

Discovery and Excavation in Scotland

Updated on 15/06/2007

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	South Lanarkshire
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Craignethan Castle
PROJECT CODE:	HSCO-90083-2012-01
PARISH:	Lesmahagow
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Paul Fox
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Kirkdale Archaeology
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Watching brief
NMRS NO(S):	NS84NW 3
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	Defence; Residential/ Castle
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)	Centred c. NS 8148 4633
START DATE (this season)	14 March 2012
END DATE (this season)	14 March 2012
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. <i>DES</i> ref.)	
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	An archaeological watching brief was maintained during the excavation of trenches to install new signage. The deposits revealed in most trenches made it clear that the area west of Craignethan Castle has been heavily landscaped in the modern period and there were indications that beneath this could be less recent landscaping. The laid stone surface encountered in one trench may merit further investigation in order to try and determine its date, nature and extent.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Historic Scotland
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ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	Archive to be deposited in NMRS

HISTORIC SCOTLAND PROPERTIES IN CARE
MINOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS 2012

Craignethan Castle: Watching Brief, March 2012

HS PIC Index Number: 90083

SITE: Craignethan Castle, Clyde Valley

N.G.R.: Centred c. NS 8148 4633

DESCRIPTION: Watching Brief during the excavation of trenches associated with
new/replacement signage

PROJECT CODE: HSCO-90083-2012-01

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APRIL 2012

INTRODUCTION

Under the terms of its Properties-In-Care (PIC) call-off contract with Historic Scotland, Kirkdale Archaeology was asked to undertake an archaeological watching brief at Craignethan Castle in the Clyde Valley, near Crossford, during the excavation of trenches to install new signage (Fig.1).

Trench 1 was located at the protruding E angle of the visitor's car park, replacing an existing sign in the same location. Trench 2, at the SE of the road opposite Trench 1, was intended to house a new sign, but a laid surface was uncovered at shallow depth and the location was moved slightly, to become Trench 3. Trench 4 was located at the foot of the access road to the castle, replacing an existing sign in the same location. Trench 5 was located at the start of the access road to the castle, near where it meets Southfield Road, and replaced a fence-mounted sign with a new version requiring the excavation of a trench.

The work was carried out manually by Historic Scotland staff under archaeological supervision, and took place on 14th March 2012.

DESCRIPTION

Trench 1

Trench 1 was located at the protruding E angle of the visitor's car park, replacing an existing sign in the same location. The trench measured 1.85m NW/SE x 0.7m NE/SW, and was excavated to a depth of 0.45m. The fills encountered (see below) were the result of relatively recent landscaping. The existing sign with its thick concrete base was loosened and 'rocked' out, revealing that the concrete base had bedded at a depth of 0.65m. The trench was photographed and extended to house the new concrete base. As a depth of only 0.45m was required for the new sign, this required the partial backfilling of the original trench.

The fills consisted of a 0.07m thick turf-line **101** resting on a 0.07m bed of pea gravel **102**. Below this was a modern mid-brown silty topsoil **103** containing bottle glass and a half penny of George V, dated 1915 (**SF001**). This was bedded on a landscaping layer of medium-sized (<0.14m) angular pieces of basalt rubble in a mid-brown silty matrix **104**, itself

overlying a further levelling layer of re-deposited mixed clay, silt, gravel, and coal fragments, **105**. The initial removal of the existing sign had shown that beneath this layer was a landscaping layer **106** of angular pieces of sandstone in a yellowish clay matrix flecked with charcoal. As this layer was beneath the required excavation depth, it was photographed and noted without further investigation.

