

HISTORIC SCOTLAND PROPERTIES IN CARE
MINOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS 2011

Burleigh Castle: Watching Brief, September 2011.

HS PIC Index Number: 90045

SITE: Burleigh Castle, Milnathort.

N.G.R.: NO 1288 0458

DESCRIPTION: Watching brief during the excavation of a single trench to take the footings of a new interpretation board.

PROJECT CODE: HSCO-90045-2011-01

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4 Western Terrace, Murrayfield, Edinburgh EH12 5QF.

SEPTEMBER 2011

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4 Western Terrace, Murrayfield, Edinburgh EH12 5QF.

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INTRODUCTION

Under the terms of its Properties-In-Care (PIC) call-off contract with Historic Scotland, Kirkdale Archaeology was asked to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of a single trench to take the footings of a new interpretation board.

The work was carried out on 29th September 2011.

DESCRIPTION

A trench measuring 1m (NW/ SE) x 0.6m (NE/SW) was excavated in an area W of the S end of the outer façade of the castle (Fig.1) and E of the assumed line of a possible ditch, which follows a roughly curving alignment W of the main façade, ultimately running off towards the S end of the S Tower.

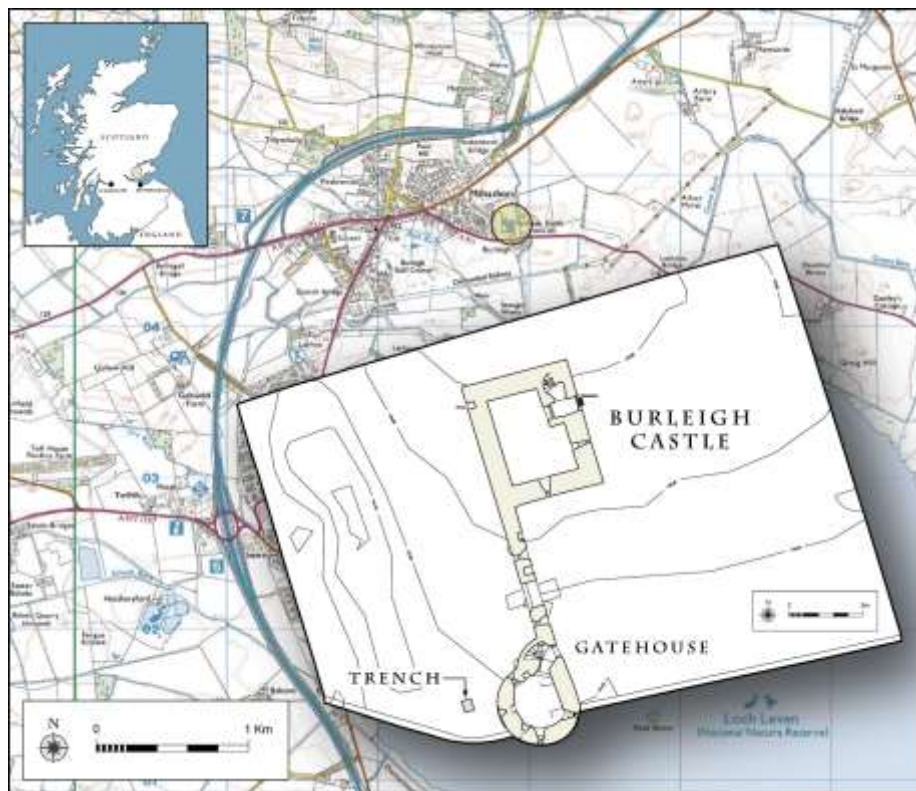


Figure 1: Plan showing the location of Burleigh Castle along with the area of the present works.
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Turf and topsoil **001** were removed to a depth of 0.2m, revealing a gravel rich deposit **002**. This comprised a loose 'spread' of small stones mixed with natural gravel and dark silt. It contained modern crockery sherds and was 0.1m thick. The limit of excavation in the trench

was reached within deposit **003**, which lay directly under **002**, and was primarily a rubble rich dump with mortar fragments and small stones. There was also evidence of burnt material (ash and coal) towards the S edge of the trench. Since the required depth of the trench was reached, **003** was not fully excavated.

C O N C L U S I O N S

All the deposits revealed in the brief excavation are 'fill' over earlier ground surfaces. Given that the present threshold of the main gateway is at current ground level, this means there may have been sloping ground (the ditch) within 5m of the main façade of the late-16th century castle.

This in turn may suggest that the ditch was more prominent in the relatively recent past – *i.e.* at a time when the ground was levelled up, perhaps during the late-19th century / early-20th century. The latter activity may in turn be contemporary with the neighbouring steading development – where the reduced castle sat in conjunction with a series of carefully planned 19th century buildings, the cottages and outbuildings on either side of the present A911 road.

The ditch appears to have followed a wide and curving alignment, which cuts across the S end of the castle façade, suggesting it relates to an earlier period of fortification (mid-16th century or earlier).

F I N D S

Several sherds of modern (late-19th/early-20th century) crockery were observed. These included pieces of white china plate, brown glazed ceramic (possibly teapot) , stoneware (jar fragments) and bottle glass. All were retrieved from **002** and **003**, and none were retained.

LIST OF CONTEXTS

No.	Description
001	Turf and topsoil. On average c.0.2m deep.
002	Gravel rich deposit. Re-deposited natural and small stones. Up to c.0.1m thick.
003	Dumped rubble and demolition debris. Sandstone, mortar and stone fragments set in loose grey silt . Excavated to a depth of c.0.4m.

LIST OF DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHS

No.	Description	From	Date
01	General view of site	E	29/09/2011
02	E-facing elevation	W	29/09/2011
03	E-facing elevation	W	29/09/2011
04	E-facing elevation	W	29/09/2011
05	E-facing elevation	W	29/09/2011
06	Graffiti on S jamb of niche	E	29/09/2011
07	Graffiti on N jamb of niche	E	29/09/2011
08	Doorway and niches	E	29/09/2011
09	S tower	W	29/09/2011
10	S tower and main gate	W	29/09/2011
11	Main façade	W	29/09/2011
12	Main façade	W	29/09/2011
13	Trench	W	29/09/2011
14	Trench	W	29/09/2011
15	Trench	W	29/09/2011
16	Trench	S	29/09/2011
17	Trench	E	29/09/2011
18	Trench	N	29/09/2011
19	S-facing section in Trench	S	29/09/2011
20	S-facing section in Trench	S	29/09/2011
21	Miscellaneous modern finds	N/A	29/09/2011