



Meigle Churchyard Archaeological Watching Brief ME03 view S

Archaeological Watching Brief
Meigle Churchyard
Ardler Road, Meigle
PERTH AND KINROSS

ME03

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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
MEIGLE CHURCHYARD
ARDLER ROAD, MEIGLE**

ME03

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Illustration 1: Site location plan

Illustration 2: Watching Brief on disable access route

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ABSTRACT

Alder Archaeology was commissioned by Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust to undertake an archaeological watching brief (site code ME03) on groundworks for a new disabled access path from Meigle parish church (centred on OS GR NO 287 445), through the graveyard to the museum south of the church. Meigle parish churchyard has been a burial ground since Pictish times and sculptured stones have been recovered from the burial ground and from the fabric of an earlier church which was destroyed by fire in 1869. Groundwork for the new route required the excavation of a shallow track 0.15m deep and 1.20m wide. The watching brief was undertaken 30 January 2012 and no significant archaeological remains were found. The foundation remains of the former graveyard wall were uncovered where it had been demolished in the 19th C to create an opening. A large deposit of disarticulated human bone was found close to the surface in the graveyard, which was then reburied at a deeper level. It was established that the bones had been collected and reburied close to the surface when a field drain had been inserted through the graveyard in the 19th C. Some structural remains (brick and stone) from disturbed 19th C grave markers and a small amount of 19th-20th-C pottery and glass was recovered. No further archaeological work will be required for the new access route.

1 Background

1.1 Introduction

Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust commissioned Alder Archaeology to undertake an archaeological watching brief on the site of groundworks for a new disabled access path from Meigle parish church to the museum. The proposed access route will be located between the SW corner of the Meigle Museum and the W pathway to the church. The church is centred on OS GR NO 287 445. Groundwork for the new route required the excavation of a shallow track 0.15m deep and 1.20m wide. The watching brief (site code ME03) was undertaken 30 January 2012 in wintry weather conditions. The requirement was to observe the excavation for the proposed disabled access and to record anything of archaeological significance.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

The main aim of this investigation was to record any significant archaeology that might be revealed in the groundworks for the new disabled access. Special attention was to be paid to the possible discovery of human remains, the former line of the graveyard wall, early grave markers and Pictish carved stonework.

1.3 Reporting

The present document has been prepared as the final report on this watching brief. Copies will be sent to the client, The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland and Perth and Kinross Historic Environment Record

1.4 Planning and Curatorial Issues

The watching brief was required as a condition of listed building consent granted by Historic Scotland, 17th October 2011, reference number 11/00903/LBC.

1.5 Acknowledgements

We wish to thank Fiona Fisher for her assistance and guidance throughout this project. The watching brief was entirely funded by Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust.

2 Details of Work

2.1 The Site (Illus 1)

The proposed disabled access pathway is located between the NW side of the Museum and the W path to the church. The S part of the new access is within an area on the NW side of the museum (former school), which is outside of the burial ground, while the N part is within the burial ground.

The original division between the graveyard and the school ground had been the graveyard boundary wall. Part of the wall was subsequently removed, creating a gap of 6m wide which accommodated a narrow footpath between the school and the church. According to OS map evidence this work was carried out sometime between 1893 and 1903.

2.2 Archaeological Potential

The churchyard has been a burial ground since Pictish times and sculptured stones have been recovered from the burial ground and from the fabric of an earlier church which was destroyed by fire in 1869. The recovered stones are on display in Meigle museum which is in the ownership of Historic Scotland. It was considered that the shallow excavation of the line of the new disabled access pathway could reveal evidence such as fragments of sculptured stones, earlier grave markers or the line of the former graveyard wall.

2.3 Archaeological Method

The archaeological watching brief was conducted on the groundwork for the disabled pathway. The trench or track excavated for the pathway was 1.20m wide and approximately 0.15m deep and removed mainly turf. Excavation was carried out by a mini digger using a smooth edged ditching bucket. The machine was under constant archaeological supervision while working and relevant deposits and features were cleaned and recorded.

