

## *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland*

Updated on 15/06/2007

<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY:</b>	PERTH AND KINROSS
<b>PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:</b>	Burleigh Castle
<b>PROJECT CODE:</b>	HSCO-90045-2010-01; HSCO-90045-2010-02
<b>PARISH:</b>	ORWELL
<b>NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	Paul Fox
<b>NAME OF ORGANISATION:</b>	Kirkdale Archaeology
<b>TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:</b>	Watching brief
<b>NMRS NO(S):</b>	NO10SW 1
<b>SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):</b>	Tower House
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS:</b>	None
<b>NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)</b>	NO 1291 0459 & NO 1287 0458
<b>START DATE (this season)</b>	7 September 2010
<b>END DATE (this season)</b>	15 September 2010
<b>PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)</b>	
<b>MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION:</b> (May include information from other fields)	A watching brief was maintained during the excavation of small trenches to allow the installation of new gates in the wall to the SW of the castle (NO 1287 0458) and in the fence to the E (NO 1291 0459). The excavations showed that both areas had been subject to later alteration, but retains <i>in situ</i> - potentially historic - deposits below the landscaping layers. Further ground-breaking works should therefore be similarly monitored.
<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 (intended/deposited)</b>	Archive to be deposited in NMRS

**Historic Scotland  
Properties in Care  
Minor Archaeological Works 2010**

**Burleigh Castle:  
East Gate Trenches  
September 2010**

**HS PIC Index Number: 90045  
Project Code: HSCO-90045-2010-01**



**7<sup>th</sup> September 2010  
Kirkdale Archaeology**

<b><u>Site</u></b>	Burleigh Castle, near Milnathort.
<b><u>N.G.R</u></b>	NO 12890 04597
<b><u>Project Description</u></b>	Archaeological watching brief on the excavation of two trenches to house the new E access gate to the castle.
<b><u>Project Code</u></b>	HSCO-90045-2010-01

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Under the terms of its PIC call-off contract with Historic Scotland, Kirkdale Archaeology was asked to undertake an archaeological watching brief on the excavation of two trenches for a new access gate on the E side of the wire fence enclosing Burleigh Castle (see Figures 1 and 2).

The fence enclosed a flat platform of ground surrounding the former castle courtyard, while the surrounding terrain was undulating in character. A lack of information about the former courtyard and the striking difference between the platform and its surroundings suggested that the platform had been deliberately raised and therefore could be considered as having high archaeological potential.

