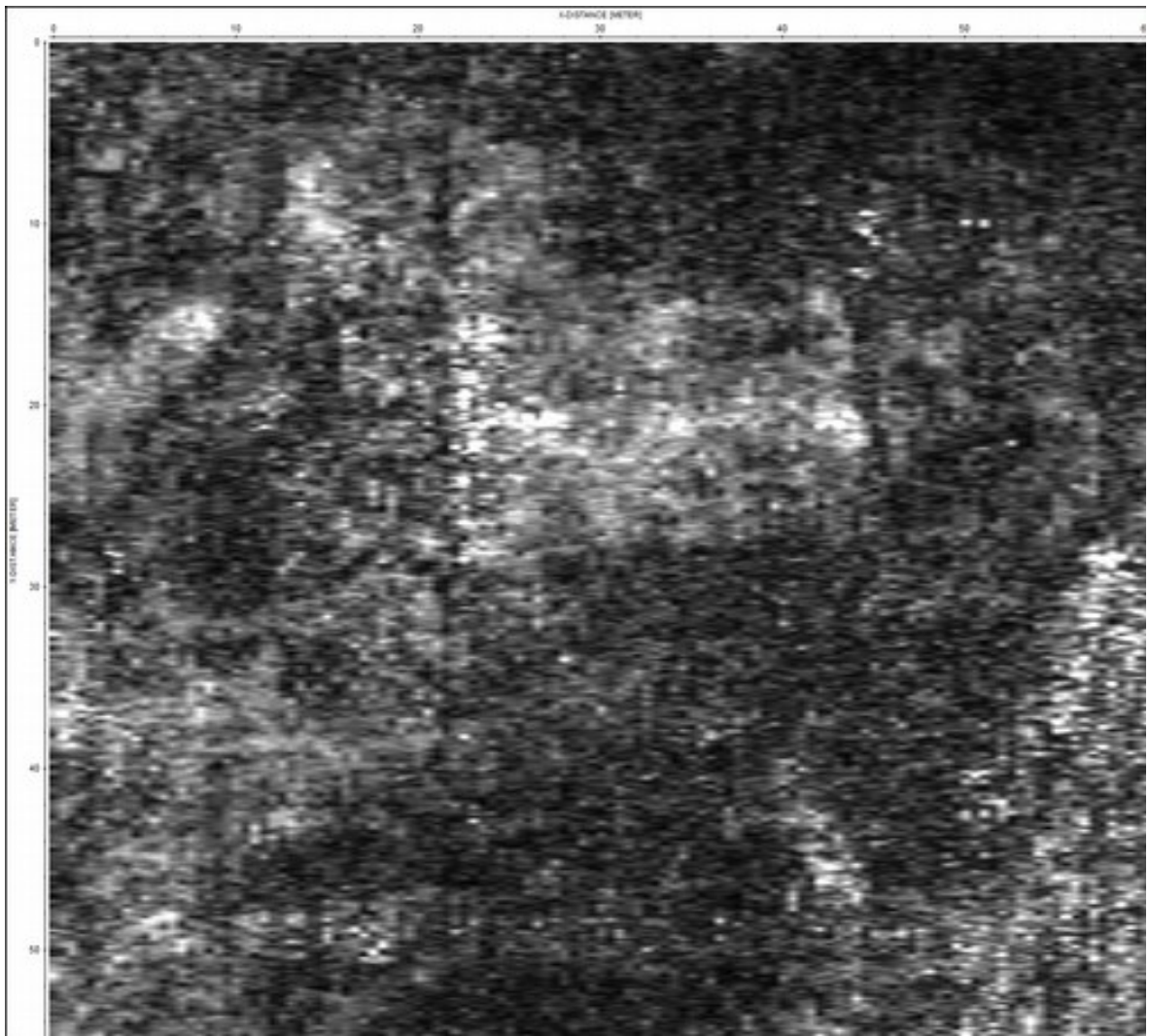
Timeslice at 6ns (~25cm)



