

Discovery and Excavation in Scotland – OASIS-type Form (2006)

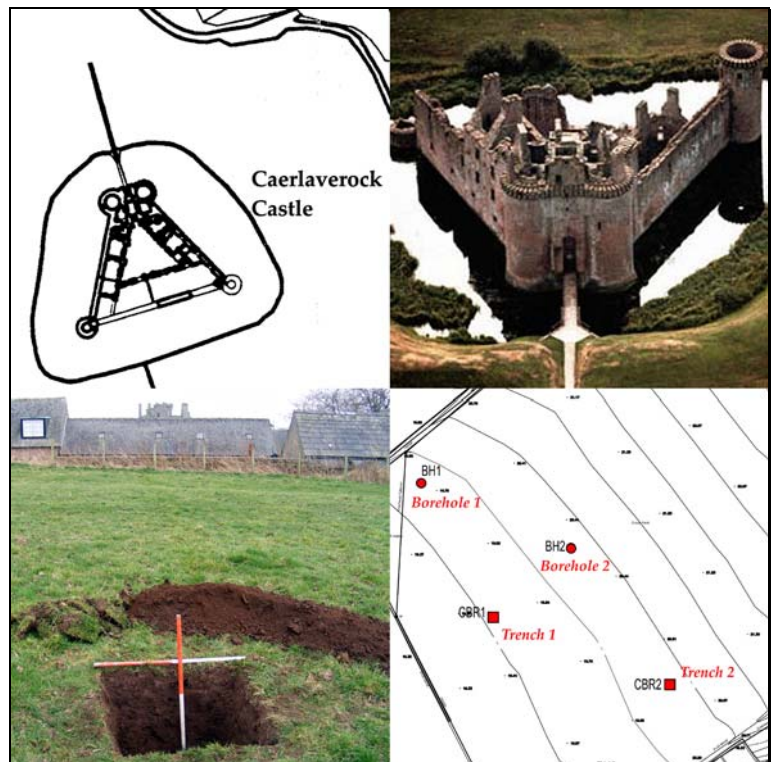
| | |
|---|--|
| LOCAL AUTHORITY: | Dumfries and Galloway |
| PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME: | Caerlaverock Castle |
| PROJECT CODE: | HSCO-90046-2009-01 |
| PARISH: | Caerlaverock |
| NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR: | David Murray |
| NAME OF ORGANISATION: | Kirkdale Archaeology |
| TYPE(S) OF PROJECT: | Watching brief |
| NMRS NO(S): | NY06NW 6 |
| SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S): | Castle |
| SIGNIFICANT FINDS: | None |
| NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures) | NY 025 658 |
| START DATE (this season) | 18 March 2009 |
| END DATE (this season) | 18 March 2009 |
| PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.) | |
| MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields) | <p>A watching brief was carried out during the excavation of six small test pits in the field just to the north of the visitor centre at Caerlaverock Castle. In addition, four slightly larger holes were excavated archaeologically. These excavations were intended to enable engineers to assess the suitability of the field for the construction of a new car park for the site. A geophysical survey undertaken prior to these works had identified some possible features, but the test pits were located to avoid these.</p> <p>There were deposits of uncertain date between the plough soil and underlying natural layers. Amongst these were found a fragment of modern china and a chert flake.</p> <p>There is the potential for archaeologically significant features to have remained intact beneath the ploughed soil. In none of the trenches did the modern plough soil reach the sub soil, indicating that archaeological features may well survive elsewhere. The chert flake, although very probably re-deposited, is a reminder of the potential for early sites along a relic coastline.</p> |
| PROPOSED FUTURE WORK: | |
| CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS: | |
| SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY: | Historic Scotland |
| ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR: | 4, Western Terrace, Edinburgh, EH12 5QF |
| EMAIL ADDRESS: | g_ewart@hotmail.com |
| ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited) | Archive to be deposited in NMRS |

Historic Scotland
Properties in Care
Minor Archaeological Works 2008-9

Caerlaverock Castle

Archaeological excavation and monitoring, March 2009

HS PIC Index number: 90046
Project code: HSCO-90046-2009-01



30 March 2009
Kirkdale Archaeology

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|-----------------------------------|--|
| <u>Site</u> | Caerlaverock Castle |
| <u>N.G.R</u> | NY 025 658 |
| <u>Project Description</u> | Archaeological excavation and monitoring |
| <u>Project code</u> | HSCO-90046-2009-01 |

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SUMMARY: February 2009 – A watching brief was carried out during the excavation of two small trenches near the dovecot at Craigmillar Castle, Edinburgh. These trenches were for the installation of bases for a new bench. Upper landscaping layers of uncertain date overlay what appeared to be demolition debris, also possibly material imported for landscaping.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Under the terms of its PIC call-off contract with Historic Scotland, Kirkdale Archaeology was asked to monitor the excavation of six small test pits and excavate archaeologically four slightly larger holes in the field just to the N of the visitor centre at Caerlaverock Castle. These excavations were intended to enable engineers to assess the suitability of the field for the construction of a new car park for the site.