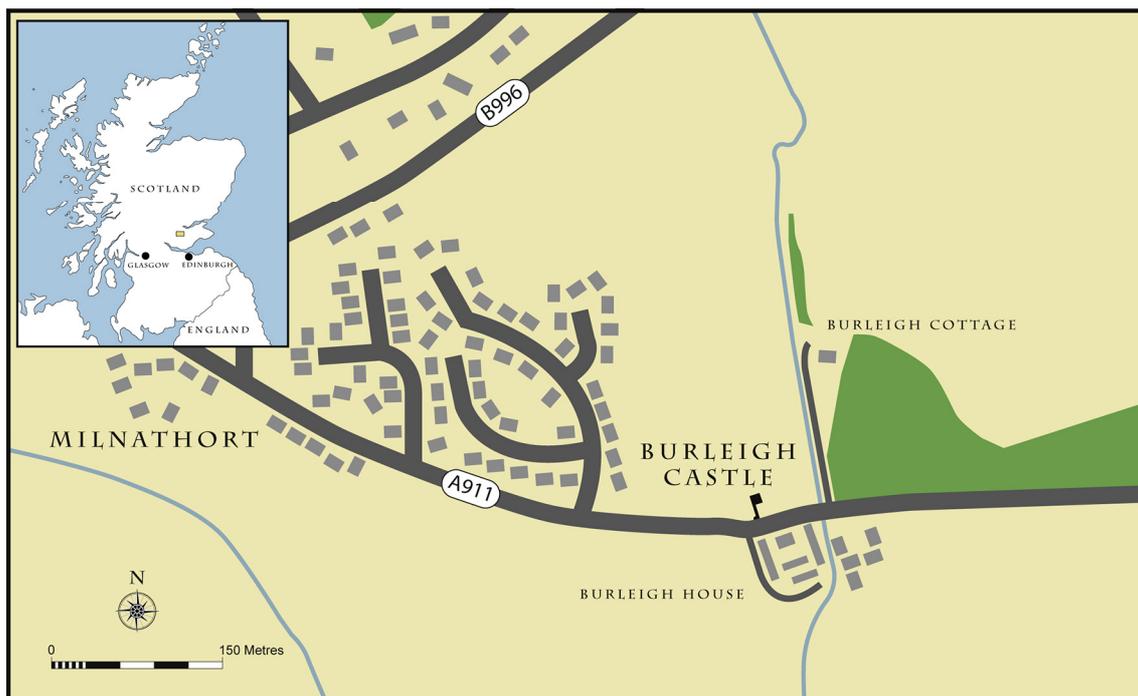


Figure 1: Location map of Burleigh Castle.

An examination of the historical maps showed two striking features in particular. Firstly, on Roy's map of 1747-55 the castle is shown as being surrounded by a linear arrangement of formal tree plantations, an arrangement which is again shown on John

Bell's map of 1796. Roy shows a formal tree-lined avenue running up to the castle from the W with a rectangular section of trees arranged in lines to the E of the castle. The rectangular plantation is bisected centrally by a meandering stream, and between the stream and the E side of the castle (i.e. in the area of the gate trench excavation) there are no trees shown.

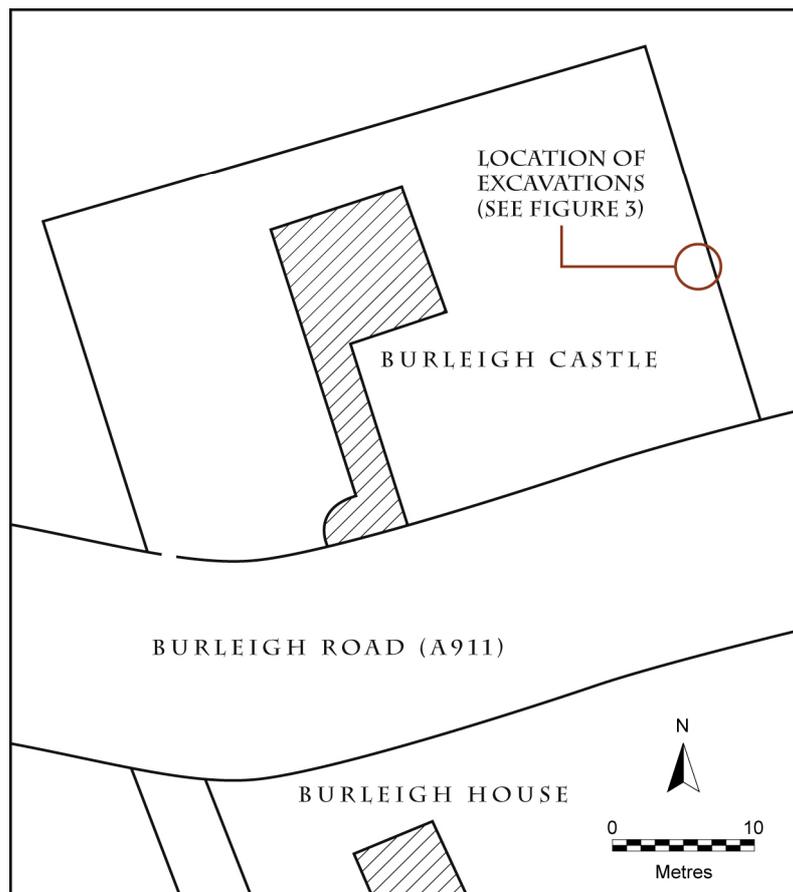


Figure 2: Location plan of the excavations.

The second feature of interest is the stream itself, which is shown as a meandering watercourse on the maps of both Roy and Bell. By 1857 it is shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map as a straight channel, being altered to turn it into a mill lade which would have serviced a mill probably built as part of the 1840s addition of steadings to Burleigh House (to the S of the castle). In order to achieve this alteration to the watercourse, several things must have happened. Firstly any remains (or perhaps

sections) of the timber plantation would have been felled in order to allow access. The holding pool, sluice and mill race (lade) would subsequently have been excavated and formalised, and then the former channel of the meandering stream filled in.