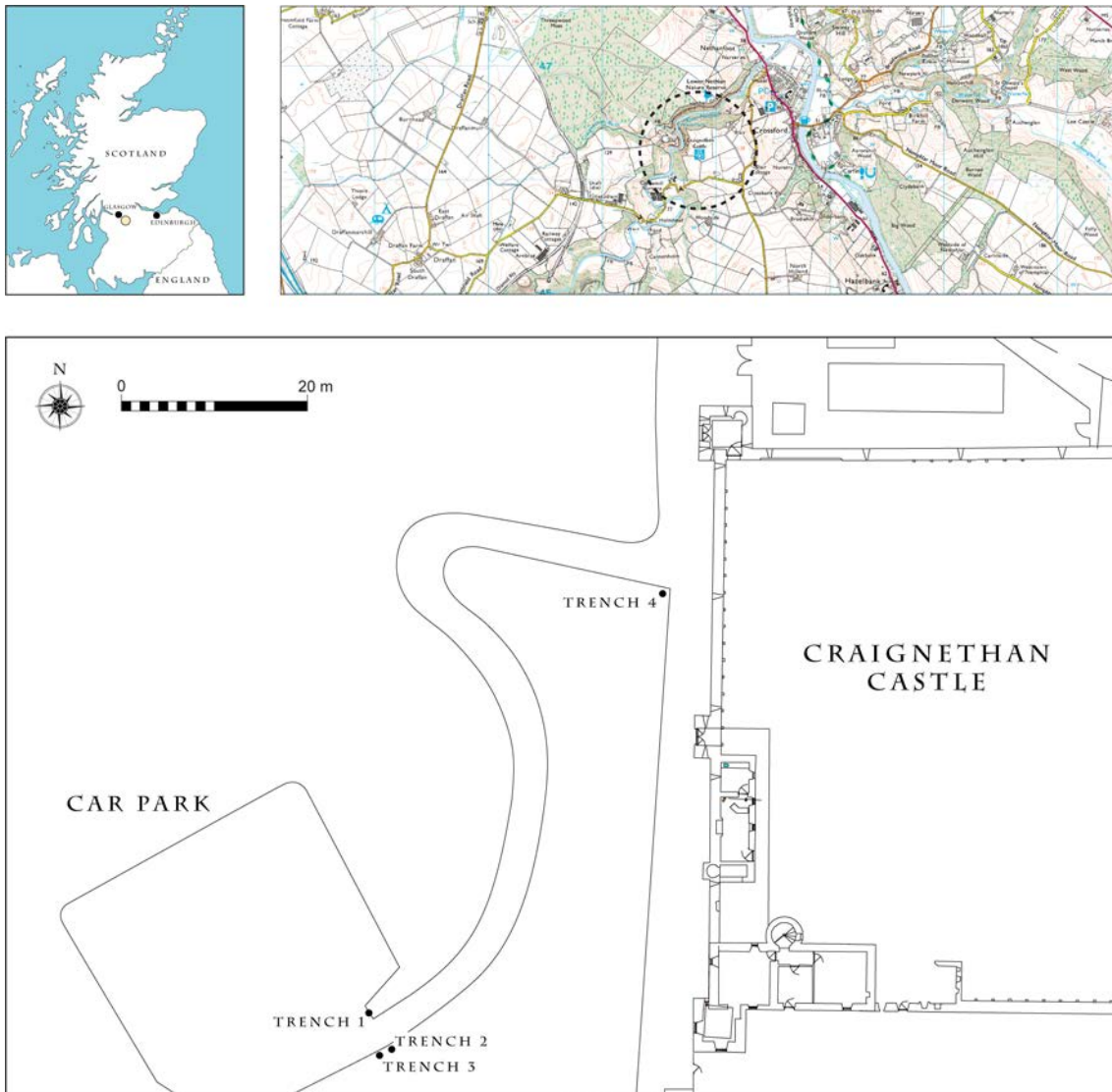


Figure 1: Plan showing the location of Craignethan Castle, and the locations of Trenches 1 - 4.
Inset No. 2 © Crown copyright. All rights reserved 2012. Licence number 100036933.

Trench 2

Trench 2 was located on the opposite side of the road to the SE of Trench 1. The trench measured (in plan) approximately 0.45m NE/SW x 0.45m NW/SE. After removal of the 0.08m thick turf **201** and mid-brown charcoal-flecked silty topsoil **202** (0.12m thick), a relatively flat surface of laid angular sandstone slabs **203** was encountered (at a depth of 0.2m). This was photographed and the decision was made to move the trench to the SW, in order to avoid disturbing the *in situ* surface. There was no indication of the age or function of the surface.

Trench 3

Trench 3 lay 0.5m to the SW of the planned location of Trench 2. The trench measured approximately 0.45m NE/SW x 0.45m NW/SE x 0.45m deep. The laid surface encountered in Trench 2 was not present. The excavation began with the removal of the 0.08m thick layer of turf **301** and mid-brown charcoal-flecked silty topsoil **302**, the latter being 0.1m thick. This rested on a thin (0.06m thick) layer of pea gravel **303** overlying a mixed re-deposited fill **304** of silt, clay and gravel, flecked with charcoal and containing modern bottle glass, which had been introduced as part of the landscaping of the car park.

