

DRAFT

Archaeological Excavation of an Underground Structure Located in The Long Shrubbery at Coleshill

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Brief abstract summarising what was done and key findings – short paragraph

It was decided to investigate the site again after a previous visit. Not enough time was allowed previously to completely uncover everything. There was a suspicion that there could be other underground bunkers/bases in the area as books written about the subject writes about them in the plural (so far only one has been discovered). Sheet corrugated iron was uncovered which in turn covered a pit approximately 7' x 7'. The corrugated iron was supported by wooden beams. A small pit was dug where it appears a trap door was located to identify the depth. The soil above the iron around the edge was 6" deep and 12" towards the middle of the site. The depth below the iron was approx. 4'.

Introduction describing the site

The site being investigated was used during World War II for the training of Auxiliary Units (Churchill's Underground Army). The training involved the art of sabotage as well as explaining how to exist should Great Britain were to be invaded. The area was chosen for the training as it was known to Major Henderson (brother of Lord Faringdon) and was hidden from sight.

Previous investigations

Previous archaeology had been undertaken in the area, the last was in 2012 when dummy trap doors were found along with a corner of corrugated iron which at the time was believed to be a dummy tunnel. Artefacts such as counter balance weights and pulleys were uncovered in the pits. The pits under the dummy trap doors had been backfilled after the war and any old rubbish had been dumped there.

Why the excavation was undertaken

There is a very real likelihood that heavy vehicles will be used at this location in the next two years and it was thought prudent to examine that which could not be done previously. There was the danger of a vehicle falling down a hole if any existed.

Short methodology describing how the excavation was undertaken

It was decided to gradually uncover the corrugated iron to find its extent. A metal detector was run over the area and it was then found that the corrugated iron covered an area of 8' x 8'. A third of the area in the middle of the site was removed above the corrugated iron doing 1 inch at a time. The spoil which was rotted vegetation from all the trees around and soil was stored away from the excavation. Having done this a trench was dug along the outer limits of the corrugated iron to establish the edges.

Once the size of the area had been confirmed the rest of the soil was removed towards the southern edge.

Description of what was found

Now that 2/3rds of the corrugated iron had been uncovered it was established that it comprised of 5 pieces 8' x 27". The middle piece had been shortened to allow for what we assume was a trapdoor. We also identified the fact that the centre of the corrugated iron had been pushed down. This allowed leaves and soil to blow under the outer edges of the iron. Very carefully the short piece was

lifted which exposed rotted timbers along with many rusted nails that had been used to fasten the timbers together. There was also a small hinge, possibly from a trapdoor. To determine how deep the pit originally was it was decided to excavate where the trap door was possibly located. It was quickly noticed that the pit had been dug into the limestone bedrock. Once we had gone down 2 feet it was decided to put up shuttering to enable a safe working environment. Digging down through crushed limestone we finally reached the bottom at a depth of 4' from the corrugated iron.

Discussion and then location map, site illustrations and photos

Having uncovered the corrugated iron it has been suggested that it is either an early version of an Operational Base or possibly a store. An Operational Base seems logical as the early ones were known to be no more than a pit. It seems likely that when the newer Operational Base was created that the crushed limestone that was dug out would have been used to back fill the old model. Agreement has been reached that the rest of the corrugated iron will be uncovered. Once that has been done the sheets will be lifted to expose where the timbers used to be and then replaced with new timbers. Once this has been done some more crushed limestone will be packed under the new beams to prevent it sinking. The pit where it was thought there was a trap door will remain to show the depth of the dig. A trap door will be made to cover the hole and make safe. The corrugated iron will be fastened to the new timbers and soil replaced as was. At some time in the future we would like to lift it all again and excavate the whole site as there is a likelihood that material was thrown into the pit before being back filled. This is only a guess and is based on earlier digs at the site. Map of entire site that has been looked at. This report refers to label "Unfinished".



Photos will also need explanatory captions



Looking from North to South trying to find the extent of the corrugated iron. Left hand side shows where it is thought a trapdoor was located.