Thus, it was apparent that the landscape around the castle had been subject to a great deal of alteration and it was hoped that the current work would perhaps allow comment to be made on the nature of this to some degree

The work was carried out on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2010.

## 2.0 DESCRIPTION AND INTERPRETATION

Trench 1 (see Figure 3) was 600mm N/S x 350mm E/W x 800mm deep and was excavated to house the S gate post. The fills consisted of (101), a turf and mid-brown sandy silt 200mm thick over a moderately compact mixed mid-brown layer of silt flecked with mortar (102) some 300mm thick. Within this layer was an 1896 one penny coin SF101. Below (102) was a moderately compact layer of brown silt and smashed degraded reddish sandstone (103) up to 150mm thick. Layer (102), with a *terminus post quem* of 1896, shows that the platform (or at least this section of it) was a later formalisation of the ground surrounding the castle, perhaps due to issues of drainage or the visual landscaping of the site. Nothing was found within (103) so it was unclear as to whether it related to the later landscaping or whether it formed the pre-landscaping ground surface. Below (103) was a layer of compact reddish brown silty clay (104), excavated to a depth of 150mm (but not bottomed), which may have represented a buried or compacted topsoil/subsoil. The layer was flecked with charcoal and contained a single body sherd of a green-glaze pottery vessel SF102. The two possible scenarios that emerged from this were that either (104) was the original ground surface which was subsequently covered by a layer of stone and silt (103) (possibly due to water logging) and in the same way by (102), or that (103) represented the original ground surface

(strewn with remnants of the demolition debris of the ancillary courtyard buildings) which was then landscaped over by (102).

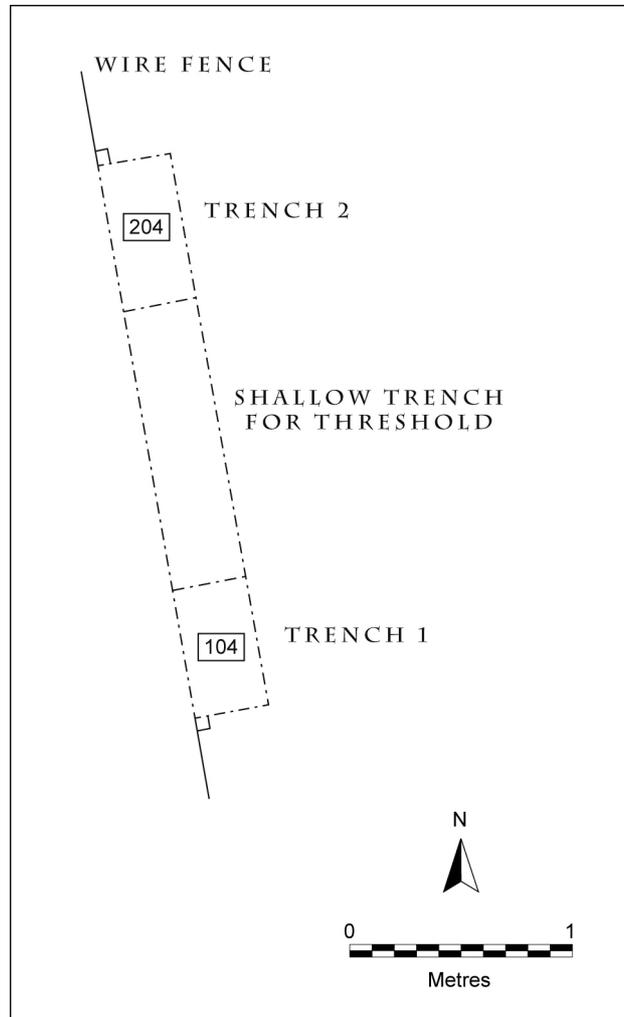


Figure 3: Plan of trenches 1 and 2.

