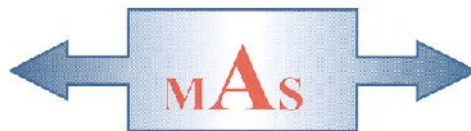


# DRUM CASTLE ABERDEENSHIRE DRAINAGE



**- Archaeological Watching Brief -**  
Carried out June- July 2013  
by  
**Murray Archaeological Services Ltd**



**Report No: MAS 2013-18**  
by  
**H K Murray & J C Murray**

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**DRUM CASTLE  
ABERDEENSHIRE  
DRAINAGE  
-Archaeological Watching Brief-**

**H K Murray & J C Murray**

**1. Background**

- 1.1 Work was being undertaken in two areas of the castle grounds to alleviate drainage problems. As a result an archaeological watching brief was carried out to record any archaeological features that might be revealed.
- 1.2 Murray Archaeological Services Ltd was commissioned by the National Trust for Scotland to undertake the watching brief on the drainage works; the field element of which was carried out on 13<sup>th</sup> June, 17<sup>th</sup> June and 18<sup>th</sup> July 2013.

**2. The Site**

- 2.1 Parish: Drumoak  
NGR: NJ 7962 0050  
NMRS No: NJ70SE 4.00

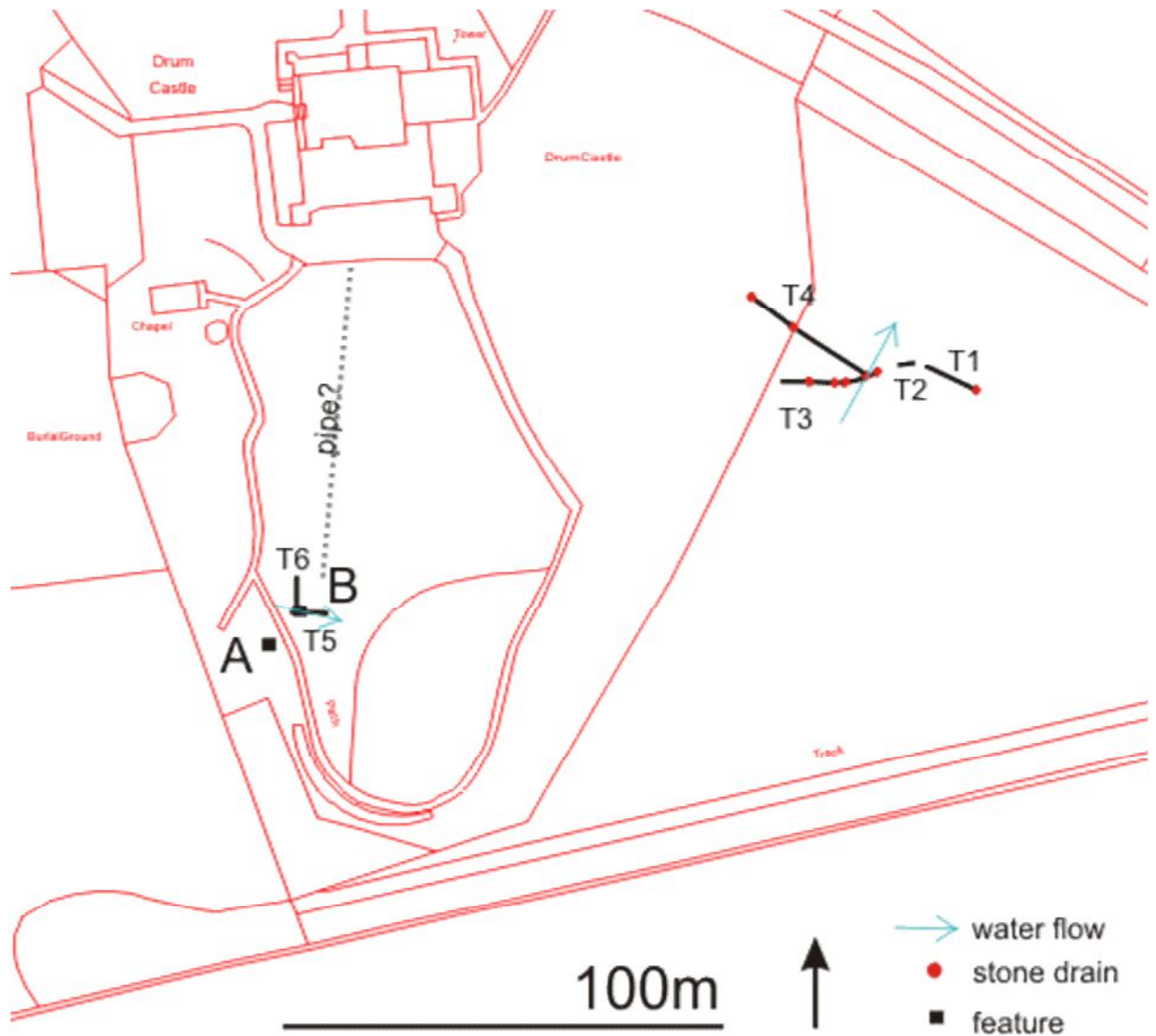
**2.2**

Two areas were involved:

- The field lying to the SE of the castle. Presently in rough grazing.
- Ground on the S and SW perimeter of the S lawn. Below trees with ground cover of leaf debris and some rough vegetation at edge of grass.

**3 Methodology**

- 3.1 In both areas a series of trenches were dug by mini- digger. These were observed, planned and photographed by MAS Ltd.
- 3.2 All mapping was done with a Magellan Mobile Mapper CX.



**Illus 1** Location of trenches (blue). Stone drains in field marked red. Features A and B marked with black squares. Dotted line indicates the possible line of lead pipe as marked by D Jennings. Reproduced from Ordnance Survey digital map data, © Crown Copyright, All rights reserved. 2012. License No 100041040

## 4. The Results

### 4.1 The field lying to the SE of the castle.

In the field SE of the castle test trenches (Illus1: 1-3) were dug by mini-digger to locate a drain. When the drain was located (below the stone drain at the E end of trench T3) a new pipe was joined into it to alleviate water logging in an area of ground to the SE of the castle (trench T4). Part of the W spur of this trench (T4), on the W side of the garden fence had a base of waterlogged grey/blue clay (Illus 2).

