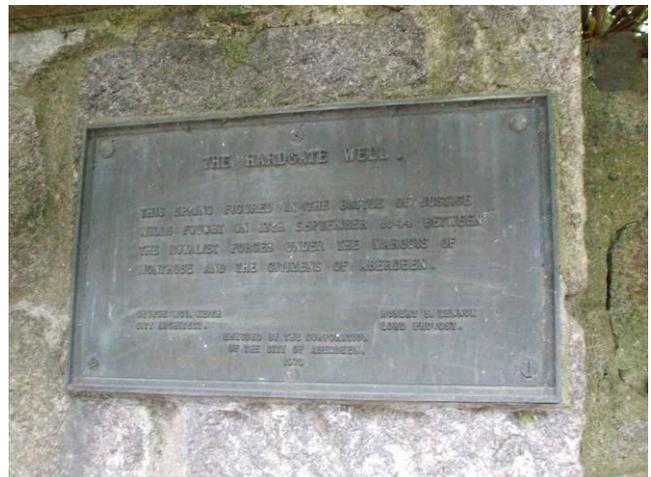


Justice Mill Lane, Aberdeen Report on archaeological work



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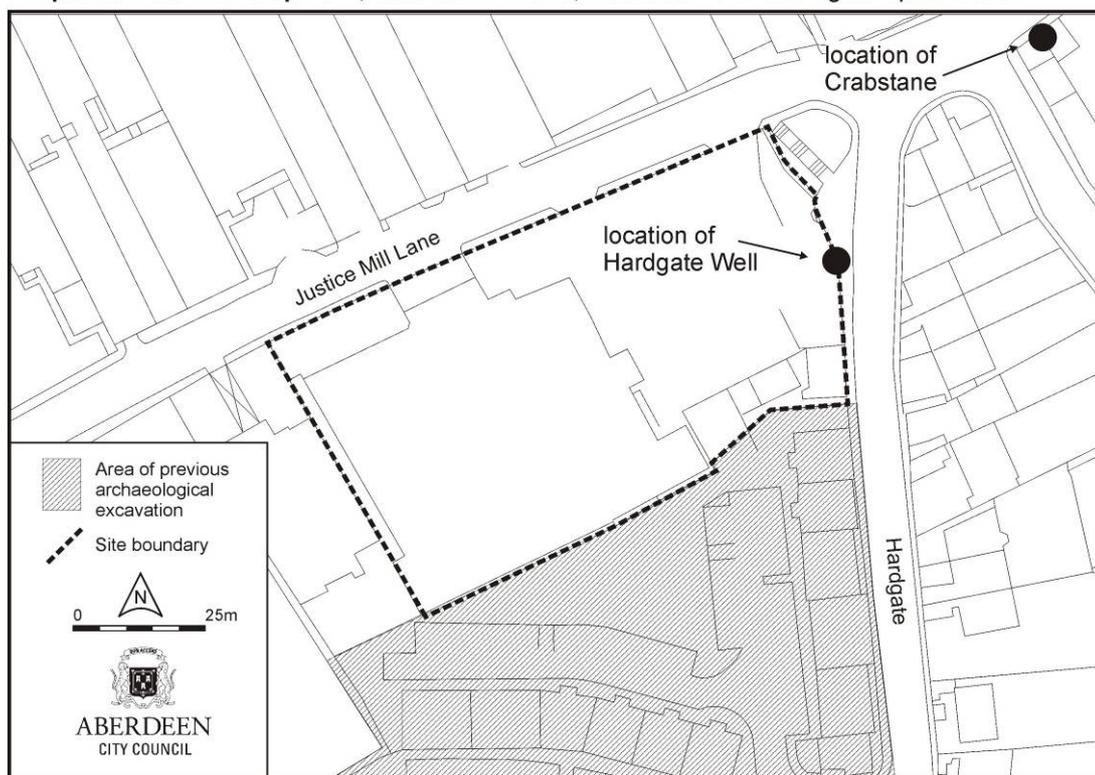
Justice Mill Lane, Aberdeen Report on archaeological work