2.4 Results of Investigations

In the area to the NW of the museum excavation revealed that below the turf and topsoil (01) was a deposit of gravel (02) which was considered to be the makeup for the former footpath or perhaps just the former general yard surface at this location. At the SW end of the excavation what was considered to be subsoil (03) was observed in patches below the gravel. Other components of the gravel makeup (02) included light grey ash (04).



Gravel with ash 04 below turf

At a distance of 14.60m from the S end of the pathway a deposit, small-medium sized stone fragments and mortar (05) were observed which were considered to be the upper deposit or demolition spread over the demolished graveyard wall (11). Below (05) were some larger mortared stones (11) forming the fabric of the base of the former graveyard wall. Wall remains (11) were formed by one large irregular shaped flat stone with smaller stones or packing on either side, measuring 0.60m wide. The wall remains were only cleaned and not fully excavated and were more evident on the E side of the trench.



Former graveyard wall (11)

On the N side of wall remains (11) was the graveyard. Here, below the turf, the soil forming the base of the new pathway was a mid brown silty loam with occasional stone fragment inclusions (09). The former gravel pathway (02) as seen the on the S side of wall (11) was not observed here.



Working in graveyard area showing base of topsoil (09)

At 1m to the N of the former graveyard wall (11) a deposit of disarticulated human bone (07) was found in a shallow pit (08). The bone was mixed in with sandy silt loam (06) and the top of the bone deposit was only 0.10m below the surface.



Disarticulated human bones (07) when first found

The bone deposit measured c. 0.80 x 0.75m and was 0.25-0.30m deep. It extended below W edge of trench. Since the bones were so close to the surface, they had to be removed for the construction of the new pathway and reburied. It was considered best to rebury the bones below their original position. The bones were removed for reburial and were seen to be from many individuals.



Disarticulated human bones removed, showing pit (08) that contained the bones



Ceramic drain (10)

When a pit for reburial was carefully being excavated through graveyard soil a red ceramic field drain (10) was found at a depth of 0.40m below the site surface. The ceramic drain had a diameter of 0.17m and was an early horseshoe type set over a slate sole (early to mid 19th C). It was apparent that the bones had been collected from burials disturbed by the insertion of the field drain and then reburied in the backfill over the field drain. The bones were reburied on the S side of the field drain in a pit measuring 0.60 X 0.60m and 0.60m deep. The pit bottom was 0.60m below site surface and the top of bones was 0.40m below the site surface. Most of the pit was excavated into the backfill for the field drain and nothing of archaeological significance was found in this deposit.



Stone (12) placed by wall along with bricks (14)

Further to the N beyond the bone deposit, nothing of archaeological significance was found. However, of interest were a rectangular stone with a circular hole in one long side (12), possibly part of a grave surround, two hand made bricks (14), that once supported a headstone base, and two fragments of worked stone (15) that appeared to be parts of the base for a modern headstone. These finds were all considered to be modern and were collected and placed up against the graveyard wall on the W side of the new pathway at the N end beside the corner where the wall returns to the S.

3 Conclusions and Recommendations

3.1 Conclusions

The watching brief for the new disabled pathway was productive in as much as it found part of foundation of the former graveyard wall line, reburied an amount of disarticulated human bone and recovered some structural remains belonging to headstones of relatively recent burials. In the area at the rear of the museum a gravel pathway was found below the turf, that either represented the former pathway through that area or the former general ground surface. There was no evidence of early burials having taken place in this area but the depth of the trench was not considered sufficient to positively establish whether or not the burial ground had ever extended into this area.

