

**HISTORIC SCOTLAND PROPERTIES IN CARE
MINOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS 2011**

Lochleven Castle: Signage Trenches, March 2011.

HS PIC Index Number: 90204

Site: Lochleven Castle, Loch Leven, Perth and Kinross

NGR: NO 1372 0178

Project Description: Watching Brief during the excavation of three trenches for new signage at Lochleven Castle.

Project Code: HSCO-90204-2011-01

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Short Archaeological Report

**24th April 2011
Kirkdale Archaeology**

INTRODUCTION

Under the terms of its PIC call-off contract with Historic Scotland, Kirkdale Archaeology was asked to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of three trenches for new signage at Lochleven Castle (Fig. 1).

The trenches were excavated manually by Historic Scotland staff under archaeological supervision, and the exact locations and orientation were decided on site by a member of staff from the Interpretation Unit.

Lochleven Castle consists of buildings ranged around a (largely upstanding) inner courtyard with a largely-obscured outer courtyard to the NW. It sits on a substantial island in Loch Leven, although the current extent of the island is due to enlargement through drainage works which took place on the loch between 1826 and 1832. The castle would originally have covered most of the island surface, with the waters of the loch reaching up to near its outer walls.

One of the trenches was located next to the shore to the NW of the castle, an area that would originally have been submerged at the time the castle was built. The remaining two trenches were located within the inner courtyard; one next to the N range, and the other near the wall-walk stairs in the SW corner of the courtyard.

The work was carried out on 30th March 2011.