Trench 2 (see Figure 3) was 700 mm N-S x 350 mm E-W x 800 mm deep and was excavated to house the N gate post. The fills consisted of (201) a turf and mid-brown sandy silt 200mm thick over a moderately compact mixed mid-brown layer of silt flecked with mortar (202) 300mm thick. Below (202) was a moderately compact layer of brown silt and smashed and degraded reddish sandstone (203) up to 150mm thick. Below (203) was a layer of compact reddish brown silty clay (204), excavated to a depth of 150mm (but not bottomed) which again possibly represented a buried compacted

topsoil/subsoil. The layer was flecked with charcoal. All the layers were again consistent with those found in Trench 1 and the same interpretation could be applied to them.

Between the two trenches, a further shallow excavation 1300mm N/S x 350mm E/W x 350mm deep was carried out in order to recess the threshold slab. The layers were consistent with those observed in Trenches 1 and 2 and nothing of archaeological interest was noted.

### **3.0 ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS**

The torrential rain meant that equipment had to be stored within the SW Tower. It was noted that within the vaulted basement there were two pieces of historic timber situated within the NW and SE recesses, serving the late 16<sup>th</sup> century gun ports. The ports were of the type known as blind gun ports, with a circular aperture internally opening to a flared horizontal elliptical external aperture, allowing covering and flanking fire. These ports were designed to allow defenders to provide fire via a small gun clamped to a wooden bed or mounted on a stand. The timbers within the gun port recesses were possibly oak; the NW timber was up to 80mm thick and c. 500mm x 250mm in plan. It had a square rebate toward the circular gun aperture with an empty hole centrally where a clamp or stand would have been secured. The SE timber was again of oak, c. 80mm thick and 650mm x 250mm in plan. The square rebate was there but had been damaged by the removal of the stand mount.

These timbers may be relatively rare examples of the actual furniture that accompanied the gun port recesses. Although the ports themselves are common, the furniture may not be, and so it is recommended that these be recorded in more detail *in situ* at the earliest possible opportunity. See photographs 10 – 13 (Appendix 3).

#### 4.0 CONCLUSIONS

The watching brief provided an opportunity to characterise the deposits, at least partially, to the E of the castle. The excavations showed that the area had been subject to later alteration, but retains *in situ* - potentially historic - deposits below the landscaping layers. Further ground-breaking works should therefore be similarly monitored.

The gun port timbers noted within the SW Tower could make an interesting recording exercise, one that adds to the story of the castle whilst shedding light on the introduction of artillery to the site in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century.

## 5.0 APPENDIX 1: LIST OF SMALL FINDS

No.	Description	Trench	Type
SF101	1896 One Penny piece	1	Coin
SF102	1 Green-Glaze Body Sherd	1	Ceramic

## 6.0 APPENDIX 2: LIST OF CONTEXTS

No.	Description
101	Turf and topsoil.
102	Mixed silt and mortar levelling.
103	Layer of silt & degraded red sandstone.
104	Layer of compact reddish brown silty clay.
201	Turf and topsoil.
202	Mixed silt and mortar levelling.
203	Layer of silt and degraded red sandstone.
204	Layer of compact reddish brown silty clay.

## 7.0 APPENDIX 3: LIST OF DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHS

No.	Description	From	Date
01	Wire fence (pre-excavation).	W	7/9/2010
02	Wire fence (pre-excavation).	W	7/9/2010
03	Wire fence and castle (pre-excavation).	E	7/9/2010
04	S trench (post-excavation).	E	7/9/2010
05	N trench (post-excavation).	E	7/9/2010
06	Trench location.	SE	7/9/2010
07	Trench (post-excavation).	S	7/9/2010
08	Raised platform and surrounding topography.	SW	7/9/2010
09	Raised platform and lade.	W	7/9/2010
10	Timber sill at NW gun port in SW tower.	SE	7/9/2010
11	Timber sill at SE gun port in SW tower.	NW	7/9/2010
12	Timber sill at SE gun port in SW tower.	NW	7/9/2010
13	W gun port and empty sill recess in SW tower.	E	7/9/2010