The field was under grass when the work was undertaken, although had recently been ploughed. Most of the area is level, but the western third slopes down to the S and W, while the ground drops steeply immediately to the S of the field boundary, possibly reflecting the presence of a raised beach.

A geophysical survey undertaken prior to these works had identified some possible features, but the test pits were located to avoid these.

The work was carried out on 18 March 2009.

2.0 DESCRIPTION

2.1 Boreholes 1-6

The six boreholes excavated by the contractors were hand dug initially, with coring being undertaken from their base. All the test pits were covered by 100 mm of fine mid brown slightly clayey silt topsoil. Test pit 1 was towards the NW corner of the field and measured 400 mm square. The top 400 mm comprised fine mid brown silt with frequent small sub angular stones throughout. Below this was a deposit of fine pale orange silt with numerous small sub angular stones which was excavated to a depth of 150 mm without bottoming it. Test pit 2 towards the W side of the field was identical in both size and sequence to test pit 1.

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Test pit 3 was dug towards the SW corner of the field and measured 350 mm square. 450 mm of fine mid brown silt were excavated, bottoming on fine pale orange silt. Test pit 4 was towards the S side of the middle of the field, measured 300 mm square and was the same as test pit 3, except the upper deposit was only 400 mm thick.

Test pit 5 in the SE corner of the field measured 450 mm square and produced 400 mm of fine pale brown silt, over the familiar pale orange fine silt which was dug into for 50 mm. The last test pit was towards the NE corner of the field and measured 400 mm square. This was excavated to a depth of 450 mm, producing 200 mm of the upper brown silt over pale orange silt. None of the test pits produced any finds.

2.2 Trenches 1-4

The test trenches measured 900 mm square and were intended to be dug to a depth of 500 mm, but as the contractors required a substantial sample from the base ended up as 600 to 750 mm deep. Test trench 1 was towards the W end of the centre of the field. Under 100 mm of topsoil **F101** was 300 mm of **F102**, fine mid brown silt with frequent small sub angular stones and occasional charcoal flecks throughout. This sealed **F103**, fine pale orange silt with occasional stones throughout. Sealed below 200 mm of this was **F104**, very compact pale pink fine silt, again with occasional small sub angular stones throughout. A single shard of white china was recovered from **F102**, and a seemingly struck chert flake from **F103**.

Test trench 2 was towards the SW corner of the field. Below 100 mm of topsoil **F201** was 450 mm of **F202**. This was a fine mid brown silt rich in small sub angular stones and sealed **F203**. This was moderately compact pale orange silt with some small

stones throughout, which in turn sealed **F204**. This proved to be very compact pale pink fine silt containing some small sub angular stones.

Test trench 3 was towards the SE of the field and below topsoil **F301** was 200 mm of pale brown fine silt, **F302**. Below this was 250 mm of pale orange fine silt rich in stones, **F303**. At the base of the trench **F305** was very compact pale pink fine silt, with a narrow strip of **F304** overlying it. This ran from the NE corner of the trench to the SW and comprised clean reddish brown sand. This was excavated and found to lie in a shallow (c 150 mm deep) depression with gently sloping sides in the top of **F305**.

Test trench 4 was towards the NE corner of the field, and below the usual 100 mm of topsoil **F401** 350 mm of **F402** was excavated. This proved to be pale brown fine silt with some sub angular stones and occasional charcoal flecks throughout. Beneath this **F403** was a layer 80 mm thick of pale orange fine silt with some small stones throughout. The base of the trench was split fairly evenly into two halves: **F404** to the E was fairly loose orangeish brown sandy clay, while **F405** comprised fairly compact reddish brown sandy clay.