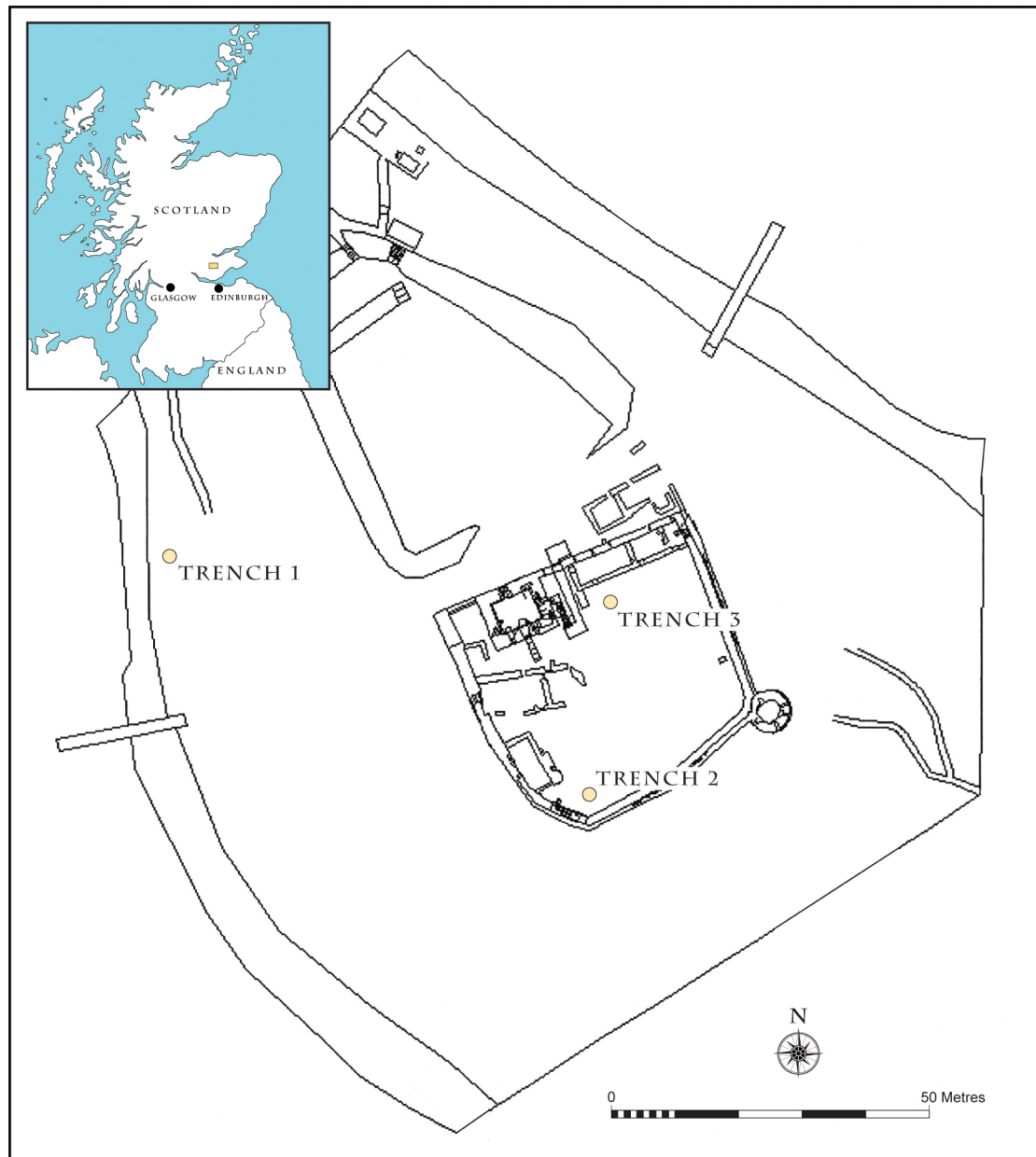


Figure 1: Location map of the works.

DESCRIPTION

Trench 1

Trench 1 measured 0.6m E/W x 1.20 m N/S x 0.46m deep and was located on the foreshore to the W of the castle facing Kinross House. This area of the island was reclaimed from the loch in the early 19th century, and this was reflected in the layers exposed by the excavation. The turf and dark brown silty topsoil **101** was up to 0.25m thick, and overlay a layer of small (<0.05m) to medium (<0.2m) sized sub-rounded water-rolled pebbles **102**. This layer (which was up to 0.1m thick) represented the surface of the loch-bed before drainage. Below **102** was a naturally-accumulated layer of compact pinkish-grey clay **103** containing sub-rounded stones (<0.08m), excavated (but not bottomed) to a depth of 0.17m. This trench showed that the areas reclaimed during the drainage works were subject to later landscaping - evidenced by the presence of modern bottle-glass shards within **101**.

Trench 2

Trench 2 measured 0.6m E/W x 1.20m N/S x 0.46m deep and was located to the SE of the SW door aperture within the N range of the castle courtyard. The turf and dark brown silty topsoil **201** was up to 0.16m thick and overlay a layer of dark brown moderately compact silt **202** flecked with sandstone and degraded oyster shell. This appeared to be a later levelling episode as it contained relatively modern-looking bottle glass and clay pipe stems (one impressed with the words 'RICHMOND' and 'DUNFERMLINE') as well as typical medieval kitchen debris, such as animal bone and oyster shells. This layer cleared onto a more compact layer of light-brown silt flecked with charcoal **203**, excavated but not bottomed to a depth of 0.09m. There were no features or artefacts present within this layer.

Trench 3

Trench 3 measured 0.6m N/S x 1.20m E/W x 0.46m deep and was located near the wall-walk stairs in the S corner of the courtyard. The turf and dark brown silty topsoil **301** was up to 0.2m thick and overlay a layer of dark-brown moderately-

compact silt **302** flecked with sandstone and degraded oyster shell 0.2m - 0.26m thick. This again appeared to be a later levelling episode as it contained both modern-looking bottle glass and accumulated debris such as bone and pottery. Below **302** was an undulating mixed layer of pinkish-grey clay **303** with numerous sub-rounded stones (<0.2m) as well as a large block (c.0.3m x 0.32m) of partially-shaped sandstone. This was not in any way a formally dressed stone, but looked as if it had been subject to some degree of shaping. No finds were recovered from this layer and the layer itself was not bottomed, but it seems likely that this could represent a potentially-early levelling episode incorporating the natural clay (as seen on the foreshore in Trench 1) and stone working debris.