Trench 4

Trench 4 was located on the SE side of the foot of the access road to the castle. The existing sign with its thick concrete base was loosened and 'rocked' out. The original concrete base had bedded at a depth of 0.5m. In plan, the trench measured 0.6m N/S x 0.5m E/W. Below the 0.08m thick turf line **401** was a mid-brown modern topsoil **402**, some 0.17m thick, and a layer of mixed silt, mortar and angular sandstone pieces (<0.1m), **403**. These were all part of a levelling exercise that occurred when the revetment to the E was built in the 1990s. The preceding ground surface of mid-brown silt and angular pieces of sandstone **404** was exposed below to a depth of 0.18m.

Trench 5

Trench 5 was located at the start of the access road to the castle, near where it meets Southfield Road (Fig.2), and was excavated in order to house a sign that replaced an existing

fence-mounted one. To the S, a cattle grid leads to Southfield Road, while to the SE is a rough farmer's track. In order not to block this track, the trench was placed to the side of the road against a wire fence in the angle not directly in line with the track. The trench measured 0.9m NE/SW x 0.7m NW/SE x 0.45m deep. Below the 0.07m thick line of turf **501** was a mid-brown imported silty topsoil **502**, approximately 0.1m thick, overlying a bed of pea gravel **503** some 0.04m thick. These sealed an earlier road surface **504** composed of extremely compact layers of coal, ash and blaze in rolled lenses. This is likely to have been the original road which served the now-disused mine shaft in the field to the N.

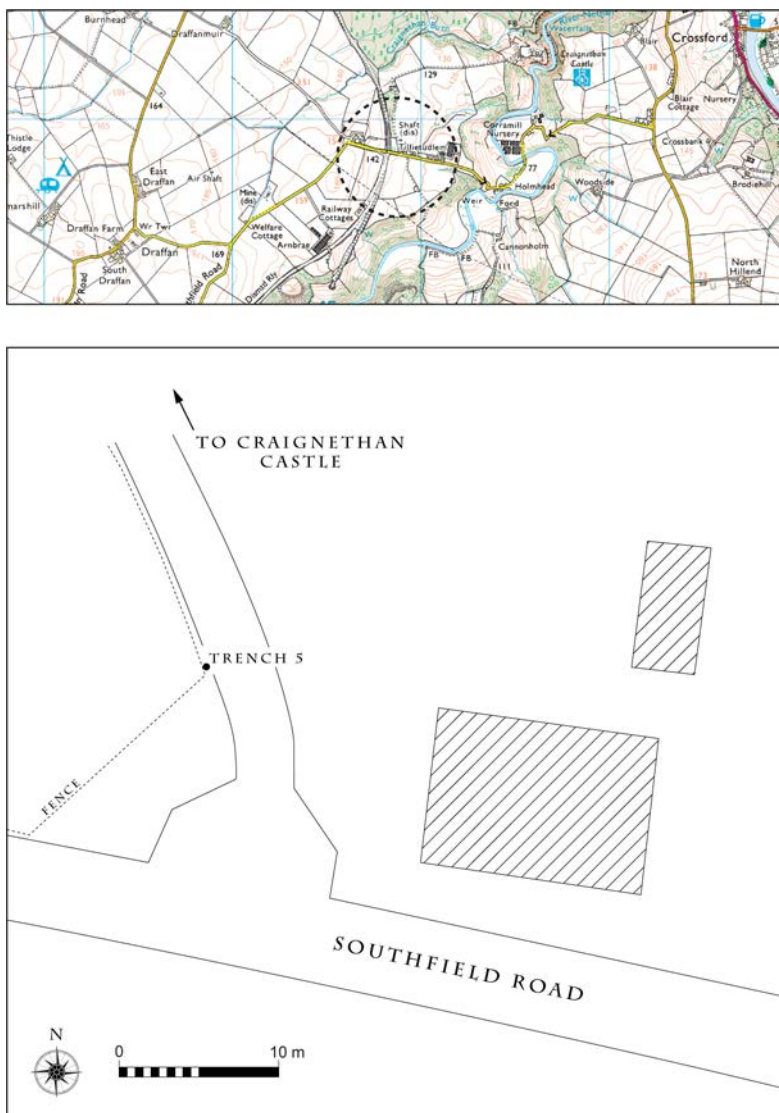


Figure 2: Plan showing the location of Trench 5
Top map © Crown copyright. All rights reserved 2012. Licence number 100036933.