T1: From 379743,800450 to 379754,800445

T2: From 379737,800449 to 379741,800450



T3: From 370715,800446 to 379734, 800446

T4: From 379713,800446 to 379733,800448



**Illus 2 Grey/blue clay in base of trench just W of the boundary fence between the field and the garden.**

A number of stone drains of 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century date were located but no other archaeological finds or features were observed.



**Illus 3 Trench T4 looking W from field fence.**

#### 4.2 *Ground on the S and SW perimeter of the S lawn.*

Over recent years a waterlogging problem has occurred at the S/SW end of the S lawn. Paul Selway, NTS Assistant Surveyor – NE Service office, considered that there was a possibility that there was water seepage from a well shown in this area on an annotated copy of the 1899 25"/mile OS map (Aberdeenshire sheet 085.09; pub 1900). The date of the annotation is not known but must post-date 1900 as changes to other wells on the property occur between the 1st edition map of 1865 (Aberdeen sheet LXXXV.9 1865 (pub 1869) and the 1899 map and are marked by the OS.

Unlike the well to the N, near the chapel, the position of which is known and which survives as a stone lined well with a slab cover, there is no modern knowledge of the position of the well to the SW of the lawn.

As the annotations show a water pipe from the well to the front façade of the mansion, as a first approach an attempt was made to locate the lead water pipe with a metal detector. Derek Jennings, who undertook this survey, marked a possible anomaly across the lawn, leading towards the higher ground at the SW of the lawn (Illus 1: dotted line). He suggested that it led towards an area of stones (Feature A).

It should however be noted that neither the trench dug across the lawn in 1996 by Kirkdale Archaeology (Kirkdale, 1996, figs 2,3), nor trenches 4 and 5 of the 2008 excavation in the S lawn (Murray & Murray 2008) revealed any water pipe across this side of the lawn.