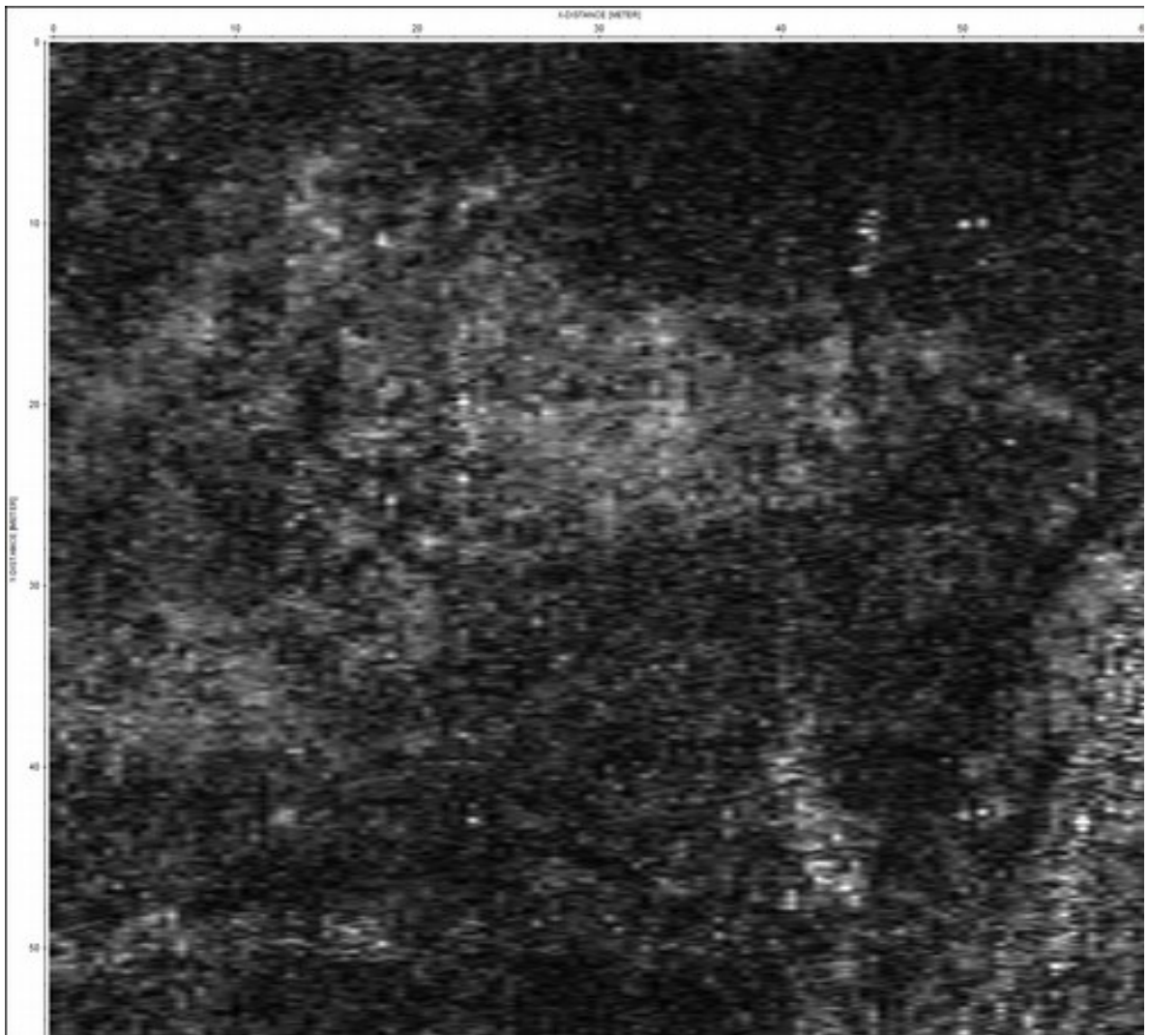
Timeslice at 7ns (~30cm)