With regard to the deposit of human bone, when first revealed it looked suspicious in that it was not normal for such an accumulation of human bone to be so close to the surface (only 0.10m below the surface), even in a graveyard. It was considered a possibility that the bone had been reburied so close to the surface after having been disturbed by a later burial. It also seemed possible that the bone could be an unauthorised burial. As a precaution Alder Archaeology informed Tayside Police who visited the site, took a statement and removed some bone for forensic examination. It was later established that the bones had been disturbed and reburied during the insertion of a field drain, most likely in the early to mid 19th C.

3.2 Recommendations

The track for the new access was completed on the day of the watching brief and there will be no further significant ground disturbance, therefore there will be no further requirement for archaeological attendance for this work. The artefacts recovered during the watching brief were all considered to be modern and therefore may be discarded.

3.3 Recommendations for Further Work

The final decision with regard to any further archaeological input for this project ultimately rests with Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust.

4 References

Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust, Graveyard Audit 2009-2010, Section I, MPK 5422

O.S. 1867, Perthshire, 1:10,560

O.S. 1880-1893, Perthshire, 1:2,500

O.S. 1900-1901, Perthshire, 1:2,500

O.S. 1902-1903, Perthshire, 1:10,560

O.S. 1959, Perthshire, 1:10,560

O.S. 1972, Perthshire, 1:2,500

Appendix 1 Context Register

<i>No:</i>	<i>Description</i>
01	Turf and topsoil, c. 0.17m thick; over gravel of 02 in S part of new foot path (to S of graveyard) and over mid brown clay loam 09 in N part of new foot path which is in the graveyard
02	Deposit, black gravel in silt, some cinders, some grey ash 04, former footpath below turf, forms base of formation level at c. 0.17m below turf, extends to edge of graveyard former wall foundation 11
03	Deposit, light brown silty loam, below 02, subsoil, just the surface of this deposit observed at the S end of the proposed footpath
04	Deposit, light grey ash, component of former footpath make up 02
05	Deposit, small-medium sized stone fragments and mortar upper deposit over demolished graveyard wall 11
06	Deposit, human bones of 07 mixed with dark brown silty sand
07	Disarticulated human bone deposit in pit, bones only 0.10m down from site surface, many individuals but none complete, c. 0.80m X 0.75m extends below W edge of trench, c 0.25-0.30m deep, over backfill 07 for field drain 10.
08	Cut, for pit with human bone 06 and ceramic drain 10, c 0.50m in depth
09	Deposit mid brown silty loam, base of topsoil in churchyard on the N side of graveyard wall foundation 11
10	Ceramic drain, large bore 0.17m diameter, horseshoe type over slate sole, top is 0.40m down
11	Wall foundation, remains of graveyard wall that once crossed this point in the trench, it was demolished to put in a foot path between the school and the church, top of wall 0.17 down from site surface, large stone on trench E side, small stone and mortar on W side, some bone fragments found over the wall stones, width of wall 0.60m
12	Stone, rectangular shape, 0.37 X 0.19m and 0.20m high, a circular hole made in one long face, no markings, within deposit 09
13	Graveyard soil, below loamy deposit 09, seen in cut for ceramic drain 10, loose sandy silt loam, moderated amount of medium sized stone fragments, some disarticulated bone
14	Two hand made bricks measuring 0.08 X 0.22 X 0.10m from topsoil 09, formerly supported base of headstone
15	Two fragments of worked stone, with bevelled edges, probably part of 19th C grave surround or support for gravestone the largest measuring 0.17 X 0.19 X 0.20m

