

## *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland*

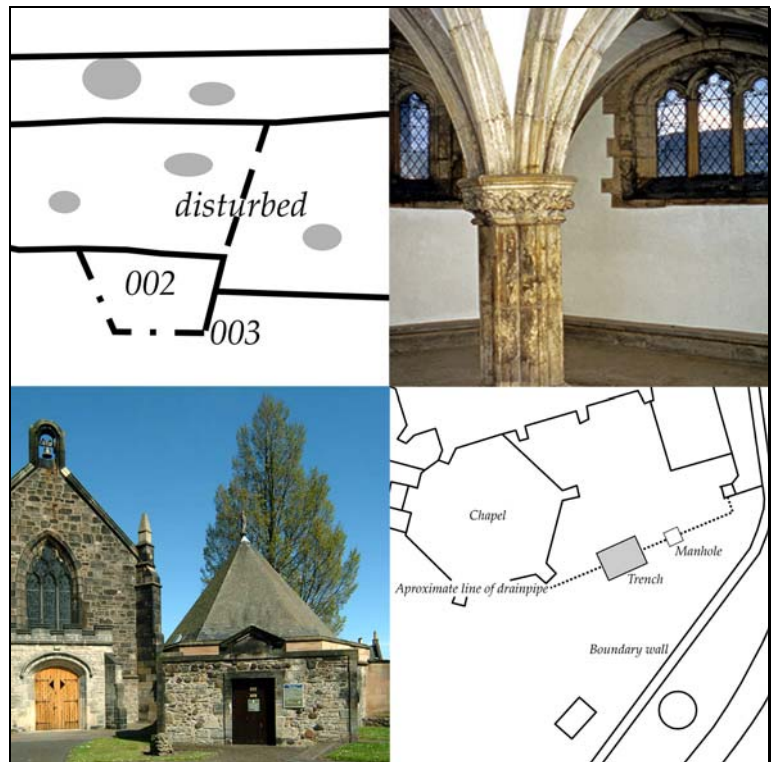
Updated on 15/06/2007

<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY:</b>	EDINBURGH, CITY OF
<b>PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:</b>	St Triduana's Chapel (Restalrig Parish Church)
<b>PROJECT CODE:</b>	HSCO-90133-2009-01
<b>PARISH:</b>	EDINBURGH (EDINBURGH, CITY OF)
<b>NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	Claire Casey
<b>NAME OF ORGANISATION:</b>	Kirkdale Archaeology
<b>TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:</b>	Watching brief
<b>NMRS NO(S):</b>	NT27SE 103.01
<b>SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):</b>	Chapel
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS:</b>	None
<b>NGR</b> (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)	NT 2834 7446
<b>START DATE</b> (this season)	9 March 2009
<b>END DATE</b> (this season)	11 March 2009
<b>PREVIOUS WORK</b> (incl. <i>DES</i> ref.)	
<b>MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION:</b> (May include information from other fields)	<i>An excavation was carried out in the graveyard of St Triduana's Chapel (Restalrig Parish Church) to locate a drain known to run from the chapel to the street to the east. A cutter sent by contractors into this drain to clear it had become stuck within the drain, and the hope was that this could be recovered. This proved difficult due to the presence of the roots of a nearby tree, which had greatly affected the area, although what was very likely to be the cut for the drain was seen. Work was abandoned at this stage.</i>
<b>PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:</b>	
<b>CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:</b>	
<b>SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:</b>	Historic Scotland
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<b>ARCHIVE LOCATION</b> (intended/deposited)	Archive to be deposited in NMRS

Historic Scotland  
Properties in Care  
Minor Archaeological Works 2008-9

# St Triduana's Aisle, Chapel and Wellhouse (Restalrig Parish Church): Archaeological Excavation, March 2009

HS PIC Index number: 90133  
Project code: HSCO-90133-2009-01



30 March 2009  
Kirkdale Archaeology

<b><u>Site</u></b>	St Triduana's Aisle, Chapel and Wellhouse (Restalrig Parish Church)
<b><u>N.G.R</u></b>	NT 283 745
<b><u>Project Description</u></b>	Archaeological excavation
<b><u>Project code</u></b>	HSCO-90133-2009-01

