

**Drum Castle, Drumoak, Aberdeenshire
Cameron Archaeology
Report on a Watching Brief**



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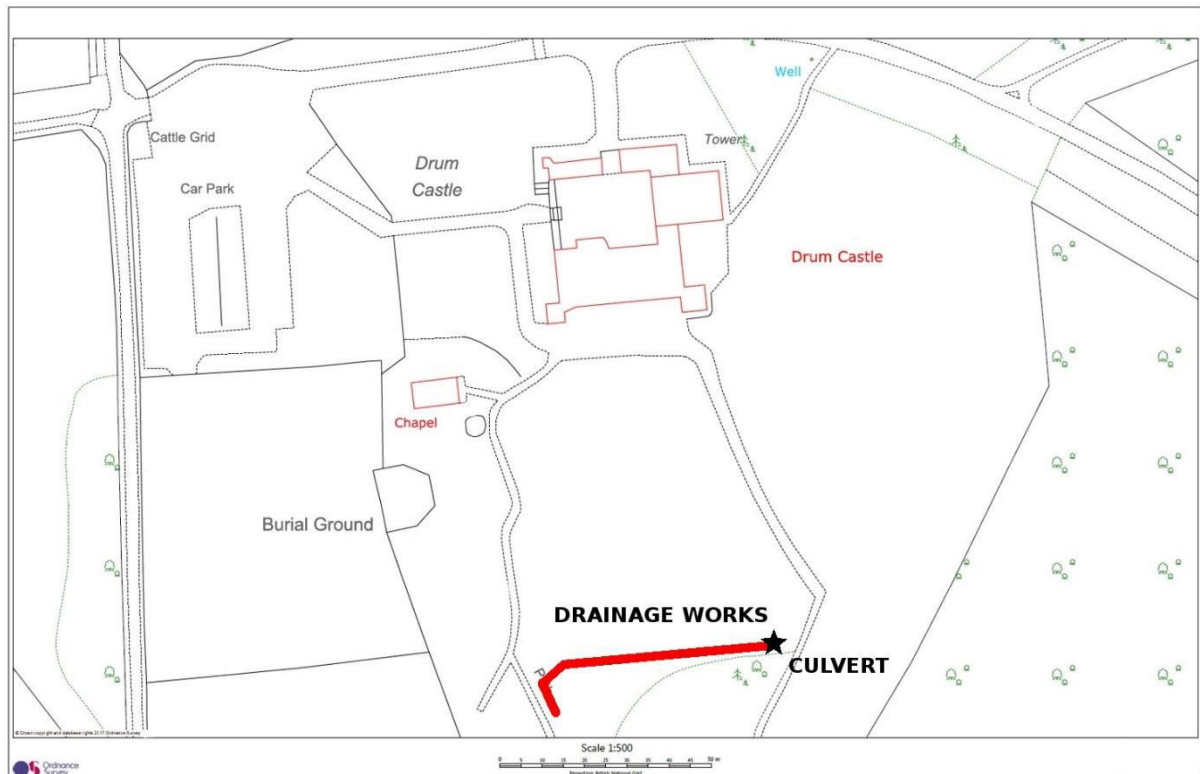
SUMMARY

On the 24th and 25th of April, 2017, a watching brief was maintained over 63.5m of drainage ditches which were being installed along the southern edge of the south lawn at Drum Castle. A fully functional hand-built stone culvert was uncovered, which was then utilized to assist with the drainage scheme. Beyond one sherd of modern pottery, no other archaeological finds or features were noted.

1 BACKGROUND

1.1 Intrusive drainage improvements took place at Drum Castle on the 24th and 25th of April 2017.

1.2 Cameron Archaeology was employed to perform an archaeological watching brief of these groundworks along the proposed drainage route by the National Trust for Scotland.



Illus 1: Location of drainage works on south edge of south lawn, Drum Castle, with location of culvert (contains Ordnance Survey Data, Crown Copyright 2017).

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 The excavation work was primarily carried out with a mini-digger, with small sections in areas containing numerous tree roots, partially hand-excavated.

2.2 The excavation primarily took place in well-kept grassy areas running E-W along the southern perimeter of the south lawn, with a smaller section on the eastern edge running through an area of pines and boggy ground near a former well.

2.3 The drainage route was mapped using GPS and extensively inspected by hand and photographed.

3 THE WATCHING BRIEF

3.1 Drainage trenching commenced at the western terminus of the drainage scheme, in a boggy area reputed to contain a now-covered well which was not located during previous works (Murray 2013:9). Again, trenching in this area did not reveal indications of a well. The soils in the extreme western segment of the trench showed clear signs of waterlogging, with grey-blue clays predominating the subsoils here. Excavation of the

western terminus was subsequently halted when several underground springs were disturbed, causing the trench to rapidly flood. A decision was made to then skip to the lawn segment and resume excavations eastwards, leaving an earthen baulk to contain the standing water until the remaining portion of the drainage works were completed. This baulk was opened at the end of the second day.