Introduction

The historical interest of this site lies principally in the location within it of superstructure associated with the Hardgate well. Fenton Wyness (*City by the Grey North Sea*, 1965, p.179) gives a vivid account of wounded and dying combatants from the Battle of Justice Mills in 1644 being carried to that spot and claims that the well that day 'ran red' with blood. However, the source for those details is untraceable. John Spalding makes no connection between the well and the battle (*Memorials of the Troubles in Scotland and in England AD1624-AD1625 Vol II*, edited by John Stuart, Aberdeen 1850) while Parson Gordon, who lived through the period, drew the earliest map of Aberdeen and wrote an accompanying description, mentions the battle, but not the well. The well seems first to appear on a map at the stage of the first edition Ordnance Survey in 1867. The superstructure of the well was refurbished in 1970, when a plaque was also fitted to it referring to its supposed part in the battle. It is likely that the plaque draws its information solely from Fenton Wyness. Moreover, the well does not feature in any other works which deal with historic wells in Aberdeen. For example, Milne's 1911 book *Aberdeen* does deal, very carefully, with the evidence for other historic wells in Aberdeen. The exclusion of this well may be significant. Although it cannot be ruled out merely an omission it remains fair to suggest that this well was not of any significant historical importance.

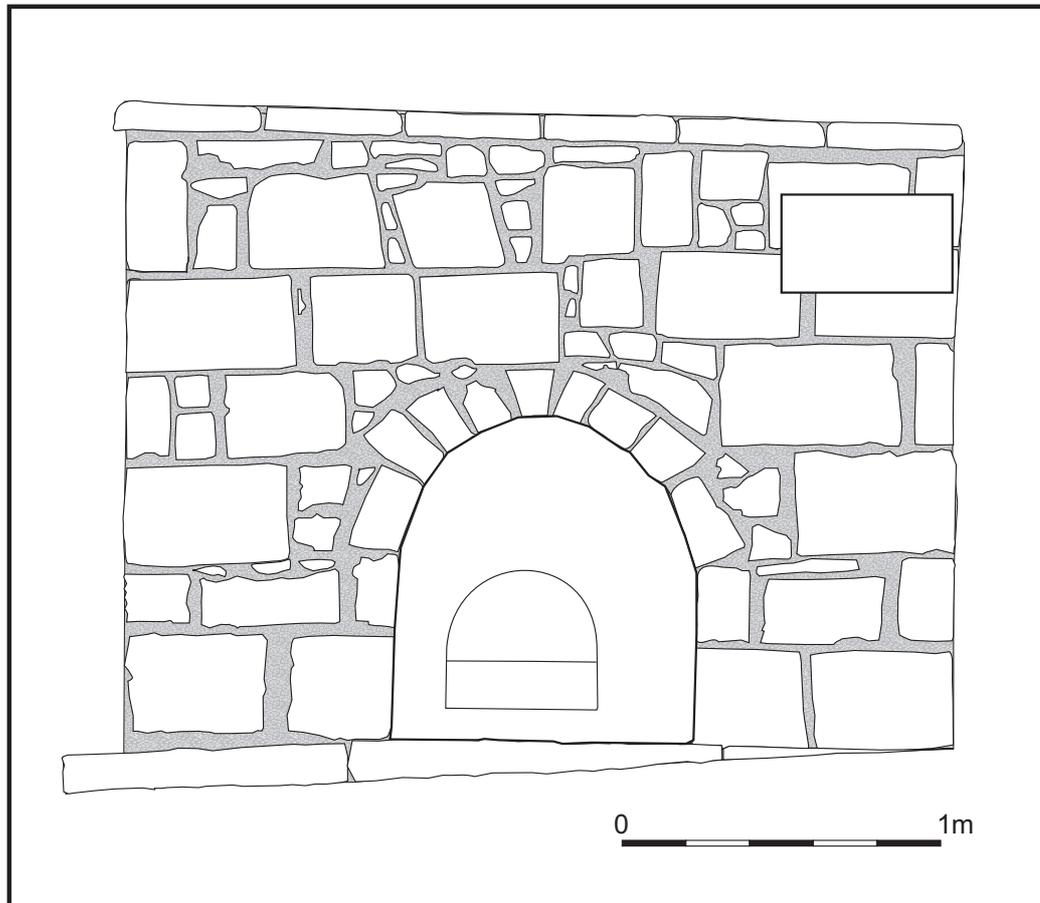
At the Battle of Justice Mills, Covenanting forces under Lord Burleigh, based in Aberdeen, met the Royalist Marquis of Montrose's troops, which included a contingent of Irish mercenary forces. Accounts make it clear that the subsequent sacking of the town was brutal. The Battle centred around the Crabstane, which lies about 60 metres north-west of the current well site. The Battle of Craibstone, on 20 November 1571, related to a feud between the Forbes and Gordon families, also took place in this same locality not far from the edge of the town.