Appendix 2 Photographic Register

<i>Image No</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>View</i>
00	General area adjacent to museum at S end of proposed foot path	N
01	General area adjacent to museum at S end of proposed footpath	S
02	Grave slabs leaning against wall	W
03	General of graveyard, with footpath marked out	N
04	General of graveyard, with footpath marked out	S
05	Venora's mound information panel	
07	Venora's mound	NE
08	General of Meigle Church	E
09	General of graveyard	SE
10	Start at S end of proposed footpath, showing underlying gravel of former pathway	NW
11	Start at S end of proposed footpath, showing underlying gravel of former pathway	NW
12	Deposit, gravel 02 of former pathway	NE
13	Deposit, patch of white ash, 04, part of makeup for former pathway	NE
14	Deposit, patch of white ash, 04, part of makeup for former pathway	NE
15-16	General of pathway construction stripping off turf and revealing former foot path makeup	N
17	General of pathway construction stripping off turf and revealing former foot path makeup	N
18-19	General of pathway construction stripping off turf and revealing for foot path	N
20	Detail of machine stripping off turf in graveyard, showing lower topsoil	NNE
21	Detail of working showing bricks for modern grave markers	N
22-23	Detail of deposit of disarticulated human bone 07, close to the surface	NE
24	General of human bone 07	NE
25	General of area of bone 07	S
26	Cut 08, cut for pit containing human bone 07	NE
27	Cut 08, cut for pit with bagged and loose human bone 07	NE

28	Cut 08, cut for pit with bagged and loose human bone 07	N
29	General showing area where bone 07 was found	SE
30-31	Detail of field drain 10 below pit for bone	W
32	Detail of field drain 10 below pit for bone	SW
33-35	Detail of part of foundation of former wall 11	E
36-37	Detail of part of foundation of former wall 11	W
38	Wall 11	NE
39	Stone with hole, 12, for modern grave	SW
40	Bricks, modern (hand made), 14	S
41-43	Stone fragments for modern grave surround, 15	W

Appendix 3 Drawing Register

<i>Sheet No.</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Scale</i>
1	General notes and comments over site plan	1:200

Appendix 4 Finds Register

<i>Context</i>	<i>Material Type</i>	<i>Details</i>
02	Pottery	1 TGE body sherd, sponge decorated blue on white, white fabric 2 TGE base sherds, transfer-printed blue on white, white fabric 1 TGE base sherd, fluted ramekin, glazed white, white fabric 1 TGE base sherd, glazed yellow/brown, red fabric 1 TGE rim sherd, glazed brown, red fabric 1 TGE rim sherd, glazed white, white fabric 1 stoneware base sherd, speckled grey/white glaze; ?funerary vase 1 stoneware body sherd; part of above
02	CBM	1 redware sherd field drain
02	Glass	1 green bottle neck; moulded

02	Plastic	Model horse; partly degraded
02	Fe	?nail shaft; corroded and concreted with pebbles
07	Pottery	1 stoneware body sherd, glazed yellow-brown 2 TGE body sherds, glazed white, white fabric 2 TGE sherds, glazed brown, red fabric 1 TGE rim sherd, glazed brown/green, cream fabric 1 TGE body sherd, glazed shades of brown, cream fabric
07	Glass	1 body sherd, moderately denatured
07	Clay pipe	2 stems
07	CBM	2 fragments red brick
07	Fe	D-shaped tubular handle, probably from coffin 1 nail
09	Pottery	1 post-medieval redware body sherd, glazed brown internally 1 TGE base sherd, glazed white, white fabric 1 TGE body sherd, glazed white, white fabric 1 TGE bowl base sherd, transfer-printed rabbit design in blue on white, buff fabric 1 TGE body sherd, transfer-printed blue on white, buff fabric 1 TGE body sherd, transfer printed green on white, white fabric 1 rim sherd, transfer-printed blue on white, ?bone china 2 TGE sherds, glazed brown, red fabric
09	Glass	6 body sherds green glass from 4 different bottles 1 vessel rim in aqua; perhaps from vase 1 clear bottle base with impressed serial number and 'VF' logo
09	CBM	1 fragment drain pipe