The drainage trench started in a SE-NW direction at the western end, before making two turns before heading east along the south lawn. The western terminus has previously seen some level of archaeological investigation during drainage works (Murray 2013: Illus 10). This work appears to have overlapped to a small degree with this current project, as indicated by disturbed stonework lying within the lower portions of the trench (Illus 2).



Illus 2: Disturbed stone lined drain near western terminus previously noted by Murray 2013; facing NE.

The remaining groundworks were relatively uneventful from an archaeological perspective, with no signs of disturbance or features until reaching a point some 17m from the east drive, when a substantial stone was dislodged by the machine. Hand investigation revealed a very well preserved, fully-functioning culvert measuring internally some 0.40m wide by 0.25m in height, running at a slight angle to the SE away from the newly installed drainage ditch for an unknown distance (Illus 3). A decision was then made by the drain installers to halt further digging and instead utilise the existing culvert by plumbing into it with the 4 inch drain pipe through the existing opening, as the culvert represented a considerable improvement on flow capacity over the drain tile employed on the rest of the project. The overall extent of the culvert is not known, however it may be surmised by the apparent heading that it extends into the upper portion of the garden, though not fully, as the standing water in the western trench segment indicates.



Illus 3 Main segment of E-W trench running across south boundary of south lawn; facing NE

4 CONCLUSIONS

Beyond one sherd of modern pottery, the reutilised culvert, and the disturbed section of stone drain noted by Murray 2013, no other archaeological finds or features were noted. It is somewhat surprising that more substantial elements of the gardens in the south lawn were not revealed, however this may be a case of the trench being located just outside the margins. The 'truer' E-W direction of the stone culvert, as opposed to the slight NNW-SSE orientation of the south lawn trench created during this project, may point to the original boundary of the gardens employing cardinal compass points within the layout.

5 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to Derek Alexander and Daniel Rhodes of the National Trust for Scotland for initiating this work.

6 REFERENCES

Murray, H.K. and Murray, J.C. 2013. *Drum Castle Aberdeenshire Drainage - MAS 2013-18*. Unpublished excavation report, accessible online at: http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archiveDS/archiveDownload?t=arch-1418-1/dissemination/pdf/mas1-206844_1.pdf as of 05-05-2017.

APPENDIX 1: PHOTOS

PHOTO ID	DIRECTION FACING	COMMENTS
DSC1346	S	Commencement of excavations
DSC1347	NNE	Commencement of excavations
DSC1348	NNE	Commencement of excavations
DSC1349	NE	'Gley' type waterlogged soils encountered along western segment of trench
DSC1350	SE	'Gley' type waterlogged soils encountered along western segment of trench
DSC1351	S	'Gley' type waterlogged soils encountered along western segment of trench
DSC1354	S	'Gley' type waterlogged soils encountered along western segment of trench
DSC1355	E	East facing view of trench showing signs of waterlogging
DSC1358	NE	Far western terminus commencing under conifers in wet, waterlogged area near possible but unlocated well
DSC1359	NNW	Excavation underway with saturated soils
DSC1361	ENE	Section of trench indication organic topsoils overlying yellow-brown gritty clays with water intrusion into trench
DSC1370	S	Rapid accumulation of water in western trench leg
DSC1372	NE	Previously disturbed stone channel recorded by Murray 2013.
DSC1379	NE	Main segment of E-W trench running across south boundary of south lawn
DSC1388	SE	Initial discovery of stone culvert
DSC1403	W	Internal view of stone culvert
DSC1405	E	Internal view of stone culvert
DSC1407	E	View of lawn segment with newly discovered culvert in foreground
DSC1409	W	General trench view looking west after digging was completed
DSC1412	E	General trench view looking east after digging was completed
DSC1422	S	Flooded trench segment shortly after removal of retaining baulk
DSC1423		Second trench corner before turning due east along lawn.



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_DSC1346.jpg



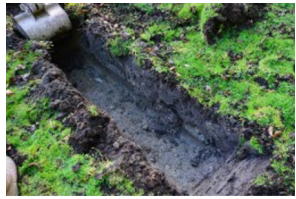
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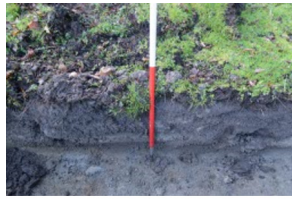
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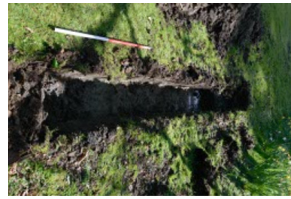
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