## 8.0 APPENDIX 4: LIST OF DRAWINGS

No.	Description	Scale	Date
001	Plan of trenches.	1:20	7/9/2010

**Historic Scotland**  
Properties in Care  
Minor Archaeological Works 2010

**Burleigh Castle:**  
South West Gate Trenches  
September 2010

**HS PIC Index Number: 90045**  
**Project Code: HSCO-90045-2010-02**



**15<sup>th</sup> September 2010**  
**Kirkdale Archaeology**

<b><u>Site</u></b>	Burleigh Castle, near Milnathort.
<b><u>N.G.R</u></b>	NO 12890 04597
<b><u>Project Description</u></b>	Archaeological watching brief on the excavation of four trenches to house the new SW access gate to the castle.
<b><u>Project Code</u></b>	HSCO-90045-2010-02

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Under the terms of its PIC call-off contract with Historic Scotland, Kirkdale Archaeology was asked to undertake an archaeological watching brief on the excavation of four trenches associated with the installation of a new access gate on the SW side of Burleigh Castle (see Figures 1 and 2). The new gate was to be erected immediately inside the current cast iron gate on the N side of a mortared sandstone wall which separates the ground on the W side of the castle from the road and pavement to the S.



Figure 1: Location map of Burleigh Castle.

Prior to the excavations for the fence posts, the first few concrete grass bars at the current gate were removed to allow the first trench to be dug. In addition, the information board had to be removed and will be re-sited as part of the current access improvement works. Both of these elements were bedded at a shallow depth just below the turf line and as such required no archaeological recording. The trenches were excavated manually by HS staff under archaeological supervision.

The castle, as shown on Roy's map of 1747-55, is surrounded by formal tree plantations – an arrangement again shown on John Bell's map of 1796. Roy shows a tree-lined avenue running up to the castle from the W with a rectangular section of trees (in lines) to the E of the castle. If the width of the avenue is shown with any degree of accuracy, the trees forming the avenue approach would have framed the W façade of the castle.

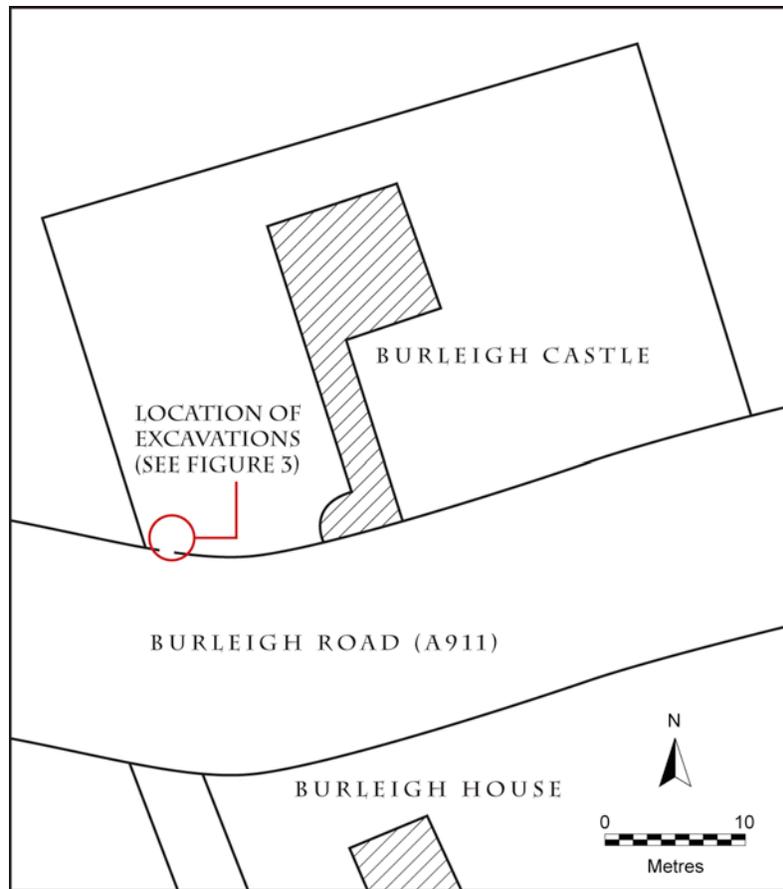


Figure 2: Location plan of the excavations.

Given this, there was a possibility that evidence of this formal planting could be encountered during the excavations, which were within the general area of the avenue's S side.

