

HISTORIC SCOTLAND PROPERTIES IN CARE
MINOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS 2010

Iona Abbey: Survey Markers Watching Brief, November 2010.

HS PIC Index Number: 90351

Site: Iona Abbey, Iona.

NGR: NM 286 245

Project Description: Archaeological watching brief on the excavation of a series of small trenches to receive a set of permanent survey markers.

Project Code: HSCO-90351-2010-01

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Short Archaeological Report

**27th February 2011
Kirkdale Archaeology**

INTRODUCTION

Under the terms of its PIC call-off contract, Kirkdale Archaeology was asked to monitor the excavation of a series of seven small trenches dug around Iona Abbey (see Figure 1) intended to take a series of permanent survey markers. Two were within the Cloister, with the other five scattered around the Abbey complex. All trenches were hand dug, and each measured c.175 x 175mm in area, by c.125 mm deep.

The work took place on 8th November 2010.

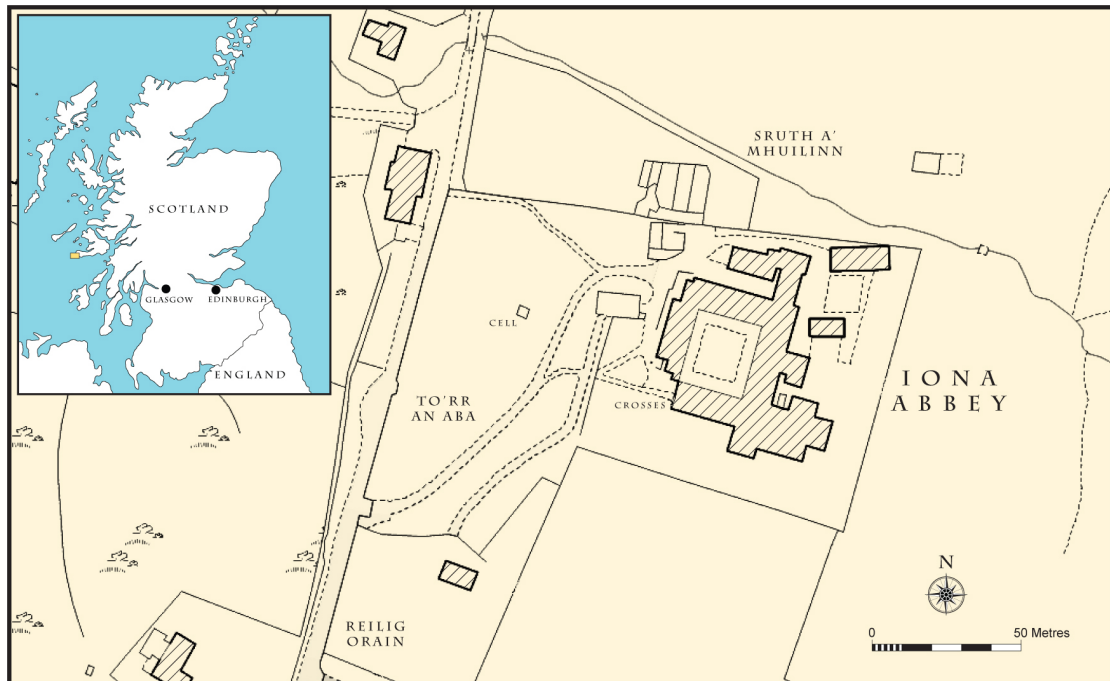


Figure 1: Location map of Iona Abbey.

DESCRIPTION

Trench 1 was located to the W of the Abbey's main door, just to the W of the modern track that skirts the E face of *To'rr an Aba*. The only deposit encountered was a dark brown silt rich in white sand.

Trench 2 was located in the SE corner of the Abbey grounds, close to the boundary dykes running around the S and E sides of the site. Again, a dark brown silt rich in white sand was encountered.



Figure 2: Trench 7: In plan (top) and general view.

Trench 3 was close to the NE corner of the Michael Chapel, to the E of the main Abbey site. This trench was bottomed within a dark brown silt rich in white sand.

Trench 4 was dug to the W of the site museum, in the NE corner of the site. A dark brown silt rich in white sand was the only fill of this trench.

Trench 5 was located to the NW of the main Abbey buildings, and its excavation again revealed a dark brown silt rich in white sand.

Trench 6 lay towards the W side of the Cloister and featured a topsoil of (sand free) dark brown silt, bottoming onto a layer of clean sand.

Trench 7 (see Figure 2), on the N side of the Cloister produced an identical sequence to that noted for Trench 6.

CONCLUSIONS

None of these small trenches were deep enough to disturb significant archaeological deposits. Those outside the Cloister seemed to be entirely within the topsoil, while Trenches 6 and 7 found evidence for a well laid turf within the Cloister - doubtless dating to the twentieth century.

LIST OF DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHS

No.	Description	Facing	Date
01	Detail of Trench 1.	N	08/11/2010
02	Trench 1, general view.	E	08/11/2010
03	Detail of Trench 2.	W	08/11/2010
04	Trench 2, general view.	NW	08/11/2010
05	Detail of Trench 3.	S	08/11/2010
06	Trench 3, general view.	SW	08/11/2010
07	Detail of Trench 4.	S	08/11/2010
08	Trench 4, general view.	SW	08/11/2010
09	Detail of Trench 5.	S	08/11/2010
10	Trench 5, general view.	SW	08/11/2010
11	Detail of Trench 6.	N	08/11/2010
12	Trench 6, general view.	N	08/11/2010
13	Detail of Trench 7.	SW	08/11/2010
14	Trench 7, general view.	S	08/11/2010