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1.0 *SUMMARY: March 2009: An excavation was carried out in the graveyard of St Triduana's Chapel (Restalrig Parish Church) to locate a drain known to run from the chapel to the street to the east. A cutter sent by contractors into this drain to clear it had become stuck within the drain, and the hope was that this could be recovered. This proved difficult due to the presence of the roots of a nearby tree, which had greatly affected the area, although what was very likely to be the cut for the drain was seen. Work was abandoned at this stage.*

## 2.0 INTRODUCTION

Under the terms of its PIC call-off contract with Historic Scotland, Kirkdale Archaeology was asked to undertake an excavation at St Triduana's Chapel (Restalrig Parish Church). The purpose of the trench was to locate a drain known to run from the chapel to the street to the E. A cutter sent into this drain to clear it by contractors had become stuck within its length, and the hope was that this could be recovered.

Saint Triduana's Chapel is a unique structure, hexagonal in shape, and originally two stories in height, with a more regular church attached to its N side. All were badly damaged during the Reformation, with the upper chapel almost completely destroyed, and the lower converted into a private burial vault for the Logans of Restalrig. In 1836 the church was rebuilt as Restalrig Parish Church, and in 1907 the burial vault was emptied out and restored.

Initially it was thought that the lower chapel was a well house, as water accumulated within it due to its semi-subterranean situation, with its floor some 2.3 m below the current ground surface. Later it was realised that this was unlikely, and it was reinterpreted as a chapel. This raises the question of why it is so waterlogged - if it was not like this when originally built, then the water table must have been altered. The surrounding graveyard is post-reformation in date, and displays evidence for alterations in the ground level, particularly to the E, where the street level beyond the graveyard is at a significantly lower level.

The cutter had been inserted into the drain system via a man-hole some 10.5 m E of the chapel, where the pipe is 1.4 m below the ground. It travelled for 4.9 m before

becoming stuck, and a camera inserted before the cutter indicated that thick roots had penetrated the drain at this point. A mature Elm tree grows out of the graveyard at this location, one of three all spaced 10 m apart and parallel to the E boundary wall of the graveyard. The date when the drain was inserted is not known and exactly what course it follows is unclear, and when the manhole was lifted it could be seen at the base of this to swing further to the S than anticipated.

While the Chapel is a Property in Care maintained by Historic Scotland, the graveyard is in the care of the City of Edinburgh Council. Both parties were consulted prior to the commencement of this project, and particular concern was voiced about the possibility of damaging the elm tree. In practical terms it was requested that tree roots of greater than 20 mm be left undamaged.

The work was undertaken between 9 and 11 March 2009.

### **3.0 DESCRIPTION**

A trench measuring 3.5 m E-W by 2.5 m N-S was laid out 2.4 m W of the manhole, along the N side of the Elm tree. Topsoil **F001** was fine dark grey silt up to 100 mm thick. This deposit produced significant quantities of human bone, as well as a small collection of relatively recent finds, including a 1964 halfpenny. The removal of **F001** showed how badly the roots have affected the area, with significant disturbance across the whole trench.

The decision was made, in consultation with Historic Scotland, to concentrate on a narrow strip at the E end of the trench, as far from the tree and as close to the known course of the drain as possible. A small extension, 800 mm E-W by 1 m N-S was added to the SE corner of the original trench to ensure that the full width of its cut was included in the excavated area. This 800 mm wide strip was then dug deeper along the whole E edge of the trench.