Another feature of note is a wide linear depression (mentioned in the First Statistical Account of Scotland, 1791-99) running N/S across the site to the W of the Castle within

the area delineated by a modern wire fence. This feature could represent either a defensive ditch contemporary with the insertion of the SW Tower and W Courtyard Wall in the 1580's or possibly a defensive moat that predates the current range of buildings.

The work was carried out on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2010.

## **2.0 DESCRIPTION AND INTERPRETATION**

Trench 1 (see Figure 3) was 440mm N/S x 500mm E/W x 600mm deep and was excavated to house the SW gate post. The fills consisted of (101), a turf and mid-brown sandy silt 60mm thick over a moderately compact mixed mid-brown layer of silt flecked with mortar (102), 200mm thick. Below (102) was a moderately compact layer of gritty sand and brown silt (103) up to 200mm thick. Below (103) was a layer of moderately compact brown silt (104), sealing a layer of smashed degraded angular pieces of red sandstone (105). This layer was exposed, but not bottomed, to a depth of 40mm. Context (102) contained modern glass and pottery while the interface between (104) and (105) contained a piece of clay pipe stem and an animal tooth. Layer (103) was truncated to the S by a sloping cut (106) 150mm deep x 100mm N/S, intended for the insertion of the modern mortar-bonded sandstone S boundary wall (109). This wall sat on a concrete foundation (108) 50mm thick. The cut (106) was backfilled with a mixed fill of sand, mortar and silt (107).

It appeared that (101) and (102) were modern levelling layers introduced after the insertion of the S Boundary Wall (the cut for the wall did not continue up through (102) and (103)) while (103), (104) and (105) were likely to be older, albeit still indicating landscaping. Dating the clay pipe stem could provide a date for this activity.

Trench 2 (see Figure 3) was 540mm N/S x 500mm E/W x 600mm deep and was excavated to house the NW gate post. The fills consisted of (201), a turf and mid-brown sandy silt 100mm thick, over a moderately compact mixed mid-brown layer of silt flecked with mortar (202) 250mm thick. Below (202) was a layer of smashed and degraded angular pieces of red sandstone in a matrix of mid-brown silt (203) some 150mm thick. This sat over a layer of moderately compact mid-brown silt containing numerous small sub-rounded pebbles (204) that was excavated (but not bottomed) to a depth of 100mm. Within (202) were three heavily corroded iron nails; nothing was recovered from (203) or (204).