#### Feature A (Illus 4-7)

Subsequently Murray Archaeological Services Ltd sectioned the E half of this possible stone feature (Feature A: GPS: 379594, 800384) by hand. It proved to be a compact spread of stones, c 1.3 x 1.8m in maximum extent over a shallow roughly bowl-shaped 'cut' some 0.95-1.0m in diameter and c 400mm in maximum depth from the top of natural. While the top was cut into yellow natural sand, the base was on hard natural clay.





**Illus 4 Feature A sectioned, looking W**



**Illus 5 Detail of section of Feature A**

After the section was drawn and photographed, the second (W) half of the feature was removed by mini-digger under archaeological supervision. This proved to be identical to the hand excavated area. There was no evidence of any cut deeper than 400mm



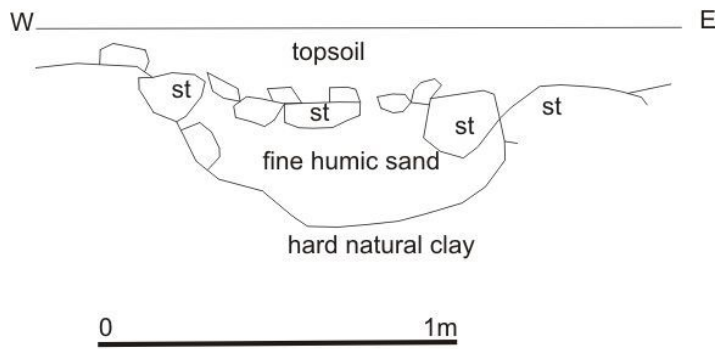
from the top of natural and there was no evidence that this had been a well. It was the excavators' opinion that this was a fairly incidental hole- possibly a tree-fall hole or the burial of a pet (although no bones were found), that had been filled in with well packed field stones to level the ground. The cut into natural was clear with no evidence of any lead or other water pipe associated with this feature.

Fragments of cement from around a c 4-6" pipe, and a few fragments of broken ceramic drain were only on the top of the stone scatter and not considered to relate to this feature- although they may either relate to a nearby feature- or be simple rubbish dumping.