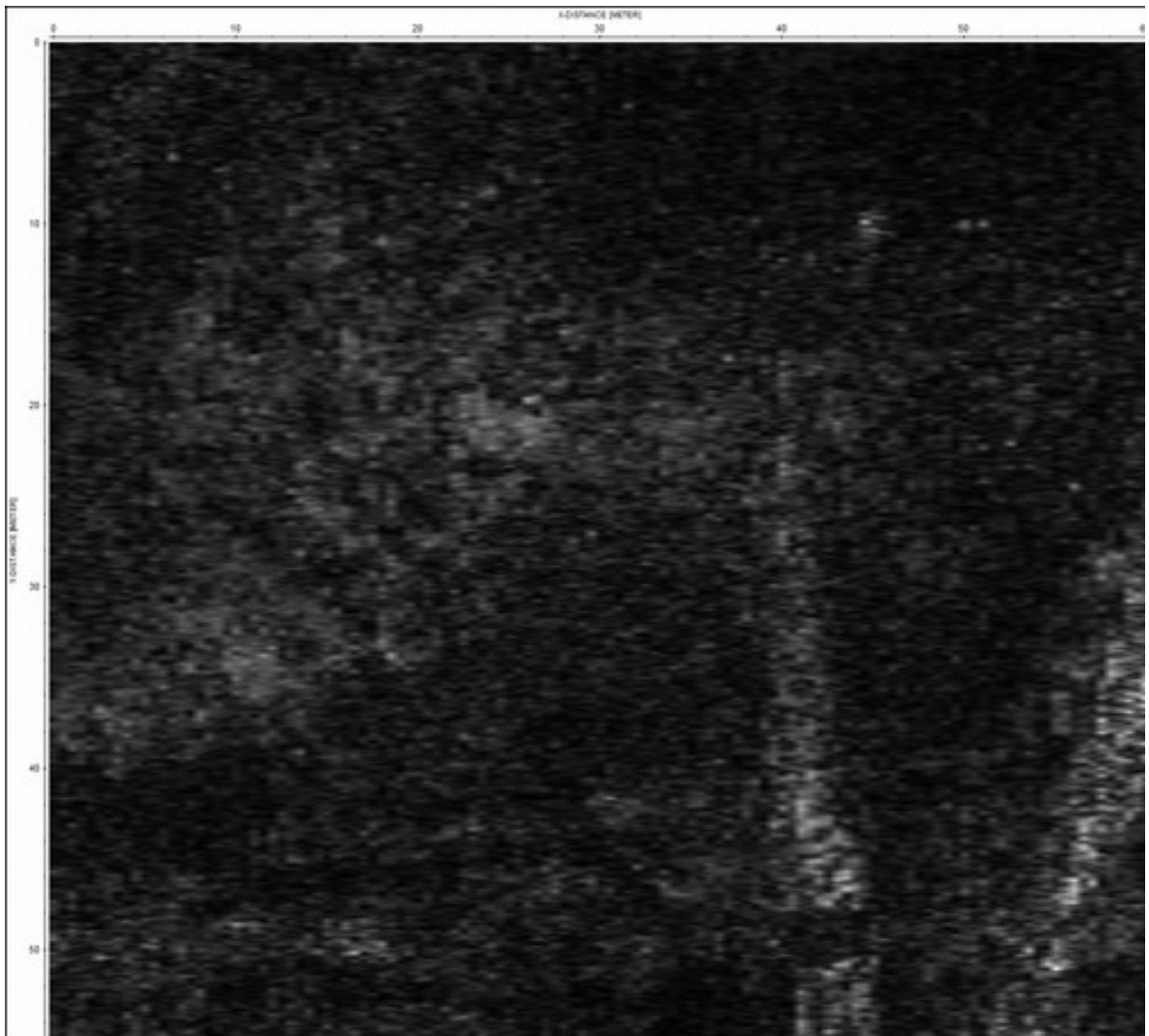
Timeslice at 8ns (~30cm)