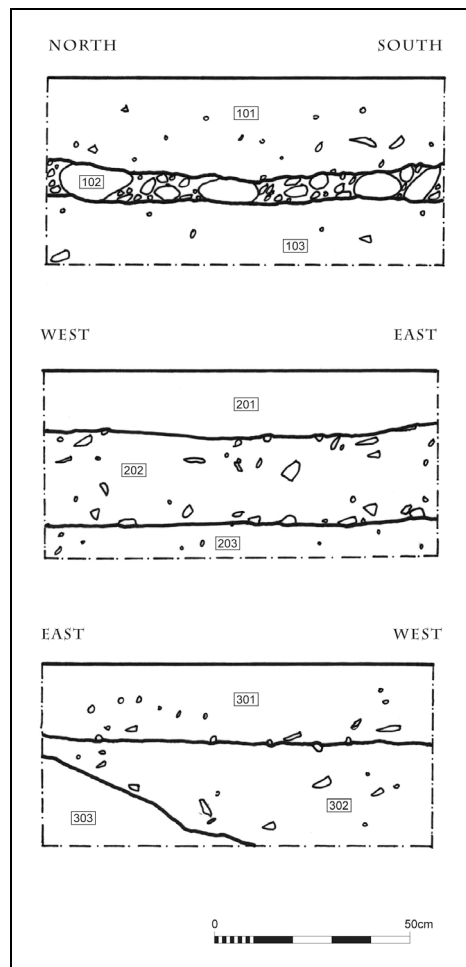


Figure 2: W-facing section in Trench 1 (top), S-facing section in Trench 2 (middle), and N-facing section in Trench 3.

CONCLUSIONS

A considerable amount of artefactual evidence was recovered from these small excavations and, subject to attribution of dates, may help us to better understand the processes through which the castle and the island were built up over time.

LIST OF CONTEXTS

No.	Description
101	Turf and dark-brown silty topsoil.
102	Layer of water rolled pebbles.
103	Natural pinkish-grey clay.
201	Turf and dark-brown silty topsoil.
202	Layer of dark-brown moderately-compact silt flecked with sandstone and degraded oyster shell.
203	Compact layer of light-brown silt flecked with charcoal.
301	Turf and dark-brown silty topsoil.
302	Layer of dark-brown moderately-compact silt flecked with sandstone and degraded oyster shell.
303	Layer of stone and pinkish-grey clay levelling.

LIST OF DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHS

No.	Description	From	Date
01	Trench 1, location shot.	E	30/3/2011
02	Trench 1, location shot.	W	30/3/2011
03	Trench 1, work in progress.	NW	30/3/2011
04	Natural clay in Trench 1.	NW	30/3/2011
05	Trench 1, work in progress.	SE	30/3/2011
06	Trench 1, work in progress.	NW	30/3/2011
07	Post-excavation shot of Trench 1, W-facing section.	W	30/3/2011
08	Post-excavation shot of Trench 1, N-facing section.	N	30/3/2011
09	Post-excavation shot of Trench 1.	SE	30/3/2011
10	The NW tower, Lochleven Castle.	NW	30/3/2011
11	Tower and N courtyard wall.	NW	30/3/2011
12	Castle and reclaimed land.	NW	30/3/2011
13	Information board.	N/A	30/3/2011
14	Trench 2, location shot.	S	30/3/2011
15	Trench 2, location shot.	NE	30/3/2011
16	Trench 2, work in progress.	SE	30/3/2011
17	Trench 2, work in progress.	NE	30/3/2011
18	Post-excavation shot of Trench 2, NE-facing section.	NE	30/3/2011
19	Post-excavation shot of Trench 2, SE-facing section.	SE	30/3/2011
20	Post-excavation shot of Trench 2.	S	30/3/2011
21	Trench 3, location shot.	NE	30/3/2011
22	Trench 3, work in progress.	SE	30/3/2011
23	Post-excavation shot of Trench 3, NW-facing section.	NW	30/3/2011
24	Post-excavation shot of Trench 3, NW-facing section.	NW	30/3/2011
25	Post-excavation shot of Trench 3.	W	30/3/2011

No.	Description	From	Date
26	Post-excavation shot of Trench 3.	N	30/3/2011
27	Post-excavation shot of Trench 2.	SW	30/3/2011
28	Post-excavation shot of Trench 2.	NW	30/3/2011
29	Castle courtyard.	N	30/3/2011
30	Castle courtyard.	NE	30/3/2011
31	N Range.	S	30/3/2011
32	NW tower.	SE	30/3/2011
33	Lochleven Castle from the loch.	SW	30/3/2011
34	Lochleven castle from the loch.	SW	30/3/2011

LIST OF DRAWINGS

No.	Description	Scale
01	Plan of Trenches.	N/A
02	W-facing section in Trench 1.	1:10
03	S-facing section in Trench 2.	1:10
04	N-facing section in Trench 3.	1:10