3.0 INTERPRETATION AND OBSERVATIONS

With the exception of test trenches 3 and 4 these excavations produced very similar results. Beneath the topsoil was pale brown fine silt, interpreted as plough soil, with a single shard of china from this found in trench 1. All the trenches then produced fine pale orange silt, with a chert flake found within this, again in trench 1. This demonstrates the survival of earlier deposits below the modern plough soil. The interpretation of this is not definitive in this limited exercise, but it may well be simply an earlier plough soil. If correct then this would make the chert flake residual. The six test pits stopped at this deposit, but Trenches 1-4 dug through it. Trenches 1 and 2 bottomed on very compact, pale pink, fine silt, doubtless the subsoil. Trench 3 had a very similar basal deposit, but with a narrow band of reddish brown sand running over it. Upon excavation this was found to be very clean, and is interpreted as natural, possibly cracking caused by frost. The possibility of this being archaeological in origin remains however, and this could be

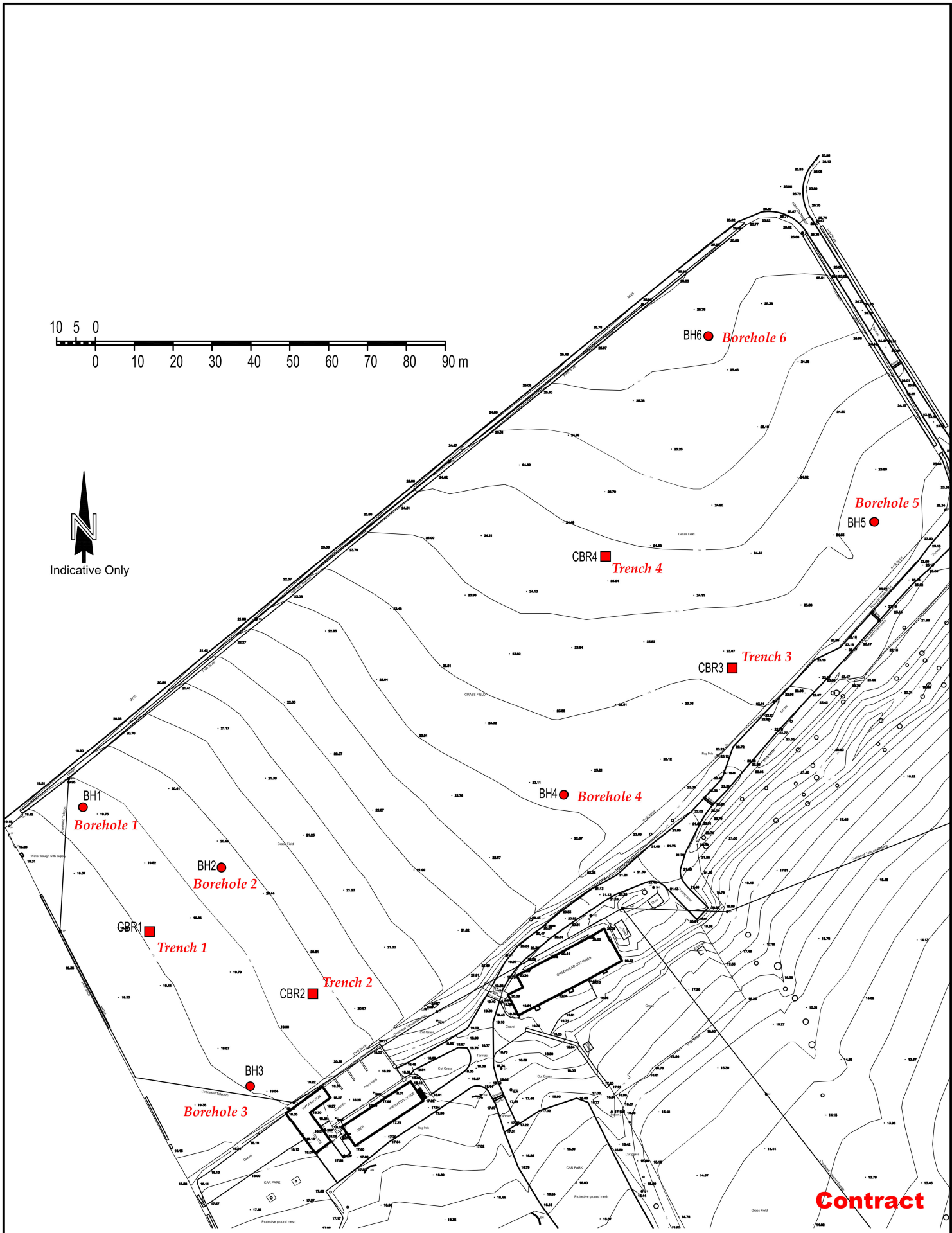
best demonstrated by opening a larger area over it. Trench 4 produced two different deposits at its base, of different colours and compaction. Again this seems likely to be natural in origin, representing a geological change.