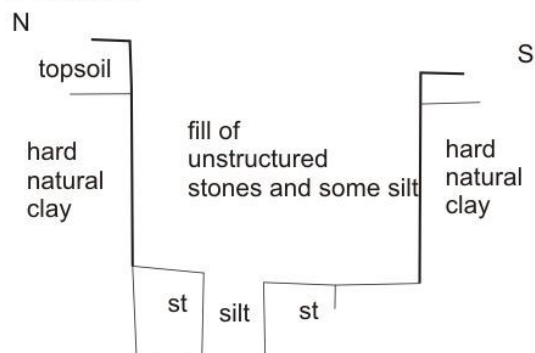


**Illus 6 Location of Feature A**

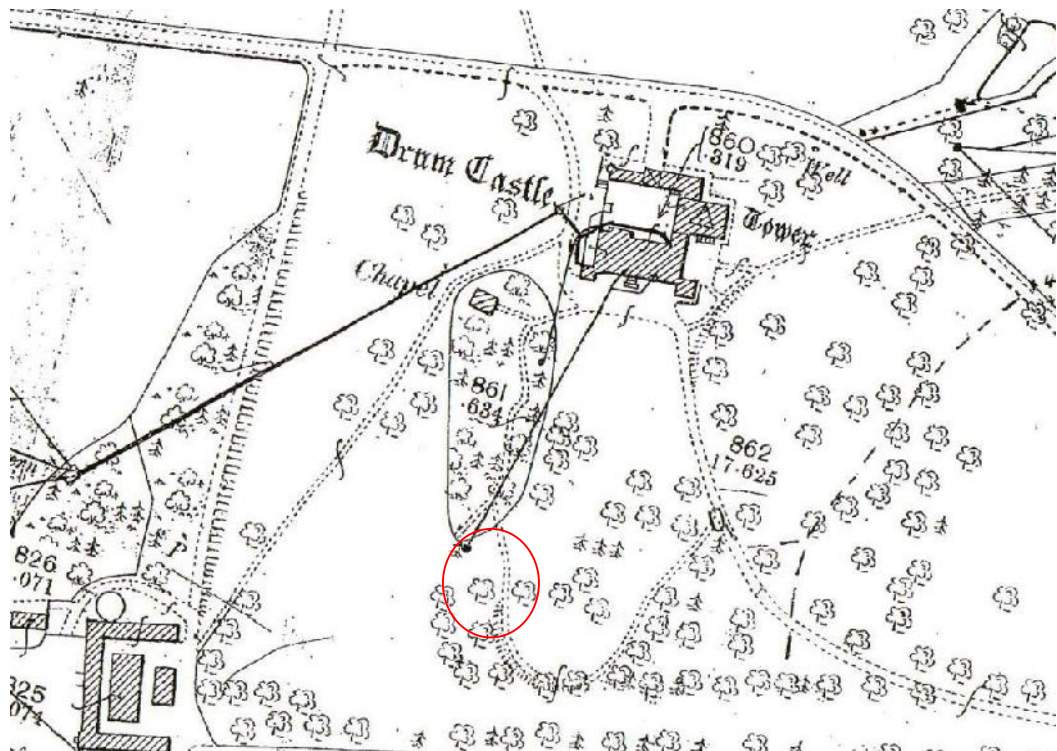
Feature A



Feature B



Illus 7 Sections of Features A and B



Illus 8 Extract from annotated copy of 1899 25"/mile 2nd OS (Aberdeenshire sheet 085.09; pub 1900). Date of annotations not known. Red circle indicates position of the well under discussion. (Map supplied by NTS surveyor, Paul Selway)



As a second approach, a machine trench (Trench T5) was dug to the N of this feature across the possible line of the lead pipe as indicated by the metal detector survey. The intention, if the pipe was located was to follow it back to the well. No pipe was found.

Feature B (Illus 7, 9, 10)

Divining rods were then used which indicated an area of water near the possible location of the well shown on the annotated copy of the 1899 map. A machine trench was cut across this (Trench T6) and it proved to be a stone channel drain (Feature B: GPS 379602, 800392) running NW to SE. This was not a stone drain (which would be a channel filled loosely with small to medium stones through which run-off water could drain). It had a channel cut c 800-820mm wide into the natural clay to a depth of 900mm below the present surface. The base of the channel was lined by stones on edge along each side, with a clear (now silt filled) channel 150-200mm wide and 200mm high between them. Above this the channel was filled with random stones. It was considered possible that these had been disturbed from a higher lining of the sides and a series of capstones. The drainage contractor considered that this was a channel to direct water from another source, possibly run off from a well or similar. He did not consider that it was a simple field drain. The silted base channel of this feature was wet, even in the present very dry conditions. Approx 1.2m of the feature was excavated. Further use of divining rods suggested that this channel may extend towards the position of the well indicated on the plan.