Proposed Hotel Development, Justice Mill Lane, Aberdeen: archaeological specification



Archaeological work

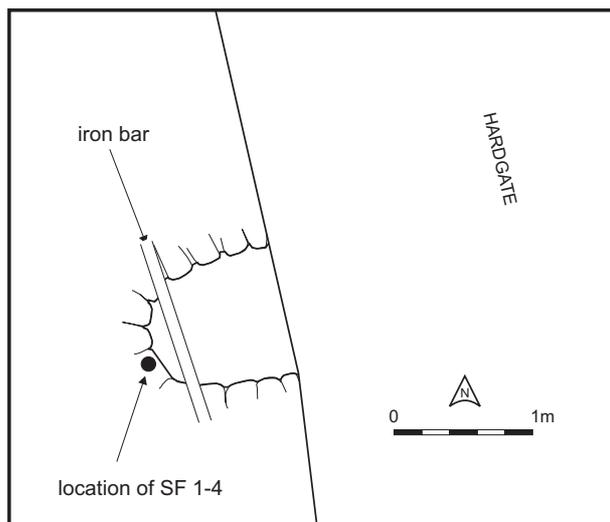
The Hardgate well was recorded prior to work starting at this site. An archaeologist then observed staff from John Lawrie's demolition numbering the stones and dismantling the structure. At this point the well shaft itself was uncovered and recorded.



The superstructure above the well was constructed of cassies set around the arch of the well (above); larger granite blocks formed the sill on which the structure was built. It is possible that the well originally had a bar across it, and the wire mesh (seen above) was a later addition. The adjacent wall had been breached and the well-head inserted into it. Soil deposits at the rear (west) of this wall included granite demolition debris and modern rubbish which had been piled behind the wall.

The dome above the well was constructed of bricks coated on the inside (east) face with off-white plaster.

After it had been recorded, the granite structure above the well was removed, revealing the oval well with a straight edge along the line of Hardgate. The well was 90cm N-S and 1m E-W. It was constructed of granite fieldstones bonded with light brown mortar. Water was sitting in the well 1m down from the level of the road on the first visit (June 08) and 1.3m down at the end of August. The level of the bottom of the well was 1.7m down from the top of the stonework, although there was an unknown depth of soft silt below this level. The level of the water was higher in the near past: the stones above the current water level were rusty brown in colour indicating that the water was heavily iron-rich.



On the cement adjacent to the street, an inscription including the date 'C McALLAN 1969 REBUILT' (below) seems to suggest that the preparation for the construction of the new well-head took place in that year.



Four coins (SF 1, 2, 3, 4) were recovered from under the 1970 superstructure and on the earlier upper surface of the mortar-bonded well structure. Two date from 1971-1981, one from post-1981 and one from 1995. It is unknown how they got in to the junction between the well and the superstructure, but certainly do not provide dating evidence for the superstructure's construction.

Removal of soil deposits was monitored around the area of the well: no deposits of archaeological interest, other than the well, were recorded. Large petrol tanks (below) from the garage previously on the site, at the junction of Hardgate and Justice Mill Lane, had caused a large amount of disturbance. No archaeological deposits were recorded in this area.



CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The superstructure of the Hardgate well was removed and the well itself revealed underneath. No other significant archaeological deposits were recorded during this work.

No further archaeological work is therefore required during this development.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

John Lawrie Demolition especially Duncan, Jim, Bruce and Nick, Richard Sullivan of Millers.

APPENDICES

- 1 Specification for archaeological work, Judith Stones
- 2 Photographs

APPENDIX 1

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL, NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES CENTRAL

MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

Hotel and Office Development at Justice Mill Lane, Aberdeen Specification for archaeological work

Summary

This specification gives an outline of the historical and archaeological value of this site and indicates the works which will be required to ensure the protection and recording of any surviving archaeological deposits.

1.0 Site Location and Description

The area of the site (NJ 9351 0574) is shown on the enclosed map extract.

