

HISTORIC SCOTLAND PROPERTIES IN CARE
MINOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS 2010

St. Orland's Stone: Excavation, November 2010.

HS PIC Index Number: 90270

Site: St. Orland's Stone, Angus.

NGR: NO 40083 50019

Project Description: Archaeological excavation ahead of the resetting of the St. Orland's Pictish symbol stone.

Project Code: HSCO-90270-2010-01

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Short Archaeological Report

**27th February 2011
Kirkdale Archaeology**

INTRODUCTION

In 2008, under the terms of its PIC call-off contract, Kirkdale Archaeology was commissioned by Historic Scotland to excavate two areas within the fenced enclosure around St. Orland's Stone - a Pictish symbol stone thought to date to the second half of the first millennium AD. The aim of this work was to determine if the stone has always been in this location, or if it had been initially erected elsewhere, and subsequently moved to its present site.

Although the cross slab was clearly reset, with concrete running under the base of the stone, this excavation revealed evidence for an earlier socket beneath the concrete. Further archaeological features around the stone included a partially disturbed burial on the W side of the stone, and evidence for a (probably nineteenth century) fence around the site. Taken together, the evidence of the earlier socket and burial probably imply that the stone is close to its original position (perhaps being slightly raised at some point during the 1950's).

The complications of a probable original socket surviving under the stone, as well as the survival of archaeological deposits in close proximity, meant that Historic Scotland's original plan to remove the stone for conservation was cancelled.

In November 2010, again under the terms of its PIC call-off contract with Historic Scotland, Kirkdale Archaeology was asked to return to the site (see Figure 1) and dig a socket through the backfill of the 2008 excavation, against the E face of the stone, to allow the stone to be reset in concrete.

The work took place on 14th November 2010.

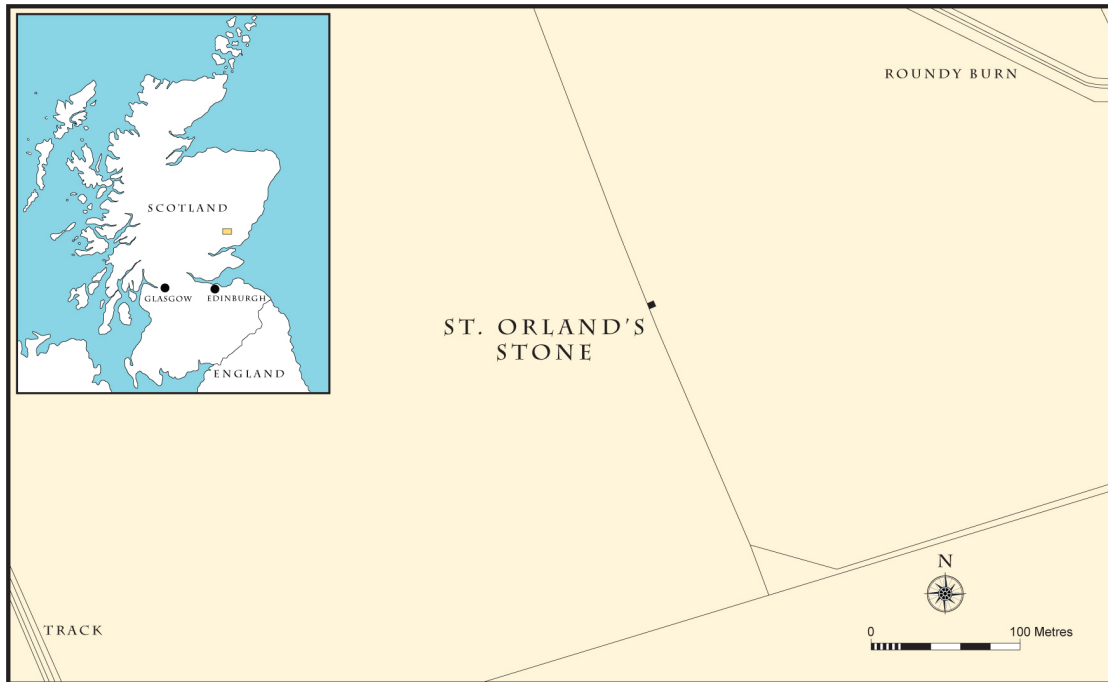


Figure 1: Location map of St. Orland's Stone.

DESCRIPTION

A trench 300mm N/S by 400mm E/W in area was opened immediately against the SE corner of the stone. A depth of 500mm of backfill (from the work in 2008) was removed by hand. This exposed the base of the stone, known from the earlier dig to be at its deepest at this point (see Figure 2). The trench was sufficiently deep to also expose the 1950's concrete running under the cross slab, and the opportunity was taken to photograph the below ground face of the stone, as this preserved peck marks across its surface that were in excellent condition.



Figure 2: Views of the work in progress. Clockwise, from top-left: Photos 1, 3, 16 and 7.

CONCLUSIONS

No new archaeological observations were made, but the fine detail of preservation of carving on the below ground faces of the stone (of preparation, not decoration) was reaffirmed, underlining the importance of preserving this monument *in situ* as carefully as possible.

LIST OF DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHS

No.	Description	Facing	Date
01	E face of slab pre- excavation.	W	14/11/2010
02	E face of slab pre- excavation.	W	14/11/2010
03	Base of E face pre- excavation.	W	14/11/2010
04	Detail of E face.	W	14/11/2010
05	Detail of E face.	W	14/11/2010
06	Detail of E face.	W	14/11/2010
07	Detail of E face.	W	14/11/2010
08	W face of slab pre-excavation.	E	14/11/2010
09	W face of slab pre-excavation.	E	14/11/2010
10	W face of slab pre-excavation.	E	14/11/2010
11	Detail of W face.	E	14/11/2010
12	Detail of W face.	E	14/11/2010
13	Detail of W face.	E	14/11/2010
14	Base of E face after excavation.	W	14/11/2010
15	Base of E face after excavation.	W	14/11/2010
16	Base of E face after excavation.	W	14/11/2010
17	Base of E face after excavation.	W	14/11/2010
18	Base of E face after excavation.	W	14/11/2010