

## *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland*

Updated on 15/06/2007

<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY:</b>	Falkirk
<b>PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:</b>	Blackness Castle
<b>PROJECT CODE:</b>	HSCO-90036-2012-02
<b>PARISH:</b>	Bo'ness and Carriden
<b>NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	Gordon Ewart
<b>NAME OF ORGANISATION:</b>	Kirkdale Archaeology
<b>TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:</b>	Watching brief
<b>NMRS NO(S):</b>	NT08SE 6
<b>SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):</b>	Castle
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS:</b>	
<b>NGR</b> (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)	NT 0550 8020
<b>START DATE</b> (this season)	15 February 2012
<b>END DATE</b> (this season)	17 February 2012
<b>PREVIOUS WORK</b> (incl. <i>DES</i> ref.)	
<b>MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION:</b> (May include information from other fields)	A watching brief was carried out during the excavation of a series of eight trenches aligned approximately NW/SE across the access road within the gateway at Blackness Castle. Each trench was intended to receive a collapsible bollard, set in concrete. The results of this programme of work demonstrated that little of archaeological interest exists within a depth of 0.3m of the present road surface in the vicinity of the area of excavation. Traffic and successive dumps of aggregate have created a very solid surface over a shallow demolition horizon. The latter derives from a demolished stone and brick structure which lay between the present shop and the parapet wall, demolished in the late-20th century to allow car parking and easier visitor access. A flooring deposit of laid bricks from the building was found and it is likely that more of the building footprint extends across the present access road.
<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 2012**

**Blackness Castle: Watching Brief, February 2012**

**HS PIC Index Number: 90036**

**SITE:** Blackness Castle

**N.G.R.:** NT 0550 8020

**DESCRIPTION:** Archaeological watching brief associated with the installation of collapsible bollards

**PROJECT CODE:** HSCO-90036-2012-02

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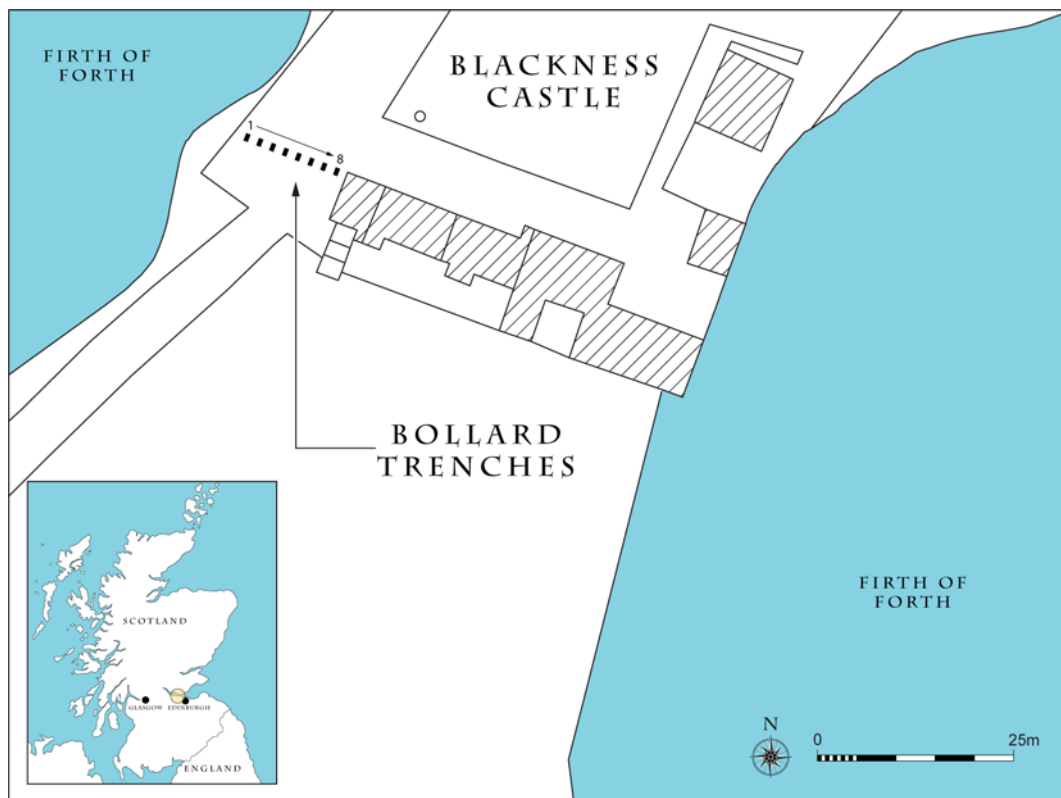
4 Western Terrace, Murrayfield, Edinburgh EH12 5QF

**MARCH 2012**

## INTRODUCTION

Under the terms of its Properties-In-Care (PIC) call-off contract with Historic Scotland, Kirkdale Archaeology was requested to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of a series of eight trenches aligned approximately NW/SE across the access road within the gateway at Blackness Castle (Fig.1). Each trench was intended to receive a collapsible bollard, set in concrete. The trenches measured 1.17m x 0.52m x 0.3m deep (with the long axis aligned NE/SW), and were evenly spaced at 1.5m intervals (measured from centre-point to centre-point). All excavation was carried out by hand, by Historic Scotland staff under archaeological supervision.