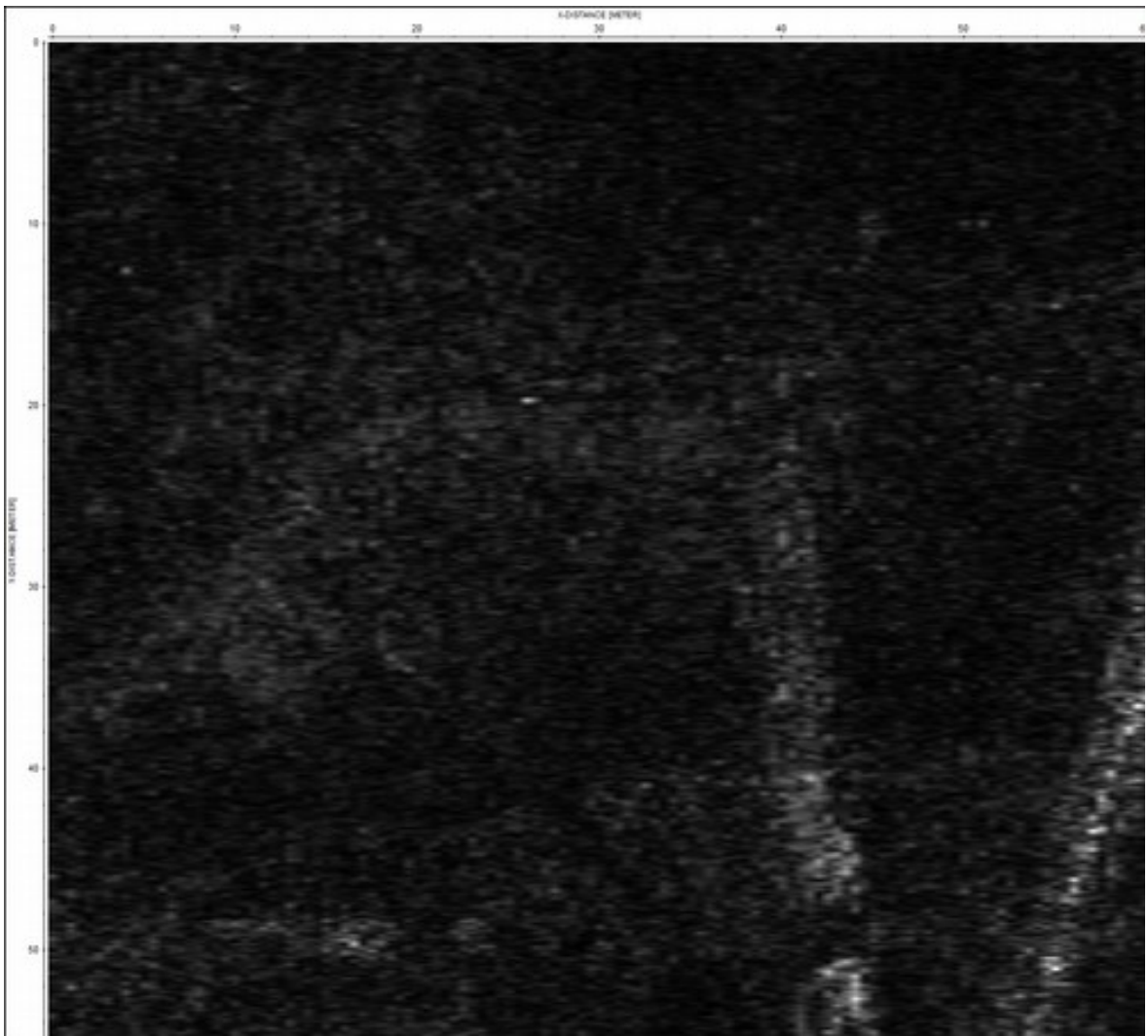
Timeslice at 10ns (~40cm)