Nails 6" long that were found after corrugated iron was lifted. They were used to fasten the corrugated iron to the wooden beams. Also found was a hinge 3" long.



Pit where it was thought trap door was located. Three sides shuttered to prevent collapse. Third side limestone bedrock.



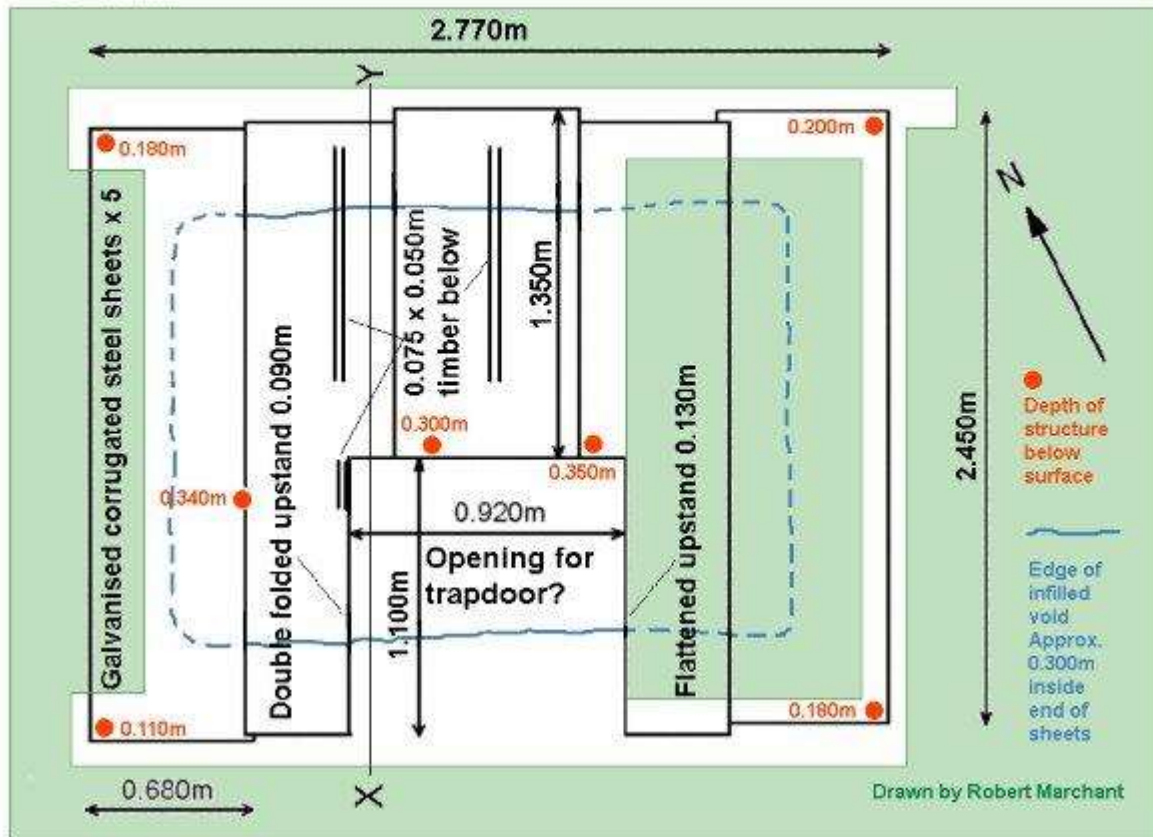
Looking from South to North, corrugated iron uncovered. Middle sheet shortened to allow for trap door. Sheet below is cut away partially and bent up for timber to be fastened to, forming a frame for a trap door.

The following drawings will be updated once the remaining soil has been removed. This will allow us to see where the timbers used to be.

Corrugated Iron Structure,
Long Shrubbery,
Coleshill.

Lat. 51° 38.548' N
Long -01° 38.806' W

PLAN VIEW
NOT TO SCALE



Corrugated Iron Structure,
Long Shrubbery,
Coleshill.

Section X - Y

NOT TO SCALE

Ground level rises 0.150m between X and Y
Ground level rises 0.110m from east to west