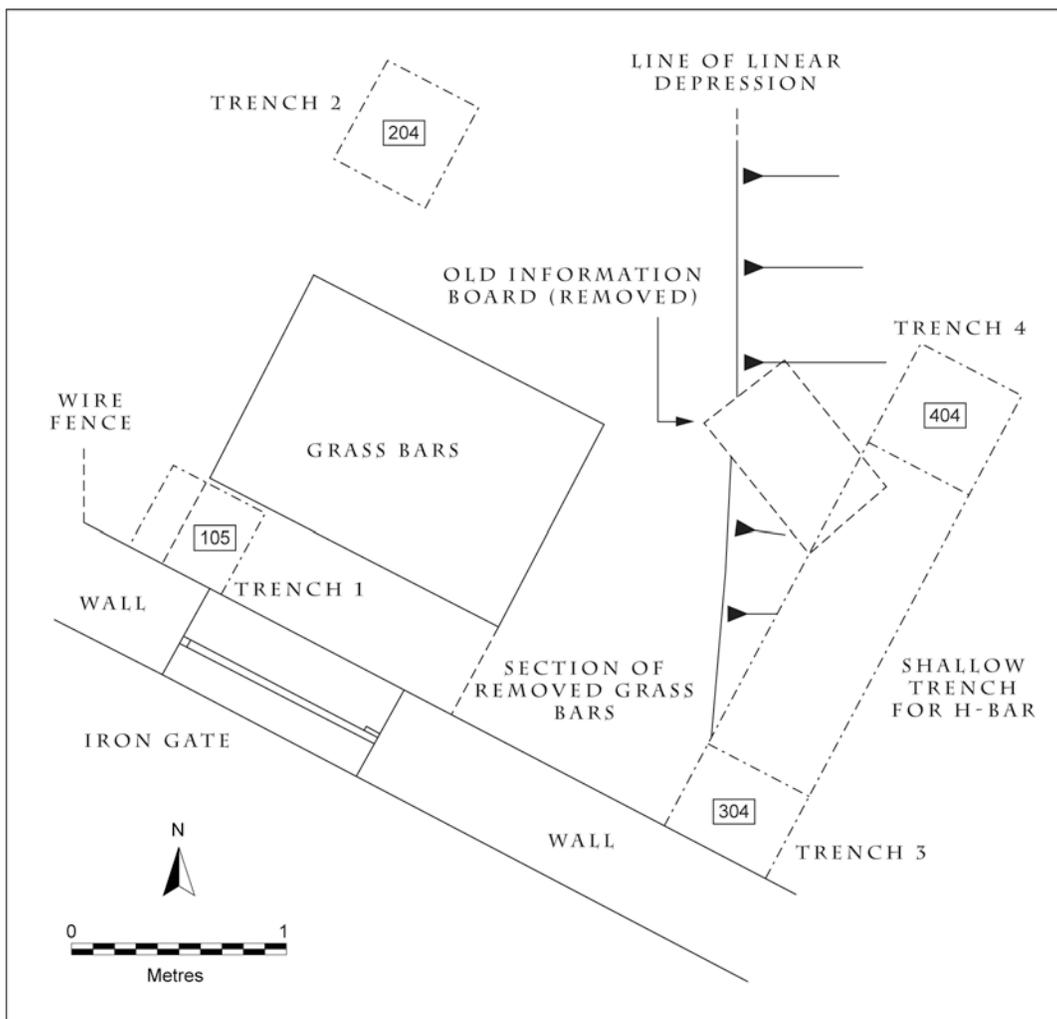


Figure 3: Plan of Trenches 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Trench 3 (see Figure 3) was 440mm N/S x 540mm E/W x 800mm deep (max.), and was excavated to house the SE gate post. The fills consisted of (301), a turf and mid-brown sandy silt 80mm thick over a moderately compact mixed mid-brown layer of silt flecked with mortar (302) that was 200mm thick. Below (302) was a moderately compact layer of gritty sand and brown silt (303) up to 300mm thick. Below (303) was a layer of angular pieces of sandstone rubble and fieldstones (304). This was exposed, but not bottomed, to a depth of 200mm. Layer (304) contained modern white pottery sherds, showing that all the layers within the section could be attributed to modern landscaping.

Layer (303) was truncated to the S by a sloping cut (305) 150mm deep x 200mm N/S related to the insertion of the modern mortar-bonded sandstone S boundary wall (308). The wall sat on a concrete foundation (307), some 50mm thick. The cut (305) was backfilled with a mixed fill of sand, mortar and silt (306).

Trench 4 (see Figure 3) was 540mm N/S x 540mm E/W x 600mm deep (max.) and was excavated to house the NE gate post. The fills consisted of (401), a turf and mid-brown sandy silt 100mm thick, which lay over a moderately compact mixed mid-brown layer of silt flecked with mortar (402) 100 mm thick. Below (402) was a layer of small sub-rounded stones in a silty matrix containing lots of coal and modern pottery (403), some 300mm thick. This sat over a further layer of moderately compact mid-brown silt containing numerous small sub-rounded pebbles (404), excavated but not bottomed to a depth of 100mm. Within (404) two clay pipe stems were recovered, along with modern pottery - showing that the various fills of the trench could be attributed to relatively modern landscaping.

Between Trenches 3 and 4, a further shallow excavation 150mm deep was carried out in order to recess the H-Bar. The layers observed were consistent with those seen in Trenches 3 and 4, and more modern pottery was recovered.

### **3.0 ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS**

While on site it was noted that there were two pictorial representations of the castle carved into two separate quoin stones on the internal N jambs of the arched courtyard doorway (see photographs 01-03). The carvings appeared to be linear representations of the castle. The upper showed the N Tower, Courtyard Wall and SW Tower, with both towers roofed (however the N Tower was shown with the roof gable running in the wrong direction). The lower carving showed the same scene but with the N Tower shorn of its roof gable i.e. finishing at the height of the ruined parapet. As the castle fell into ruin after the forfeiture of the estates following the Jacobite Rebellion of 1715, this would seem to be the earliest possible date for the carving.