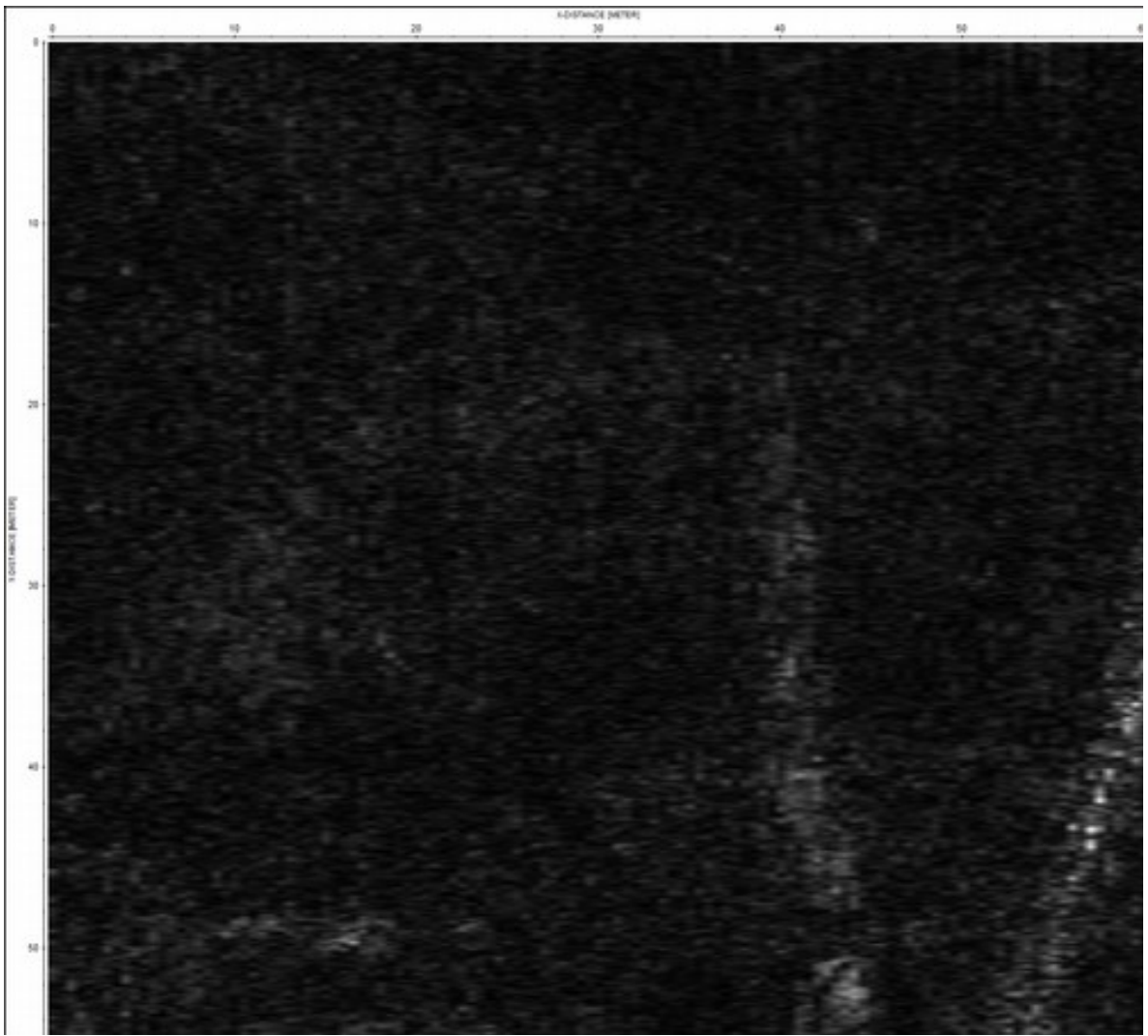
Timeslice at 12ns (~45cm)



