

Discovery and Excavation in Scotland

Updated on 15/06/2007

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	West Dunbartonshire
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Dumbarton Castle
PROJECT CODE:	HSCO-90107-2009-01
PARISH:	Dumbarton
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Gordon Ewart
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Kirkdale Archaeology
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Watching brief
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NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)	NS 3996 7452
START DATE (this season)	3 February 2009
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PREVIOUS WORK (incl. <i>DES</i> ref.)	
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	<i>The excavation of 11 small holes around the flight of steps down to the cistern located to the southwest of the French Prison at Dumbarton Castle was monitored. These holes were part of the works to install a new handrail. Masonry seen in these holes was thought likely to represent an access structure pre-dating the modern steps currently in place.</i>
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	
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ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	Archive to be deposited in NMRS

**Historic Scotland
Properties in Care
Minor Archaeological Works 2008-9**

**Dumbarton Castle:
Archaeological Monitoring,
February 2009**

**HS PIC Index number: 90107
Project code: HSCO-90107-2009-01**



**March 2009
Kirkdale Archaeology**

<u>Site</u>	Dumbarton Castle
<u>N.G.R</u>	NS 399 744
<u>Project Description</u>	Archaeological monitoring
<u>Project code</u>	HSCO-90107-2009-01

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SUMMARY

February 2009 – The excavation of 11 small holes around the flight of steps down to the cistern located to the southwest of the French Prison at Dumbarton Castle was monitored. These holes were part of the works to install a new handrail. Masonry seen in these holes was thought likely to represent an access structure pre-dating the modern steps currently in place.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Under the terms of its call-off contract with Historic Scotland, Kirkdale Archaeology was asked to monitor the excavation of 11 small foundation holes to receive uprights for a new handrail around the flight of steps down to the cistern located to the SW of the French Prison at Dumbarton Castle (Fig. 1). The work took place on the 3rd of February 2009.

2.0 DESCRIPTION

The holes were arranged with numbers 1–5 immediately S of the S boundary wall of the steps. Hole 6 was centrally placed immediately W of the W boundary wall of the steps. Holes 7–11 lay N of the N boundary wall of the steps. The entrance to the flight of steps is to the E.

Evidence of the footing for the boundary wall and the arch over the cistern were picked up in holes 4 and 5. More extensive evidence of masonry was picked up in holes 1 and 11 in the form of wall lines extending towards the E. In general the trenches were dug to a depth of 300 mm except where earlier masonry was located at a depth of *c* 250 mm. The deposits excavated in each hole were a dark grey silt with fragments of 19th- and 20th-century pottery.

3.0 INTERPRETATION AND OBSERVATIONS

The present stairwell and parapet are thought to be modern. However, the cistern and access to it relate to the military occupation of the site. In turn the masonry revealed in holes 1 and 11 suggest some residual access arrangement succeeded by

the present flight of steps and parapet wall.

#	Description	From	Date
1	Work in progress	N	03/02/09
2	Work in progress	N	03/02/09
3	Holes 1 to 5	E	03/02/09
4	Hole 1	-	03/02/09
5	Hole 11	-	03/02/09
6	Hole 4	-	03/02/09
7	Hole 4	-	03/02/09
8	Miscellaneous finds	-	03/02/09
9	Miscellaneous finds	-	03/02/09
10	Excavation completed	SW	03/02/09
11	Excavation completed	SW	03/02/09
12	Excavation completed	NE	03/02/09
13	Hole 11	E	03/02/09
14	Hole 11	NE	03/02/09
15	Hole 11	SW	03/02/09
16	View of arch over cistern	-	03/02/09
17	Entrance to cistern	-	03/02/09
18	Entrance to cistern	-	03/02/09
19	Holes 4 and 5	-	03/02/09
20	View of entrance to cistern	NE	03/02/09
21	Completed excavation	NW	03/02/09
22	Hole 10	N	03/02/09
23	Holes 8 and 9	N	03/02/09
24	Holes 8 and 9	N	03/02/09
25	Holes 8 and 9	N	03/02/09
26	Hole 7	N	03/02/09
27	Hole 6	NW	03/02/09
28	Hole 6	NW	03/02/09
29	Holes 5 - 7	SW	03/02/09
30	Holes 2 - 4	SW	03/02/09
31	Hole 1	S	03/02/09
32	Hole 1	S	03/02/09
33	Holes 1 and 2	S	03/02/09
34	Completed excavation	E	03/02/09