It would be advisable to make a proper scaled drawing of the graffiti, since it is quite weathered and in generally poor condition. There was a further carving to the N, on the N side of the cupboard recess flanking the door, but it was too indistinct to make out under normal lighting conditions.

### **4.0 CONCLUSIONS**

The late 18<sup>th</sup> century First Statistical Account records that Burleigh Castle was furnished with a ditch. The trenches that were dug during the current works contained relatively modern material which post-dated this period. The insertion of the modern road and possible drainage issues may have led to a general raising of the ground level. Not wanting to lose an important feature of the castle, perhaps the ditch was recreated at a higher level. This would possibly account for the presence of the late material within the fills, below which traces of the original ditch may survive. The small size of the trenches meant that it was difficult to draw solid conclusions about the wider make-up of the site, and so it would undoubtedly be useful if any further works in the area were monitored in order to better our understanding of the monument within its current setting.

## 5.0 APPENDIX 1: LIST OF CONTEXTS

No.	Description
101	Turf.
102	Mid brown topsoil.
103	Layer of gritty sand and silt.
104	Layer of brown silt.
105	Layer of smashed red sandstone.
106	Cut through 103 for wall.
107	Backfill of cut 106.
108	Concrete wall foundation.
109	Mortar bonded sandstone wall.
201	Turf.
202	Mid brown topsoil.
203	Layer of smashed red sandstone and silt.
204	Dark brown silt layer.
301	Turf.
302	Mid brown topsoil.
303	Layer of gritty sand and silt.
304	Layer of smashed red sandstone.
305	Cut through 303 for wall.
306	Backfill of cut 305.
307	Concrete wall foundation.
308	Mortar bonded sandstone wall.
401	Turf.
402	Mid brown topsoil.
403	Layer of small rounded stones and silt, rich in pottery.
404	Dark brown silt with charcoal and pottery.

## 6.0 APPENDIX 2: LIST OF DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHS

No.	Description	From	Date
01	'Castle' graffiti on lower quoin of internal N jamb of arched courtyard door.	E	15/9/2010
02	'Castle' graffiti on upper quoin of internal N jamb of arched courtyard door.	E	15/9/2010
03	Internal N jamb of arched courtyard door.	E	15/9/2010
04	Existing gate and information board (pre-excavation).	N	15/9/2010
05	Existing gate, information board and ditch (pre-excavation).	NW	15/9/2010
06	Existing gate, grass bars and ditch (pre-excavation).	SW	15/9/2010
07	Existing gate, grass bars and ditch (pre-excavation).	SW	15/9/2010
08	Ditch and fate from N tower.	NE	15/9/2010
09	Removal of information board.	N	15/9/2010
10	E-facing Section in Trench 1 (post-excavation).	E	15/9/2010
11	E-facing Section in Trench 1 (post-excavation).	E	15/9/2010
12	N-facing Section in Trench 1 (post-excavation).	N	15/9/2010
13	Trench 1 post-excavation.	N	15/9/2010
14	E-facing section in Trench 2 (post-excavation).	E	15/9/2010
15	Trench 2 post-excavation.	E	15/9/2010
16	Castle (general view).	SW	15/9/2010
17	E-facing section in Trench 2 (post-excavation).	E	15/9/2010
18	E-facing section in Trench 3 (post-excavation).	E	15/9/2010
19	E-facing section in Trench 3 (post-excavation).	E	15/9/2010
20	N-facing section in Trench 3 (post-excavation).	N	15/9/2010
21	E-facing section in Trench 4 (post-excavation).	E	15/9/2010
22	E-Facing section in Trench 4 (post-excavation).	E	15/9/2010
23	Work in progress.	NE	15/9/2010
24	Work in progress.	NE	15/9/2010
25	Work in progress (Trench 5).	NW	15/9/2010
26	E-facing section in Trench 5 (post-excavation).	E	15/9/2010
27	Trenches 3, 4 and 5 (post-excavation).	E	15/9/2010
28	Trenches 3, 4 and 5 (post-excavation).	E	15/9/2010

## 7.0 APPENDIX 3: LIST OF DRAWINGS

No.	Description	Scale	Date
001	Plan of Trenches	1:20	15/9/2010