

Discovery and Excavation in Scotland

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Stirling
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Stirling, King's Knot
PROJECT CODE:	HSCO-90288-2010-01
PARISH:	Stirling
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Gordon Ewart
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Kirkdale Archaeology
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Archaeological Monitoring
NMRS NO(S):	NS79SE 7
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	EARTHWORK, GARDEN
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)	NS 7900 9400
START DATE (this season)	18 May 2010
END DATE (this season)	18 May 2010
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. <i>DES</i> ref.)	
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	<p>Recurring drainage problems towards the NW corner of the area around the King's Knot had prompted a re-examination of the existing drainage measures, and so two trenches were excavated in order to locate the existing drain pipes.</p> <p>A feature that lay close to the present ground surface may have been contemporary with the construction of the <i>parterre</i>. The evidence of both trenches suggested that the ground levels were artificial, constructed of re-deposited natural soils. It was possible that a sandy deposit encountered may have related to the use of sand and gravel as part of the decorative border for the <i>parterre</i> in this area. The <i>parterre</i>, as built in the 17th Century, would not necessarily have been grassed over, and would have exploited the clean homogenous sands and silts as a background for more detailed planting or decoration. If this was the case, then remnants of the earthwork could lie immediately below the present ground level, and may even be being impacted upon by the penetration of plant activity from within the turf and topsoil layers. This situation has been noted elsewhere, at Hopetoun House <i>parterre</i> for example, where the elaborate patterns revealed in crop marks existed only within the turf. They did not survive as easily discernible sub-surface features, and thus it is important that any future work on the site of the King's Knot - even if it only affects the turf line - should be subject to archaeological monitoring.</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 2010**

The King's Knot: Drainage Trench Monitoring May 2010

**HS PIC Index Number: 90288
Project Code: HSCO-90288-2010-01**



**18th May 2010
Kirkdale Archaeology**

<u>Site</u>	The King's Knot, Stirling.
<u>N.G.R</u>	NS 7900 9400
<u>Project Description</u>	Archaeological monitoring of two trenches dug to address ongoing drainage issues.
<u>Project Code</u>	HSCO-90288-2010-01

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Under the terms of the PIC call-off contract, Kirkdale Archaeology was asked by Historic Scotland to monitor the excavation of two trenches being dug on the King's Knot in Stirling, a *parterre* or garden feature possibly dating to the 17th Century (although it may have been a revision of an earlier earthwork).

Recurring drainage problems towards the NW corner of the area around the King's Knot had prompted a re-examination of the existing drainage measures, and so two trenches were excavated in order to locate the existing drain pipes.

The work took place over a single day on 18th May 2010.



Figure 1: N end of the *parterre*.

2.0 DESCRIPTION AND INTERPRETATION

Trench 1

This trench measured *c.*1m x 2m in plan and was excavated to a depth of *c.*0.85m. It was aligned approximately N/S. Two deposits were revealed, (001) the topsoil and turf, (*c.*0.3m deep), and (002) beneath. This appeared to be re-deposited natural and was excavated to a depth of *c.*0.5m. A pipe (003) was discovered at the base of the trench, running approximately N/S.