Although these interpretations are necessarily very tentative in nature from such a small scale exercise in such a large field, this has at least demonstrated that there is the potential for archaeologically significant features to have remained intact beneath the ploughed soil. In none of the trenches did the modern plough soil reach the sub soil, indicating that archaeological features may well survive elsewhere. The chert flake, although very probably re-deposited, is a reminder of the potential for early sites along a relic coastline.

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APPENDIX 1: LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

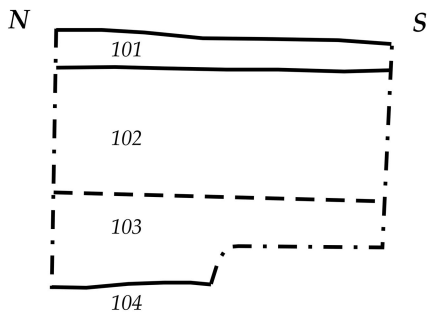
| # | Description | From | Date |
|--------|--|------|------------|
| 1- 2 | Hole 3 as finished | NW | 18/ 03/ 09 |
| 3 | Hole 2 as finished | S | 18/ 03/ 09 |
| 4 | Hole 4 as finished | N | 18/ 03/ 09 |
| 5 | Hole 5 as finished | NW | 18/ 03/ 09 |
| 6 | Hole 5 as finished | N | 18/ 03/ 09 |
| 7 | General shot | - | 18/ 03/ 09 |
| 8 | Trench 2, general shot | N | 18/ 03/ 09 |
| 9 | Trench 2 as finished | N | 18/ 03/ 09 |
| 10 | Trench 3 in plan | N | 18/ 03/ 09 |
| 11 | Trench 3 N facing section | N | 18/ 03/ 09 |
| 12- 14 | Trench 1 W facing section | W | 18/ 03/ 09 |
| 15- 16 | Trench 1 W facing section, detail of N end after sondage dug | W | 18/ 03/ 09 |
| 17- 18 | Trench 4 N facing section | N | 18/ 03/ 09 |
| 19- 20 | General shots of castle | - | 18/ 03/ 09 |



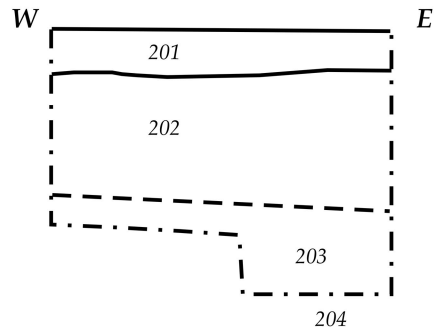
Contract

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|--|-----------------------------|
| ENGINEER John C Turner | DRAWN BY: William J Barr |
| SCALE 1:1250 | DATE 16.12.08 |
| PROJECT DRAWING NUMBER EDS 4.1.25E | |
| ARCHIVE NUMBER | |

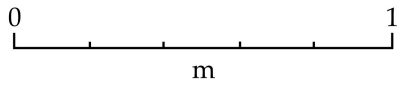
Fig. 1 : Location plan



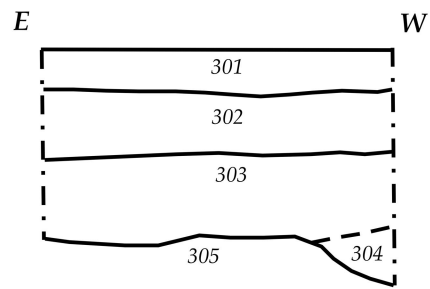
Trench 1, W facing section



Trench 1, S facing section

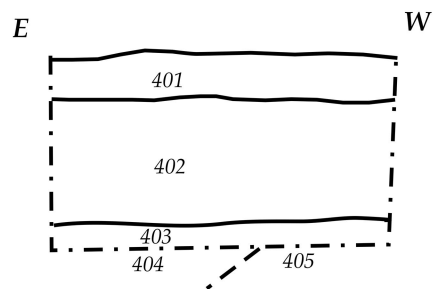
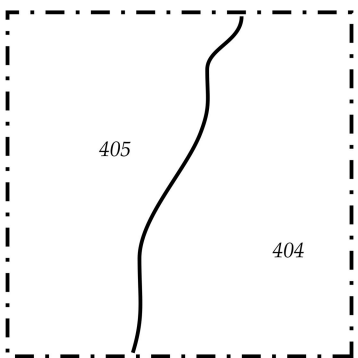


Trench 3, plan



Trench 3, N facing section

Trench 4, plan



Trench 4, N facing section

Fig. 2 : Plans and sections of Trenches 1-4.