After the removal of significant amounts of heavily root-disturbed soil from this area, an area of loose, mixed deposits, **F002**, was noted. Discrete patches of ash, blaze and coke sat amongst more substantial amounts of small, rounded gravel, with fine, dark grey silt mixed throughout. This crossed the 800 mm wide sondage in a

strip 1.6 m N-S. A maximum depth of 250 mm of this material was excavated without bottoming it - beyond this depth the roots hindered further work. This showed that it was within a steep sided cut, **F003**, and this could be seen to be cut against **F004**, mid brown, fine silt that was not itself excavated. At this stage work was abandoned, as it was clear that the required depth could not be reached in this area due to the roots.

#### 4.0 INTERPRETATION AND OBSERVATIONS

Although no drain was exposed it seems certain that **F003** is its cut. The manhole was situated only 2.4 m W of the trench, and showed the pipe heading in this direction, while the loose fill, **F002**, comprising a mix of gravel and burnt material, may have been a deliberate attempt to increase the drainage of surface water. The only real surprise was the width of this feature at 1.6 m, which would presumably make it almost square in profile if emptied out.

Late 19<sup>th</sup>-century OS maps and a photograph taken in 1907 show a path running from a door (now blocked) in the E boundary wall of the graveyard, and curving around the S side of the chapel. While it is unlikely that the drain itself predates the 1907 emptying of the burial vault, this feature may well follow the line of an extant path. It might be thought that traces of the path itself were uncovered, as this would explain both the width and the gravel content of **F002**. However, the loose nature of **F002**, along with the depth of its cut **F003** (at least 250 mm) means this interpretation seems fairly unlikely. In spite of the large diameter of the Elm tree, this must presumably post- date this drain, or at least been very small when it was dug.

Further attempts to retrieve the cutter by digging down seem fairly futile while the tree remains. It should be noted that the drain is not blocked and continues to function. An electric pump within the chapel is used to raise water up from the floor of the chapel to the drain system, and in the short term this continues to function. A longer-term solution seems to involve the excavation of a new drain, with the obvious archaeological ramifications that this would have.