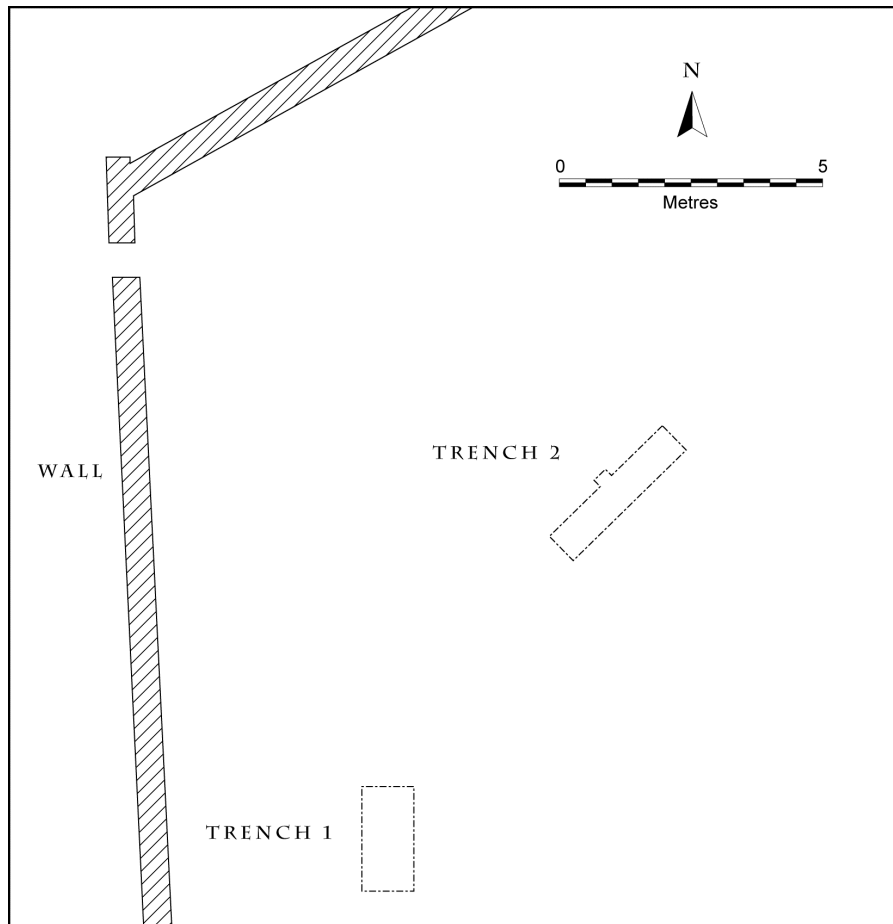


Figure 2: Location plan of the two trenches.

Trench 2

This trench measured *c.*3m x 0.6m in plan and was aligned approximately NE/SW. It was excavated to a depth of *c.*0.5m. A modern field drain (005) lay towards the middle of the trench at a depth of *c.*0.5m, set in a cut (not fully excavated) up to *c.*0.3m wide. The drain was comprised of a set of 15" pipes laid end-to-end, placed upside-down. The drain cut the S side of an earlier rubble drain (004), which was formed by several rounded and angular stones laid loosely in a sandy matrix within a cut. The cut was not fully excavated but probably extended to a maximum width of *c.*0.8m. Context (004) was aligned on the central axis of the *parterre* and was probably drainage for the pathway that bisected the earthwork.

3.0 CONCLUSIONS

Context (004), a feature that lay close to the present ground surface (only 0.2m to 0.3m below) may have been contemporary with the construction of the *parterre*. The evidence of both trenches suggested that the ground levels were artificial, constructed of re-deposited natural soils. It was possible that a sandy deposit below (001) and (002) may have related to the use of sand and gravel as part of the decorative border for the *parterre* in this area. The *parterre*, as built in the 17th Century, would not necessarily have been grassed over, and would have exploited the clean homogenous sands and silts as a background for more detailed planting or decoration. If this was the case, then remnants of the earthwork could lie immediately below the present ground level, and may even be being impacted upon by the penetration of plant activity from within the turf and topsoil layers. This situation has been noted elsewhere, at Hopetoun House *parterre* for example, where the elaborate patterns revealed in crop marks existed only within the turf. They did not survive as easily discernible sub-surface features, and thus it is important that any future work on the site of the King's Knot - even if it only affects the turf line - should be subject to archaeological monitoring.

4.0 APPENDIX 1: LIST OF CONTEXTS

No.	Description
001	Turf and topsoil, c.0.3m deep.
002	Clean sandy silt, excavated to a maximum depth of c.0.58m.
003	Drain pipe in Trench 1.
004	Rubble drain in Trench 2, comprising a cut c.0.8m wide, filled with rounded and angular stones in a loose sandy matrix.
005	Modern field drain in Trench 2 comprising a series of separate 15" pipes laid in a cut c.0.3m wide.