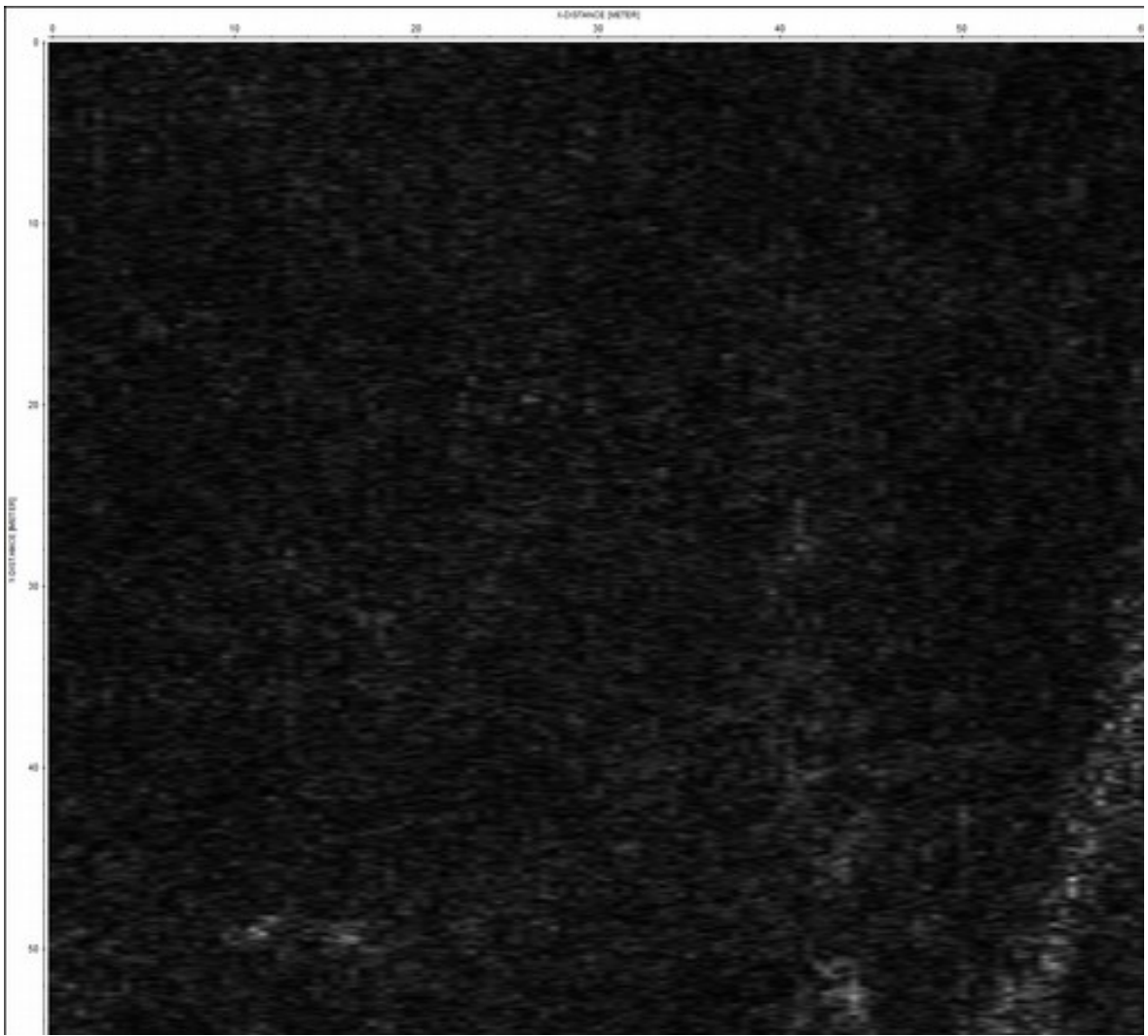
Timeslice at 14ns (~55cm)



Timeslice at 16ns (~65cm)



Timeslice at 18ns (~70cm)



Timeslice at 20ns (~80cm)

Interpretation



Negative cut features are shown in red.

More solid features are shown in light green.

Less solid features are shown in dark green.

The area of possible hard standing is shown in orange.

A) This feature is a very broad ditch. It appears quite close to the surface at 2ns (~10cm) and is visible in the western part to a depth of around 25ns (~100cm) where it seems to have a roughly V shaped profile. It seems to be below, and earlier than, feature D, and the material from that feature fills feature A. making it more visible at depth in the area of feature D. The relationship with feature H is uncertain, but H is probably later and cuts this feature. This feature cuts feature B and is later than it. Feature C is later than feature A and cuts it. This feature is mostly likely a continuation of the large field drain shown on the lidar just to the east of the survey area, which has since been backfilled.

B) This feature seems to be a metallised trackway. It starts to make an appearance at 8ns (~30cm) to the southern end and disappears around 20ns (~80cm). It is earlier than both features A and D. Feature A cuts it, feature D is just at a higher level.

C) This feature seems to be a utility, with a wide excavation trench associated with it. It is visible from the surface, and hence is most likely modern, and continues at least to the recorded depth of 30ns (~120cm). The cut for this feature may be wider than is shown, but the clearest cut is shown on the interpretation image. This feature cuts feature A.

D) This is a very complex multi-part feature, which the interpretation image does not do full justice. It is a layer of semi-solid material of varying thickness and depth. It appears from around 3ns (~10cm), mainly to the south-west and continues to a maximum depth of around 18ns (~70cm). The place where it appears the deepest is centred on the letter H on the interpretation image, where it appears to sink in a bowl shape not otherwise shown on the image. This may be due to subsidence, but is more likely more flat than it appears, but appears to sink in this area due to the wave velocity changing due to water leaking from feature H. The eastern part has a fairly rectangular form, but the western part is more amorphous. This feature is later than features A and B, and probably related in some way to feature E. As for interpretation, this feature may be a large area of hard standing, but another possibility is a dump of rubbish. Speaking to a groundman while the survey was taking place, it is known that there was a rubbish dump to the south-west. It may be that dump extends into this area also.

