

HISTORIC SCOTLAND PROPERTIES IN CARE
MINOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS 2011

Holyrood Park: New Steps Installation, Monitoring, February 2011.

HS PIC Index Number: 90131

Site: Holrood Park, Edinburgh.

NGR: Centred c. NT 275 730

Project Description: Monitoring the construction of new steps at various points around Arthur's Seat, in Holyrood Park.

Project Code: HSCO-90131-2011-01

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Short Archaeological Report

**24th March 2011
Kirkdale Archaeology**

INTRODUCTION

Under the terms of its PIC call-off contract with Historic Scotland, Kirkdale Archaeology was asked to oversee the construction of new steps at various points around Arthur's Seat.

Half-day visits were made on the 1st, 14th, 22nd and the 28th of February 2011 to carry out this work. The new steps were being constructed as part of the work that saw a new path laid at the N end of the 'Dry Dam'.

DESCRIPTION AND INTERPRETATION

Dry Dam

The path that continued up to meet the E approach to Arthur's Seat was repaired at various points, in some places existing steps were widened, while elsewhere new steps were installed. There was generally little excavation in this area, and if it did occur, usually a maximum depth of 100mm of the 'topsoil' was removed. This material was generally a red brown slightly silty clay.

A 1923 ha'penny coin was recovered during the excavation for a step toward the bottom of the main slope.

Nether Hill

New steps were laid in this area, and digging them into the hill removed a depth of 200mm of a dark red/brown silty clay and gravel.

Zig Zags

Steps were installed all the way up the 'Zig-Zags,' and the path was widened, often by as much as 1m. A depth of up to 400mm of a dark red/brown silty clay and gravel was removed. There were no features observed, but three sherds of white

earthenware were recovered, two were undecorated and the other was a flat body sherd (perhaps from a plate), and had a blue transfer decoration on one side.



Figure 1: Nether Hill prior to new steps being laid.

CONCLUSIONS

The material removed in all these areas seems likely to be hillwash, and the finds from the 'Zig-Zags' are likely to date from the Victorian Period, or later.

Prior to the work commencing, it was thought most likely that there could be archaeological remains in the vicinity of Nether Hill or the uppermost part of the Dry Dam. These areas are both fairly close to the fort on Arthur's Seat, and particular attention was paid to the work being carried out here

However, nothing was seen in the small areas excavated, and it is also highly likely that there hillwash continues to cover any prehistoric archaeological features that survive on these slopes.

LIST OF DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHS

No.	Description	Facing	Date
1	Stone bags for new steps continuing up to the base of Arthur's Seat.	NE	01/02/2011
2	Site location, showing steep slopes to either side of the path.	N	01/02/2011
3	Nether Hill prior to new steps being laid.	N	01/02/2011
4	Nether Hill prior to new steps being laid.	N	01/02/2011
5	New steps under construction at the 'Zig Zags'.	S	01/02/2011
6	New steps under construction at the 'Zig Zags'.	S	01/02/2011
7	Prior to new steps being constructed at Nether Hill.	SE	01/02/2011
8	Prior to new steps being constructed at Nether Hill.	S	01/02/2011
9	Prior to new steps being constructed at Nether Hill.	S	01/02/2011