**A1.0 APPENDIX 1: LIST OF CONTEXTS**

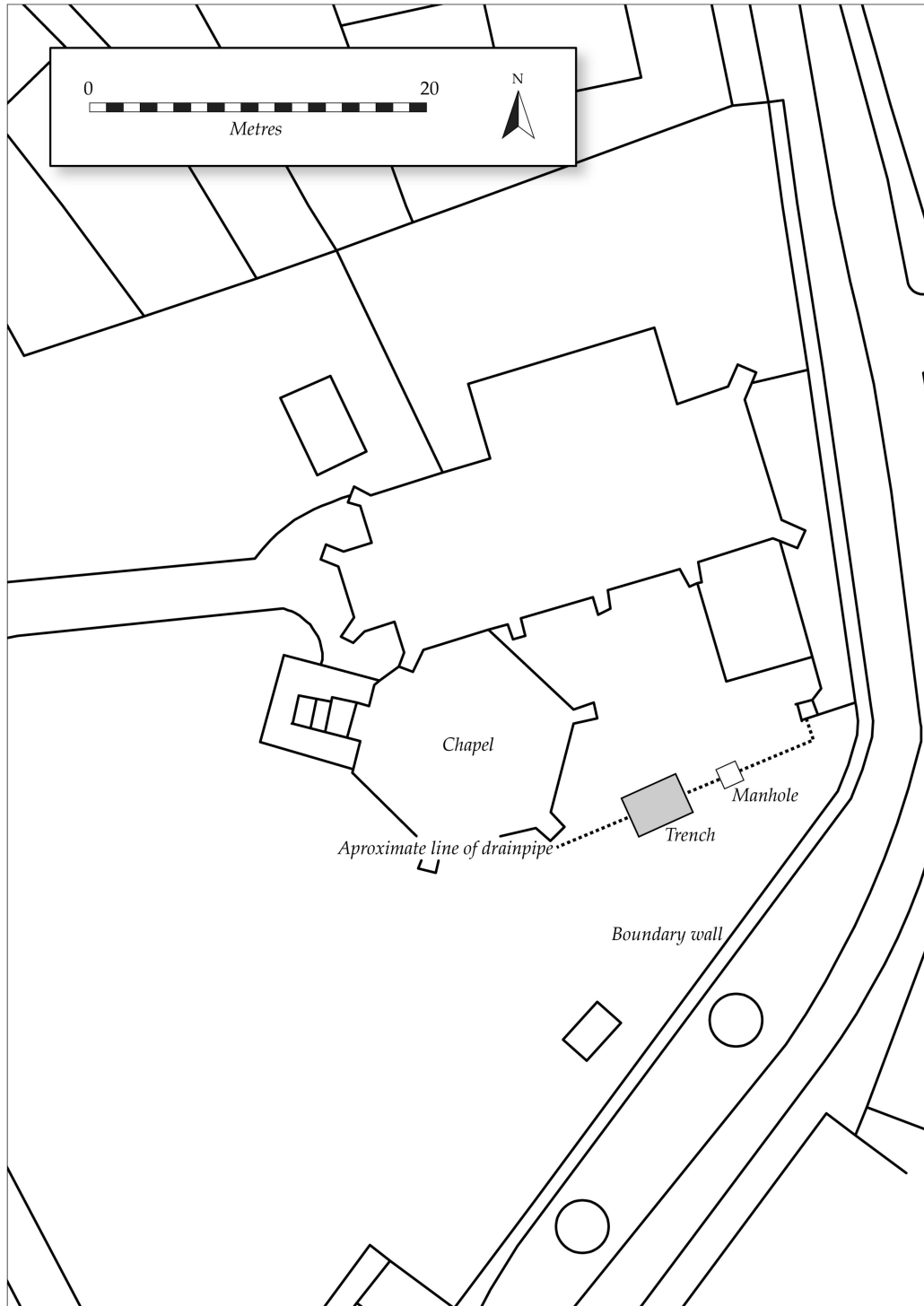
#	Description
001	Topsoil
002	Fill of F003
003	E-W cut
004	Unexcavated deposit cut by F003

**A2.0 APPENDIX 2: LIST OF DRAWINGS**

#	Type	Description	Scale
001	Section	W facing section of trench	1: 10
002	Plan	Location plan	1: 50

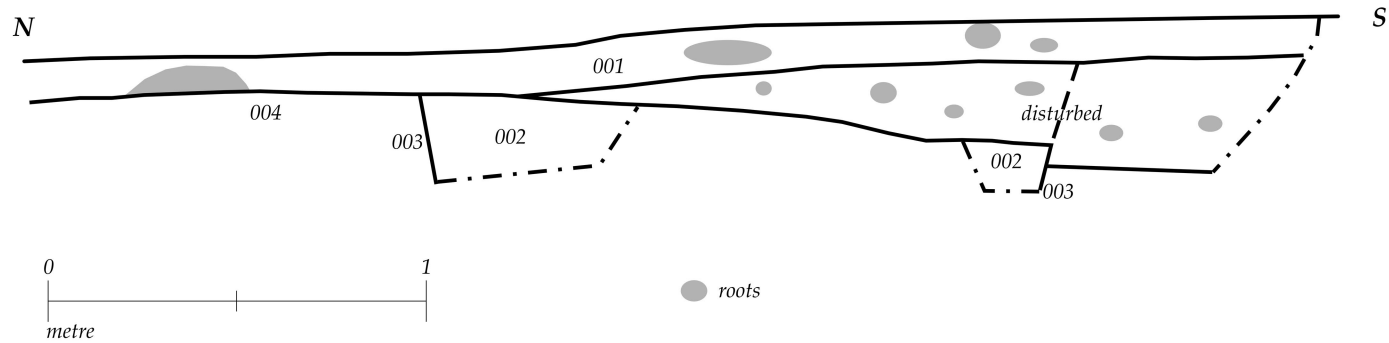
**A3.0 APPENDIX 3 : LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS**