2.0 Planning Background

The request for this fieldwork is made in the context of National Planning Policy Guideline no 5, Archaeology and Planning, which states that archaeological remains should be regarded as part of the environment to be protected and managed. In paragraph 14, planning authorities are advised that they should ensure that archaeological factors are fully considered in both the development planning and development control processes. Paragraph 16 urges planning authorities to regard archaeological remains as a finite and often highly fragile resource vulnerable to needless or thoughtless damage or destruction. Paragraph 25 states that the implications of development proposals for ancient monuments and their settings should be considered at the outset of the development control process. It is appropriate for planning authorities to request, where appropriate, the prospective developer to arrange for archaeological fieldwork and ensure that relevant information on the cultural heritage is taken into account in any environmental assessment that may be necessary (paragraph 24).

National Planning Policy Guideline 18, Planning and the Historic Environment, paragraph 52 states that 'in cases of demolition or significant alteration of historic buildings, structures or streetscape, planning authorities are encouraged to make it a condition of consent that applicants arrange suitable programmes of recording features that would be destroyed in the course of the proposed works...'

3.0 Historical and Archaeological Background

The historical interest of this site lies principally in the location within it of superstructure associated with the Hardgate well. The well itself may also lie on the site.

The history of the Hardgate well is very shadowy. Fenton Wyness (*City by the Grey North Sea*, 1965, 179) gives a vivid account of wounded and dying combatants from the Battle of Justice Mills in 1644 being carried to that spot and claims that the well that day 'ran reid' with blood. However, the source for those details is untraceable. John Spalding makes no connection between the well and the battle (*Memorials of the Trubles in Scotland and in England AD1624-AD1625 Vol II*, edited by John Stuart, Aberdeen 1850) while Parson Gordon, who lived through the period, drew the earliest map of Aberdeen and wrote an accompanying description, mentions the battle, but not the well. The well seems first to appear on a map at the stage of the first edition Ordnance Survey in 1867. The superstructure of the well was refurbished in 1970, when a plaque was also fitted to it referring to its supposed part in the battle. It is likely that the plaque draws its information solely from Fenton Wyness.

At the Battle of Justice Mills, Aberdeen's forces, on the side of the Covenant, met the Royalist Marquis of Montrose's 'wild Irish' mercenary troops. The resulting defeat of the town is sometimes said to have been very brutal. The Battle centred around the Crabstane, which lies about 60 metres north-west of the current well site. The Battle of Craibstone, on 20 November 1571, related to a feud between the Forbes and Gordon families, also took place in this same locality not far from the edge of the town.

4.0 Previous Archaeological Work

There has been no previous archaeological work at this site. A development immediately to the south of the present site (see map) was archaeologically evaluated in 1995, because of its proximity to the site of the medieval Justice Mills. However all that was revealed was 19th century garden soil in the northern portion of the site, while the more southerly portion was heavily disturbed by 19th and 20th century buildings.

5.0 Requirement for Work

The Hardgate well must be recorded by an archaeologist before and during any works associated with it, or structural alterations to it. All related excavation works must also be observed and recorded by an archaeologist, including any works to discover earlier locations of the well-head, and all ground disturbing works within 25 metres of the current well site. The initial survey of the existing remains should be at least to the level of an English Heritage Level 2 historic buildings survey, including plans, sections and photographs.

6.0 Timetable

A timetable must be agreed for the various stages of work so that provision can be made for monitoring by the Keeper of Archaeology.

7.0 Staff Structure

A list of key project staff with qualifications and experience will be submitted by the archaeological contractor. The use of unwaged staff will not normally be acceptable.

8.0 Health and Safety /PLI

Such concerns and responsibilities are primarily a matter for the archaeological contractor who must submit evidence of conformity to the Health and Safety at Work Act and possession of public liability insurance to Aberdeen City Council.

9.0 Recording Systems

These must be specified and should include the structure for site record.

10.0 Monitoring Arrangements

It is necessary for the planning authority to monitor the progress and effectiveness of the fieldwork in order to ensure the proper execution of the specification and therefore conformity to the brief. Stages at which monitoring is appropriate will be agreed between the archaeological contractor and the Keeper, Archaeology. The possibility of random inspections should not be excluded.

11.0 Reporting Requirements

Provision must be made for:

- 11.1 Specialist examination of animal and human bone and of any preserved or organic material.