E) Seemingly related to the more regular eastern part of feature D, this slight rectangular feature appears from around 5ns (~20cm) to a depth of 10ns (~40cm). It has the horizontal appearance of a foundation, but its vertical profile is too weak and insubstantial to be a building. It is most likely an oddly formed extension to feature D.

F) This negative cut feature may extend further north and south, but is only visible in this area due to the presence of the features either side. It is most likely related to those features, being on the same alignment.

G) Another negative cut, similar in form to feature F

H) This is probably a small utility cut. It's relationship to the other features is uncertain, due to a lack of clarity on the results, but is most likely later than them. It may be a water pipe that is leaking around the point marked H.

Conclusion

Suitability for a bonfire site is variable across the site. The south-east corner should be avoided. If feature D is a rubbish dump, that may be ignited by extreme heat, but if feature H is leaking water, that would mitigate the situation. There doesn't appear to be any archaeological features important enough to be affected by a bonfire site.*

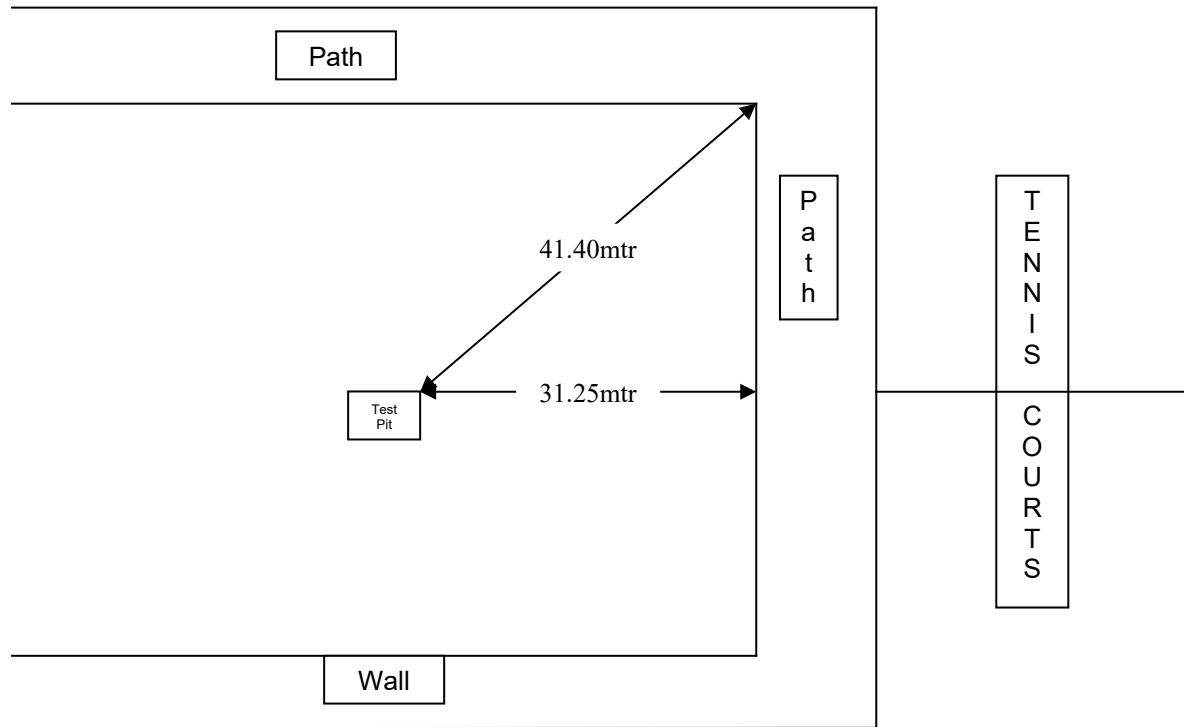
*After excavation permission for the site to be used for a bonfire was refused.

Excavation Photos





Convent Field Test Pit Location.



Not to scale

41.40mtrs from the corner gate.

31.25mtrs from the fence and between the two tennis courts.

S. Corbett ENHAS

04/09/2017