Appendix 5 Discovery & Excavation in Scotland Entry

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Perth and Kinross Council
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Archaeological Watching Brief, Meigle Churchyard, Ardler Road, Meigle
PROJECT CODE:	ME03
PARISH:	Meigle
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR(S):	Ray Cachart
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Alder Archaeology Ltd
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Watching Brief
NMRS NO(S):	NO24SE 25
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	Historic Burial Ground
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)	Site centred on 2871 4457
START DATE	30 January 2012
END DATE	30 January 2012
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. <i>DES</i> ref.)	Find of sculptured stone in churchyard <i>Discovery & Excavation Scotland</i> 1989, Meigle Kirkyard, 64
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	Alder Archaeology was commissioned by Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust to undertake an archaeological watching brief (site code ME03) on groundworks for a new disabled access route from Meigle parish church (centred on OS GR NO 287 445), through the graveyard to the museum south of the church. Meigle parish churchyard has been a burial ground since Pictish times and sculptured stones have been recovered from the burial ground and from the fabric of an earlier church which was destroyed by fire in 1869. Groundwork for the new route required the excavation of a shallow track 0.15m deep and 1.20m wide. The watching brief was undertaken 30 January 2012 and no significant archaeological remains were found. The foundation remains of the course of the former graveyard wall was uncovered where it had been demolished in the 19th C to create an opening. A large deposit of disarticulated human bone was found close to the surface in the graveyard, which was then reburied at a deeper level. It was established that the bones had been collected and reburied close to the surface when a field drain had been inserted through the graveyard in the 19th C. Some structural remains (brick and stone) from disturbed 19th C grave markers and a small amount of 19-20th C pottery was recovered. No further archaeological work will be required for the new access route.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust

CAPTIONS FOR ILLUSTRS	None
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	Alder Archaeology Ltd, 55 South Methven Street, Perth PH1 5NX
ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended)	NMRS
EMAIL ADDRESS:	Director@AlderArchaeology.co.uk

Appendix 6 Standard Terms of Reference for all Fieldwork

6.1 Recording Methodology

Alder Archaeology employs a Single Context Recording System that allows full cross-referencing of stratigraphy, finds and environmental samples, as well as site-wide phasing. All features will be planned at scale 1:20, and sections drawn at scale 1:10. Sections and profiles will be drawn and all features will be photographed with metric scale included. Environmental samples will be taken from archaeologically significant contexts, if the analysis of these samples would aid significantly in the interpretation of any features identified.

6.2 Human Remains

If human remains are encountered they will be left in situ and the local police will be informed. If removal is required this will take place in compliance with Historic Scotland's Policy Paper *The Treatment of Human Remains in Archaeology*.

6.3 Products and Reporting

A Data Structure Report will normally be prepared within a period agreed within the Written Scheme of Investigation/ Project Design, after the completion of the fieldwork. This forms the basic level of reporting. Further reporting may be required on the basis of discoveries made during excavations.

A copy of the report and the project archive will be deposited in the NMRS. Further copies will be sent to the client, LAAO and others, as appropriate.

6.4 Artefacts

Finds of objects will be subject to the Scots Laws of Treasure Trove and *Bona Vacantia*. We will report such finds, if recovered, with supporting documentation to the Secretariat of the Treasure Trove Panel for disposal to the appropriate museum.

6.5 Discovery and Excavation in Scotland

A brief summary of the results will be submitted to *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland*.

6.6 General Conditions and Health and Safety

We adhere to the Code of Conduct of the Institute for Archaeologists.