- 11.2 Specialist conservation and examination of artefacts found during the fieldwork.
- 11.3 Preparation of plans, sections and finds drawings to publication standards.
- 11.4 The sorting and analysis of records and the production of a full report on the work.
- 11.5 Its publication in an appropriate manner.
- 11.6 The preparation of a catalogued archive and its deposition in the City Council's Sites and Monuments Record and the National Monuments Record of Scotland within six months of the end of the fieldwork..
- 11.7 Copies of the report should be sent to the Keeper of Archaeology, the applicant and the planning authority. A brief survey of results should be submitted to *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland*, along with the appropriate fee.

12.0 Small finds and Human Remains

Finds of objects will be subject to the Scots Laws of Treasure Trove and Bona Vacantia and reported by the archaeological contractor to the Secretariat of the Treasure Trove Panel (Dr Alan Saville, National Museums of Scotland, Queen Street, Edinburgh EH2 1JD) for disposal to an appropriate museum. Should human remains be found they must be reported to the Keeper of Archaeology within 12 hours of discovery.

13.0 Timescale

The report must be produced within four weeks of the end of the field work.

14.0 Further Information

Additional information about the site, or this brief, can be obtained from the Keeper of Archaeology, Whitespace, 60 Frederick Street, Aberdeen AB24 5HY Tel (01224) 523658.

15.0 Conclusion

The archaeological fieldwork is to be carried out in compliance with this brief and in the context of NPPG 5 and NPPG 18. The selection of any contractor will be subject to approval of the Keeper, Archaeology. Work should be carried out in close liaison with the Keeper, Archaeology.

September 2007



demolition of well-head



demolition of well-head (1)



demolition of well-head (2)



demolition of well-head (3)



demolition of well-head (4)



demolition of well-head (5)



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demolition of well-head (54)



demolition of well-head (55)



demolition of well-head (56)



demolition of well-head (57)



helen getting well depth 28
aug 08



helen getting well depth 28
aug 08 (1)



helen getting well depth 28
aug 08 (2)



helen getting well depth 28
aug 08 (3)



helen getting well depth 28
aug 08 (4)



helen getting well depth 28
aug 08 (5)



helen photographing well 28
aug 08



helen photographing well 28
aug 08 (1)



O416 Hardgate Well 01



O416 Hardgate Well 02



O416 Hardgate Well 03



O416 Hardgate Well 04



O416 Hardgate Well 05



O416 Hardgate Well 06



O416 Hardgate Well 07



O416 Hardgate Well 08



O416 Hardgate Well 09



O416 Hardgate Well 10



observation of soil moving and tanks



observation of soil moving and tanks (1)



observation of soil moving and tanks (2)



observation of soil moving and tanks (3)



observation of soil moving and tanks (4)



site 28 aug 08



site 28 aug 08 (1)



site 28 aug 08 (2)



site 28 aug 08 (3)



site 28 aug 08 (4)



site 28 aug 08 (5)



Stewart Buchanan recording well-head



Stewart Buchanan recording well-head (1)



Stewart Buchanan recording well-head (2)



Stewart Buchanan recording well-head (3)



Stewart Buchanan recording well-head (4)



Stewart Buchanan recording well-head (5)



Stewart Buchanan recording well-head (6)



Stewart Buchanan recording well-head (7)



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Stewart Buchanan recording well-head (9)



Stewart Buchanan recording well-head (10)



Stewart Buchanan recording well-head (11)



Stewart Buchanan recording well-head (12)



Stewart Buchanan recording well-head (13)



Stewart Buchanan recording well-head (14)



the well



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the well-head



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the well-head (14)



the well-head (15)



the well-head (16)



the well-head (17)



well 7 July 08



well 7 July 08 (1)



well 7 July 08 (2)



well 7 July 08 (3)



well 7 July 08 (4)



well 7 July 08 (5)



well 7 July 08 (6)



well 7 July 08 (7)



well 7 July 08 (8)



well 7 July 08 (9)



well 7 july 08 (10)



well 7 july 08 (11)



well 7 july 08 (12)



well 7 july 08 (13)



well 7 july 08 (14)



well 28 aug 08



well 28 aug 08 (1)



well 28 aug 08



well 28 aug 08 (1)



well 28 aug 08 (2)