**Illus 9 Stone lined channel: Feature B**



**Illus 10 Location of stone lined channel: Feature B**

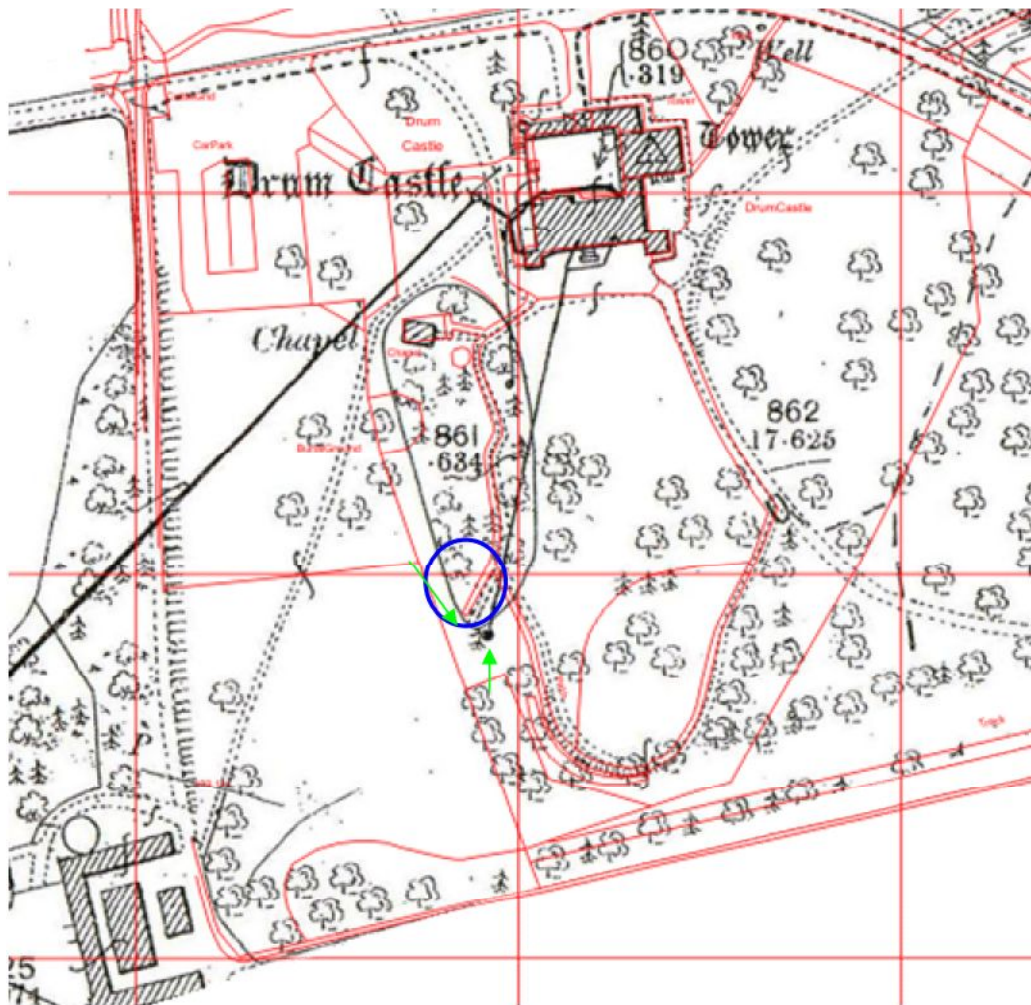
A further attempt was made to locate the former well by reference to the position in relation to the paths on the 1899 map and those shown on the more recent map (although these paths no longer exist on the ground). Measurements were established in relation to the burial enclosure and the nearby field fences (Illus 11). This would suggest that the well had been within a 3m radius of GPS 379590, 800389. However, probing did not indicate any obvious well covering slab, although part of the significant area was covered by a very large felled tree trunk.

## 5. Discussion

No features were found in the E field with the exception of 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> century stone filled drains.

In the area SW of the S lawn, there is still no clear indication of the well. The documentary evidence would suggest that the well post-dated 1899 and may be of early 20<sup>th</sup> century date.





**Illus 11 Present map overlaid on annotated 1899 OS map. Possible well position indicated by blue. Measured from adjacent fences (green arrows). Modern map reproduced from Ordnance Survey digital map data, © Crown Copyright, All rights reserved. 2012. License No 100041040**

## References

- Kirkdale Archaeology 1996 *Drum Castle:Excavations, January 1996*. DRU/ AO31.  
Unpublished client report.
- Murray, H K & Murray, J C 2008 *Drum Castle environs project- south lawn*.  
DRU/08/1 MAS 2008-5. Unpublished client report.



Photographs supplied to archive on CD

| <b>Photographic catalogue Drum Castle drainage</b> |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Digital frame no</b>                            | <b>Content</b>                                      |
| Drum drainage A                                    |   |
| A01-A02  | Field area looking N towards trenches               |
| A03-A05  | Trench 3 looking E                                  |
| A06-A07  | Trench 1 looking E                                  |
| A08-A09  | Looking S from trench 3                             |
| A10-A14  | Feature A as first cleaned, prior to sectioning     |
| B01-B03  | Trench 4 looking E                                  |
| B05-B06  | stone drain in Trench 4                             |
| B07  | Trench 4 looking W from fence                       |
| B08-B11  | Feature A sectioned by hand, looking W              |
| B12-B13  | Feature A general view looking E                    |
| B14- B17   | Feature B (N point points W in error)               |
| B18  | Location Feature B, looking N                       |
| B19  | Looking W from Feature B towards possible well site |