5.0 APPENDIX 2: LIST OF DRAWINGS

No.	Description	Scale
1	Location plan of trenches.	NTS
2	Trench plans.	NTS

6.0 APPENDIX 3: LIST OF DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHS

No.	Description	From	Date
1	Trench 1 during excavation.	S	18/5/2010
2	Trench 1 during excavation.	S	18/5/2010
3	Trench 1 during excavation.	N	18/5/2010
4	Trench 1 during excavation.	N	18/5/2010
5	Trench 1 during excavation.	S	18/5/2010
6	Trench 1 during excavation.	S	18/5/2010
7	N end of the <i>parterre</i> .	S	18/5/2010
8	Trench 2 during excavation.	E	18/5/2010
9	Trench 2 during excavation.	E	18/5/2010
10	Trench 2 during excavation.	E	18/5/2010
11	Trench 2 during excavation.	W	18/5/2010

No.	Description	From	Date
12	Trench 2 during excavation.	W	18/5/2010
13	Context (004).	V	18/5/2010
14	Context (004).	V	18/5/2010
15	Trench 2 during excavation.	S	18/5/2010

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The King's Knot: Drainage Trench Monitoring May 2010

**HS PIC Index Number: 90288
Project Code: HSCO-90288-2010-01**



**18th May 2010
Kirkdale Archaeology**

<u>Site</u>	The King's Knot, Stirling.
<u>N.G.R</u>	NS 7900 9400
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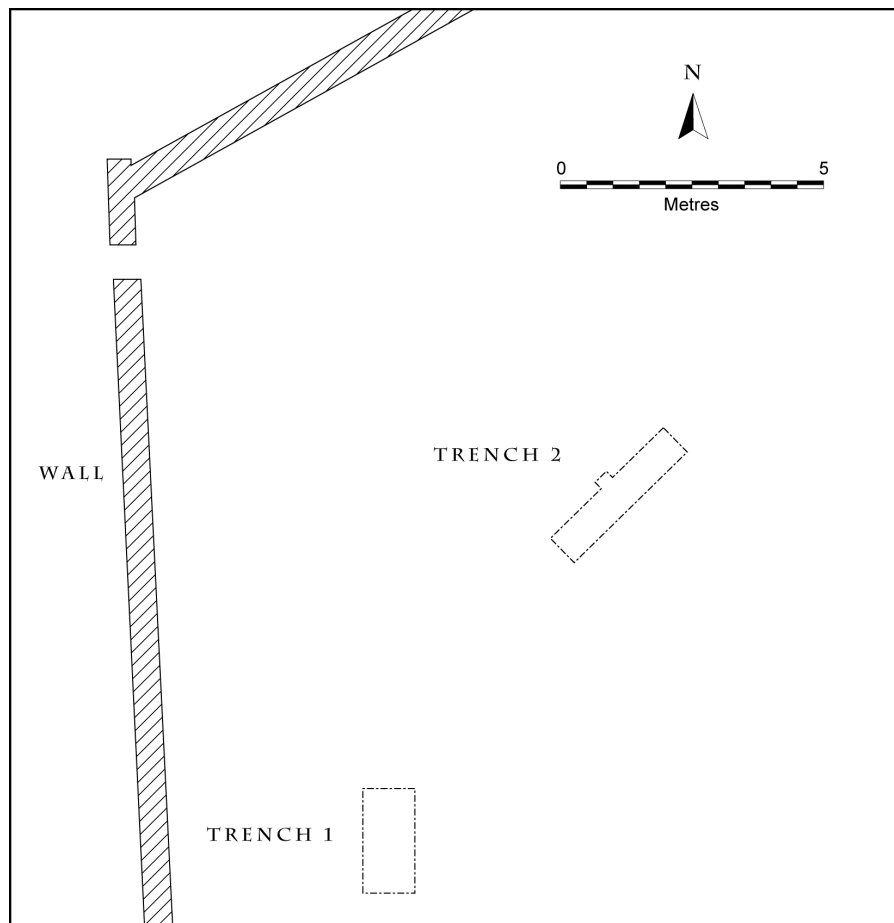


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