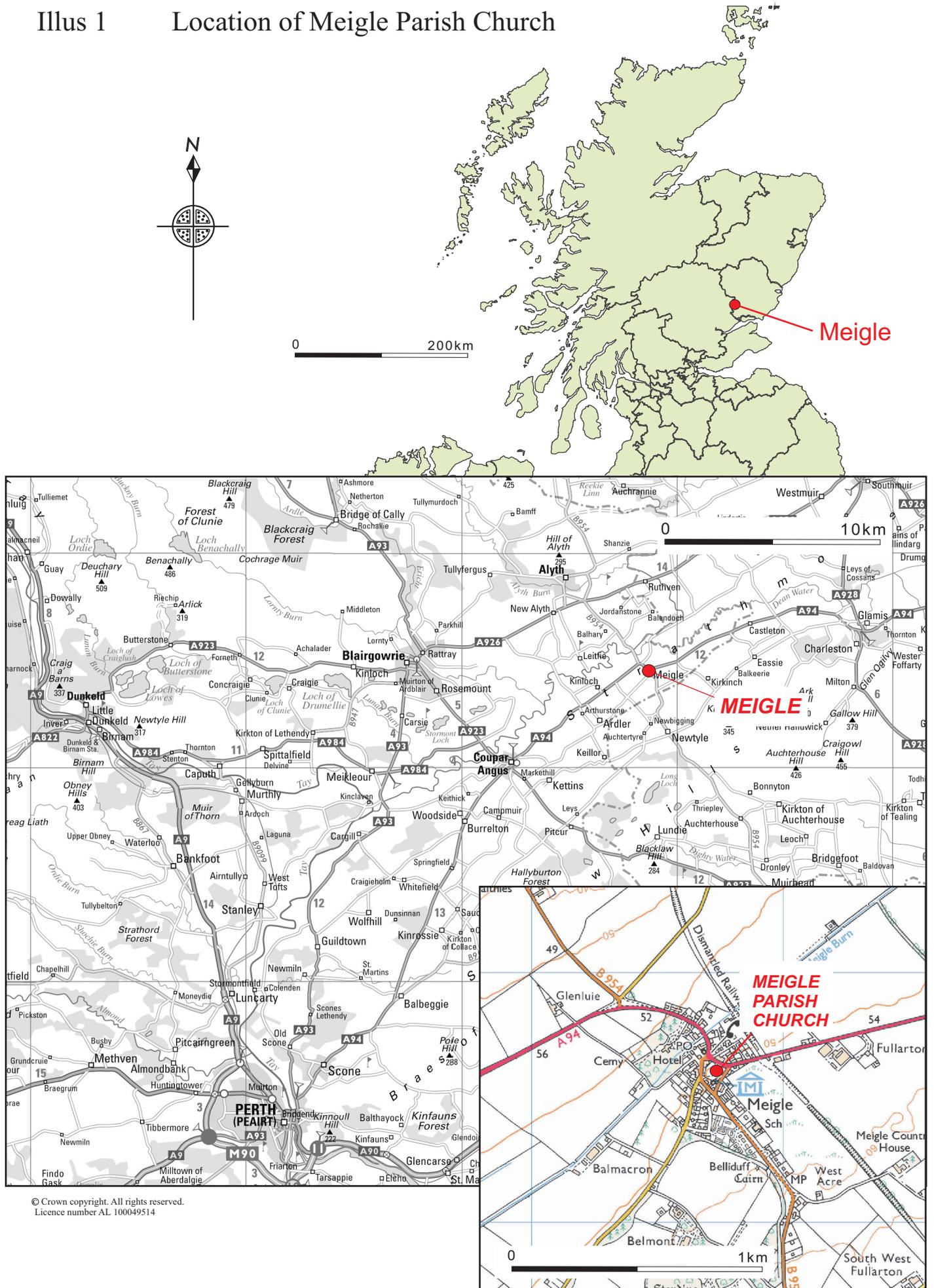
Alder Archaeology Ltd has public liability insurance of £2,000,000. Details of this can be provided on request.

We operate a strict health and safety policy and conforms to the Health and Safety at Work Act. We undertakes Risk Assessments on all fieldwork carried out.

Alder Archaeology representatives will at all times wear protective footwear, high visibility clothing and other appropriate clothing. Hard hats will be worn if there is active plant on site or at all times if the site is deemed a hard hat area.

If lightly contaminated deposits are uncovered disposable boiler suits and gloves will be worn. A source of clean water will be made available for staff to clean hands with. If the health risk posed by site contamination is felt to be too high all further archaeological work will stop in that area.

Illus 1 Location of Meigle Parish Church



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Illus 2
Location
of Watching Brief