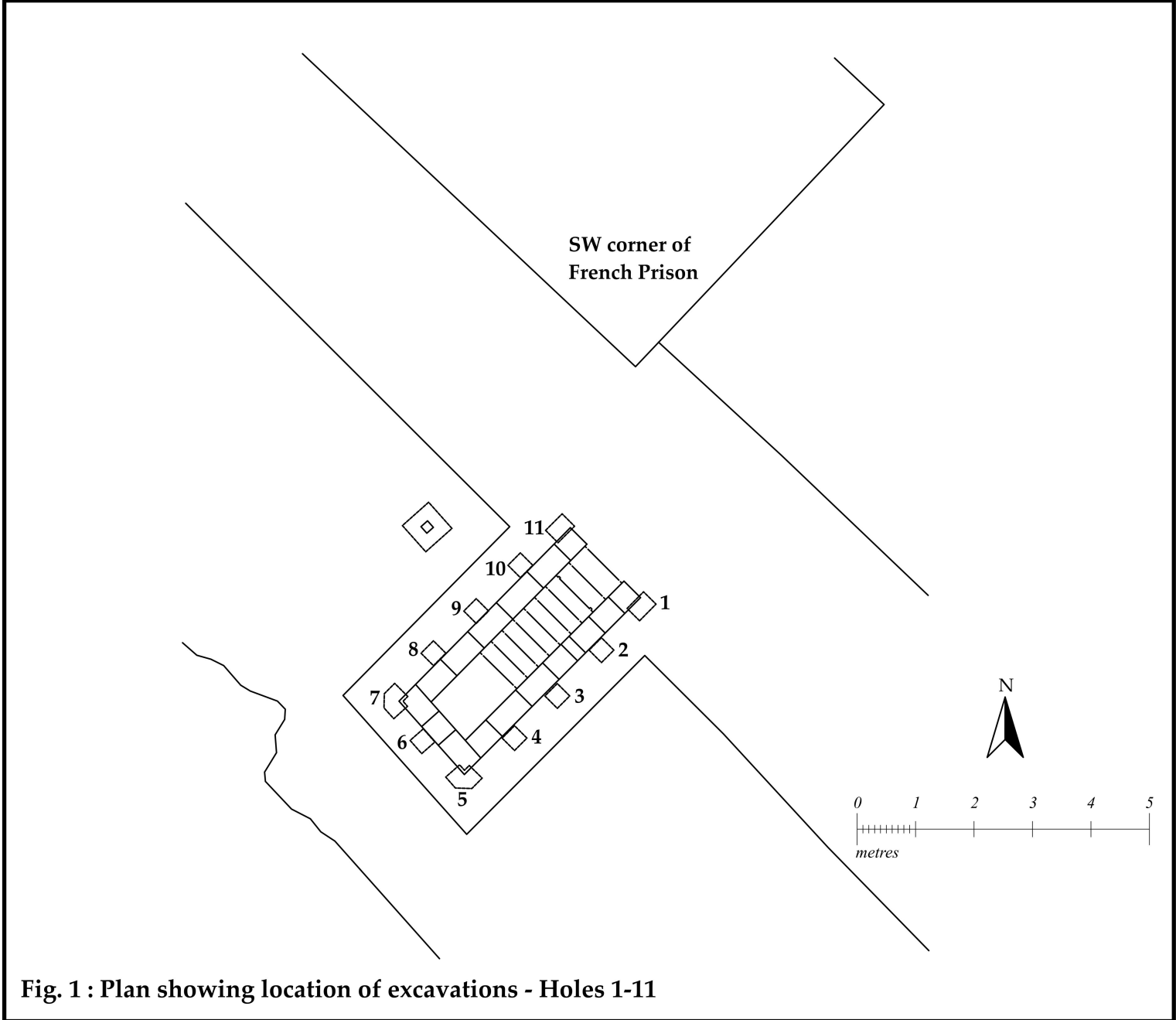
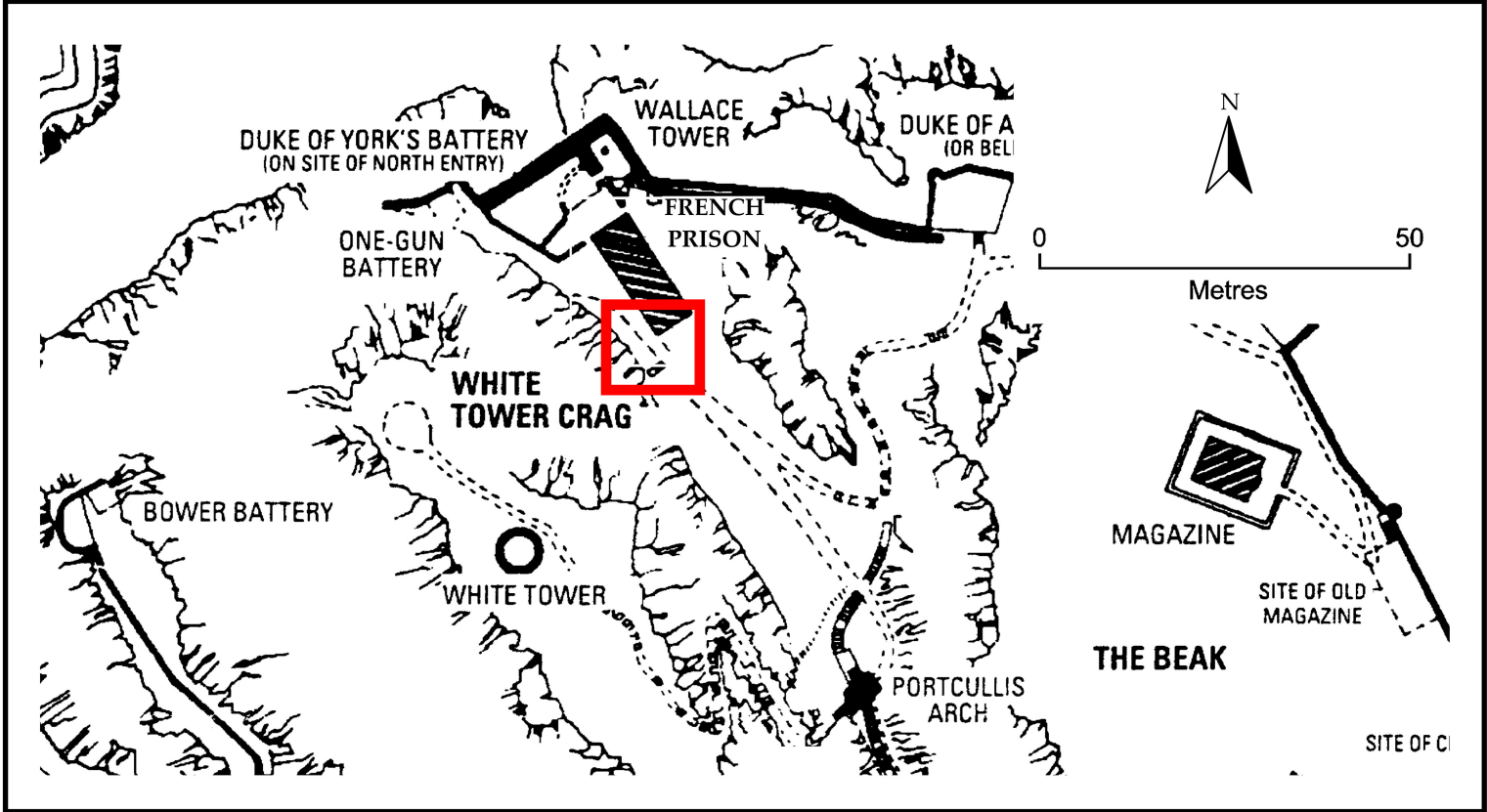


Fig. 1 : Plan showing location of excavations - Holes 1-11