The work took place over three days, from 15<sup>th</sup> February - 17<sup>th</sup> February 2012.



**Figure 1:** Plan showing the location of Blackness Castle, and the site of the present works

## **DESCRIPTION**

The eight trenches were numbered consecutively from the W and were excavated, recorded and filled in a rolling programme of work, two trenches at a time. This was designed in order to minimise disturbance to visitor access. All the trenches were identical in fill apart from Trench 1 (see below). The ground in general proved to be extremely compacted, and required the use of hammer drills to break through the upper metalled surface and its bedding.

### **Trench 1**

This lay 1.29m S of the castle parapet wall, and the upper 0.3m comprised two deposits of a heavily compacted stony aggregate (001). This gave way to a spread of demolition debris, characterised by concrete fragments and stone, some 0.05m deep (002). Removal of 002 reached the limit of required excavation, but exposed the W side of a N/S aligned brick surface (003), running parallel with the E section of the trench. In the W part of the trench was a dark silty deposit (005) and a further brick structure was revealed, running diagonally across the SW corner of the trench (004). The latter was apparently a detached section of 003 or a similar such feature.

### **Trenches 2 - 8**

All these trenches featured the same sequence of increasingly compacted fills. Uppermost was context 001, an aggregate, overlying rubble (002) to the required depth.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The results of this programme of work demonstrated that little of archaeological interest exists within a depth of 0.3m of the present road surface in the vicinity of the present area of excavation. Traffic and successive dumps of aggregate have created a very solid surface over a shallow demolition horizon. The latter derives from a demolished stone and brick structure which lay between the present shop and the parapet wall, demolished in the late-20<sup>th</sup> century to allow car parking and easier visitor access. A flooring deposit of laid bricks from the building was found in Trench 1, and it is likely that more of the building footprint extends across the present access road.

## LIST OF CONTEXTS

No.	Description
001	Imported aggregate – pink chippings, commercially sourced. Up to 0.15m deep.
002	Demolition debris from the cleared structure. Bricks, stone fragments and concrete fragments, up to 0.1m deep.
003	N edge of brick floor, comprised of six bricks set in mortar. Each brick measured 230mm x 110mm x 90mm deep. Found only in Trench 1. Extended for 1.17m N/S.
004	Broken/detached fragment of 003, comprised of three conjoined bricks, lying across the SW corner of Trench 1.
005	Dark silt and small stones (unexcavated). Abutted the W edge of 003.

## LIST OF DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHS

No.	Description	From	Date
01	Trench 1, as completed	N	15/02/2012
02	Trench 1, as completed	E	15/02/2012
03	Trench 1, N-facing section	N	15/02/2012
04	Trench 1, W-facing section	W	15/02/2012
05	Trench 1, SW-facing section	SW	15/02/2012
06	Trench 2, as completed	W	15/02/2012
07	Trench 2, as completed	E	15/02/2012
08	Trench 2, S-facing section	S	15/02/2012
09	Trench 2, SW-facing section	SW	15/02/2012
10	Trench 2, as completed	SW	15/02/2012
11	Trench 3, as completed	S	15/02/2012
12	Trench 3, as completed	SW	15/02/2012
13	Trench 3, SW-facing section	SW	15/02/2012
14	Trench 3, SW-facing section	SW	15/02/2012
15	Trench 6, SW-facing section	SW	17/02/2012
16	Trench 6, as completed	SW	17/02/2012
17	Trench 7, as completed	SW	17/02/2012
18	Trench 7, SW-facing section	SW	17/02/2012
19	Trench 8, SW-facing section	SW	17/02/2012
20	Trench 8, as completed	SW	17/02/2012
21	Trench 8, as completed	SW	17/02/2012
22	Trench 8, as completed	N	17/02/2012
23	Trench 8, as completed	S	17/02/2012
24	Trenches 6, 7 and 8, work in progress	SE	17/02/2012
25	Trenches 1 - 8, work in progress	E	17/02/2012
26	Trenches 1 - 8, work in progress	W	17/02/2012
27	Trenches 1 - 8, work in progress	N	17/02/2012