Frame	Description	From	Date
1-2	Trench being opened	-	09/ 03/ 09
3	Trench after removal of F001	N	09/ 03/ 09
4	Trench after removal of F001	E	09/ 03/ 09
5	F002, S end	SW	10/ 03/ 09
6-7	F002, N end	W	10/ 03/ 09
8-12	General shots	-	11/ 03/ 09
13	Trench backfilled	E	11/ 03/ 09

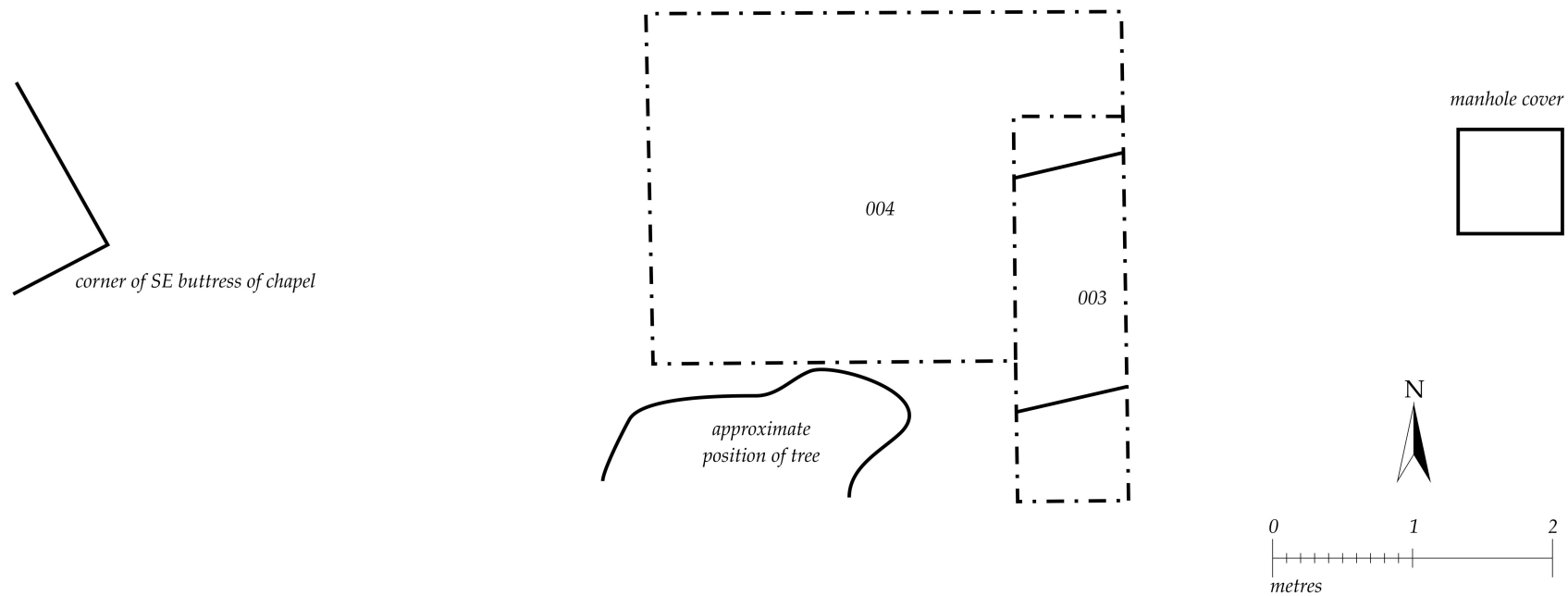


**Fig. 1 : Plan (1:400) showing location of excavation**





**Fig. 2 : W facing section of trench (1:20)**



**Fig. 3 : Plan of trench (1:50)**