CONCLUSIONS

It is clear that the area W of Craignethan Castle has been heavily landscaped in the modern period, and there were indications that beneath this could be further landscaping of a more historical nature. The laid stone surface encountered in Trench 2 may merit further investigation in order to try and determine its date, nature and extent.

It is recommended that further ground-breaking works should be accompanied by an archaeological watching brief.

LIST OF CONTEXTS

No.	Description
101	Turf
102	Pea gravel
103	Modern mid-brown silty topsoil
104	Landscaping layer of mid-brown silt and angular rubble
105	Levelling layer of clay, silt and gravel with coal pieces
106	Levelling layer of angular pieces of sandstone in a yellowish clay matrix flecked with charcoal
201	Turf
202	Mid-brown silty topsoil
203	Surface of laid angular sandstone
301	Turf
302	Mid-brown silty topsoil
303	Pea gravel
304	Levelling layer of clay, silt and gravel with coal pieces
401	Turf
402	Mid-brown silty topsoil
403	Mixed silt, mortar and angular sandstone pieces levelling
404	Mid-brown silt and angular pieces of sandstone
501	Turf
502	Mid-brown silty topsoil
503	Pea gravel
504	Road surface of compact layers of coal, ash and blaze

LIST OF DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHS

No.	Description	From	Date
01	Pre-excavation shot of Trench 1	SW	14/3/2012
02	Pre-excavation shot of Trench 1	NW	14/3/2012
03	Removal of existing sign in Trench 1	N	14/3/2012
04	Removal of existing sign in Trench 1	N	14/3/2012
05	NE-facing section after removal of existing sign in Trench 1	NE	14/3/2012
06	NE-facing section after removal of existing sign in Trench 1	NE	14/3/2012
07	Trench 1 after removal of existing sign	SE	14/3/2012
08	Expanding Trench 1 to the NW	SE	14/3/2012
09	Post-excavation shot of Trench 1	SW	14/3/2012
10	SW-facing section of Trench 1	SW	14/3/2012
11	Post-excavation shot of Trench 1	SE	14/3/2012
12	SE-facing section of Trench 1	SE	14/3/2012
13	Post-excavation shot of Trench 2 with stone surface	NE	14/3/2012
14	Post-excavation shot of Trench 2 with stone surface	NE	14/3/2012
15	Post-excavation shot of Trench 2 with stone surface	SW	14/3/2012
16	Post-excavation location shot of Trench 2	NE	14/3/2012
17	Post-excavation location shot of Trench 2	SW	14/3/2012
18	Post-excavation shot of Trench 3	SW	14/3/2012
19	SW-facing section in Trench 3	SW	14/3/2012
20	Post-excavation shot of Trench 3	SW	14/3/2012
21	Pre-excavation shot of Trench 4	NE	14/3/2012

No.	Description	From	Date
22	Pre-excavation shot of Trench 4	N	14/3/2012
23	Pre-excavation shot of Trench 4	E	14/3/2012
24	Removal of existing sign base in Trench 4	E	14/3/2012
25	Post-excavation shot of Trench 4	N	14/3/2012
26	Post-excavation shot of Trench 4	N	14/3/2012
27	Post-excavation shot of Trench 4	NE	14/3/2012
28	Post-excavation shot of Trench 4	N	14/3/2012
29	Post-excavation shot of Trench 5	S	14/3/2012
30	Post-excavation shot of Trench 5	N	14/3/2012
31	Trench 5, work in progress	SE	14/3/2012
32	Disused mineshaft to N of Trench 5	SW	14/3/2012
33	Location shot of Trench 5	N	14/3/2012
34	Post-excavation shot of Trench 5	S	14/3/2012
35	S-facing section in Trench 5	S	14/3/2012
36	Post-excavation shot of Trench 5	NE	14/3/2012

LIST OF DRAWINGS

No.	Type	Description	Scale
01	Plan	Trenches 1 - 3	1:50
02	Plan	Trench 4	1:50
03	Plan	Trench 5	1:50

LIST OF SMALL FINDS

No.	Type	Description	Context
01	Coin	1915 Half-penny	103