

Discovery and Excavation in Scotland

Updated on 15/06/2007

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Argyll and Bute
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Inch Kenneth Chapel
PROJECT CODE:	HSCO-90168-2012-01
PARISH:	KILFINICHEN AND KILVICKEON
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Paul Fox
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Kirkdale Archaeology
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Watching brief
NMRS NO(S):	NM43NW 1
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	Burial ground, Church
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	
NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)	NM 4373 3544
START DATE (this season)	14 May 2012
END DATE (this season)	16 May 2012
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	A watching brief was maintained during the excavation of five trenches to install a new bow yett providing access to the 13 th -century chapel and burial ground. There were no finds or features of archaeological significance.
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 2012**

Inch Kenneth Chapel: Watching Brief, May 2012

HS PIC Index Number: 90168

SITE: Inch Kenneth Chapel, Argyllshire

N.G.R.: NM 4373 3544

DESCRIPTION: Watching Brief during the excavation of trenches to install a new
bow yett (swinging gate) providing access to the chapel

PROJECT CODE: HSCO-90168-2012-01

CONTENTS:	Introduction.....	1
	Description.....	2
	Conclusions.....	4
	List of Contexts.....	5
	List of Digital Photographs.....	5
	List of Drawings.....	6



4 Western Terrace, Murrayfield, Edinburgh EH12 5QF

J U N E 2 0 1 2

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 on the island of Inch Kenneth (off the W coast of Mull) during the excavation of five trenches to install a new bow yett providing access to the 13th Century chapel and a burial ground (Fig.1).

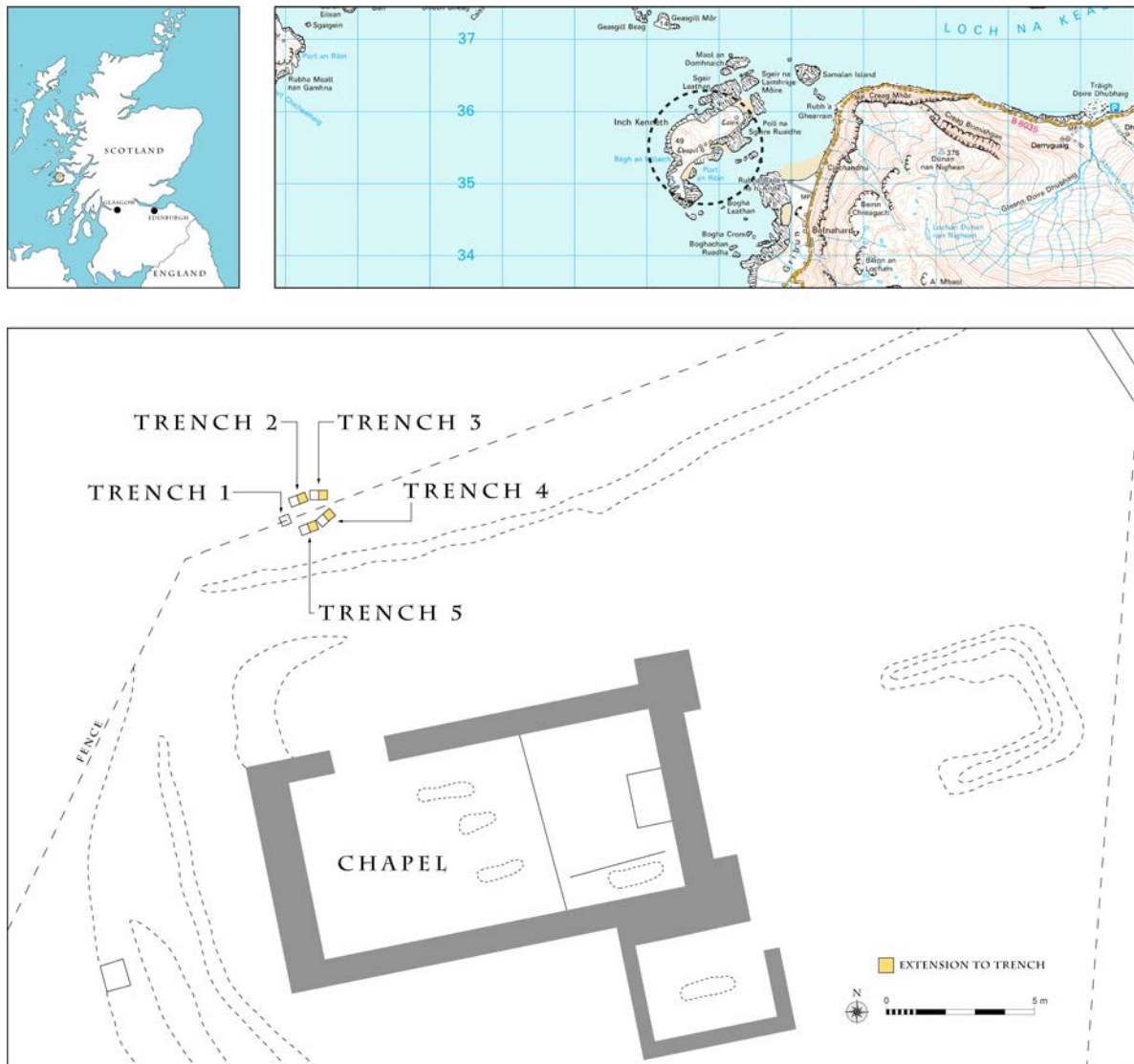


Figure 1: Plan showing the location of Inch Kenneth Chapel, and the area of works.
Inset No. 2 © Crown copyright. All rights reserved 2012. Licence number 100036933.

The trenches were located on top of a low earth and stone embankment of indeterminate age to the N of the N gable of the chapel. The embankment was approximately 0.5m high and

appeared to be part of a large roughly-rectangular enclosure, probably a paddock, which could be traced in the field to the N.

The chapel itself is rectangular with the walls defining a single compartment internally, with the altar to the E. The E and W walls are gabled; the E wall has been strengthened at a later date by the addition of wide buttresses. There are internal burials and a large (external) burial ground to the SW and also a later burial enclosure added onto the chapel's SE corner. There is a further burial plot with evidence of structure a short distance E of the chapel.

The chapel and its associated features and structures have never been excavated. Prior to 1831, a hoard of Anglo Saxon coins and some Viking age braided silver were discovered in the vicinity, and there was thus a high potential for encountering features or artefacts of archaeological interest during the present works.

The excavations were carried out manually by Historic Scotland staff under archaeological supervision, and took place on 16th May 2012¹.

DESCRIPTION²

Trench 1

Trench 1 measured 0.25m N/S x 0.24m E/W x 0.6m deep. The turf, 101, approximately 0.08m thick, sat on 102, a layer of mid-brown silty topsoil (0.14m thick). In turn, context 102 cleared onto a 0.18m thick layer of moderately compact mid-brown silt and stone (103), within which were some pieces of disarticulated animal bone. The stones were sub-rounded and up to 0.15m long x 0.06m thick. This deposit sat over a 0.2m thick compact layer of light brown silty clay (104) flecked with charcoal and pieces of animal bone. The presence of this material showed that the ground had been heavily made-up. At the desired depth of 0.6m, this layer (104) cleared onto a further loose layer of crushed stone (105).

¹ Additional de-turfing, to form a path up from the beach, had been carried out previously and was recorded photographically during this visit.

² The trenches were dug as the text describes. Subsequently, Trenches 2 - 5 were extended to the E by 0.3m to provide a better fit between the upright post and the swinging gate.

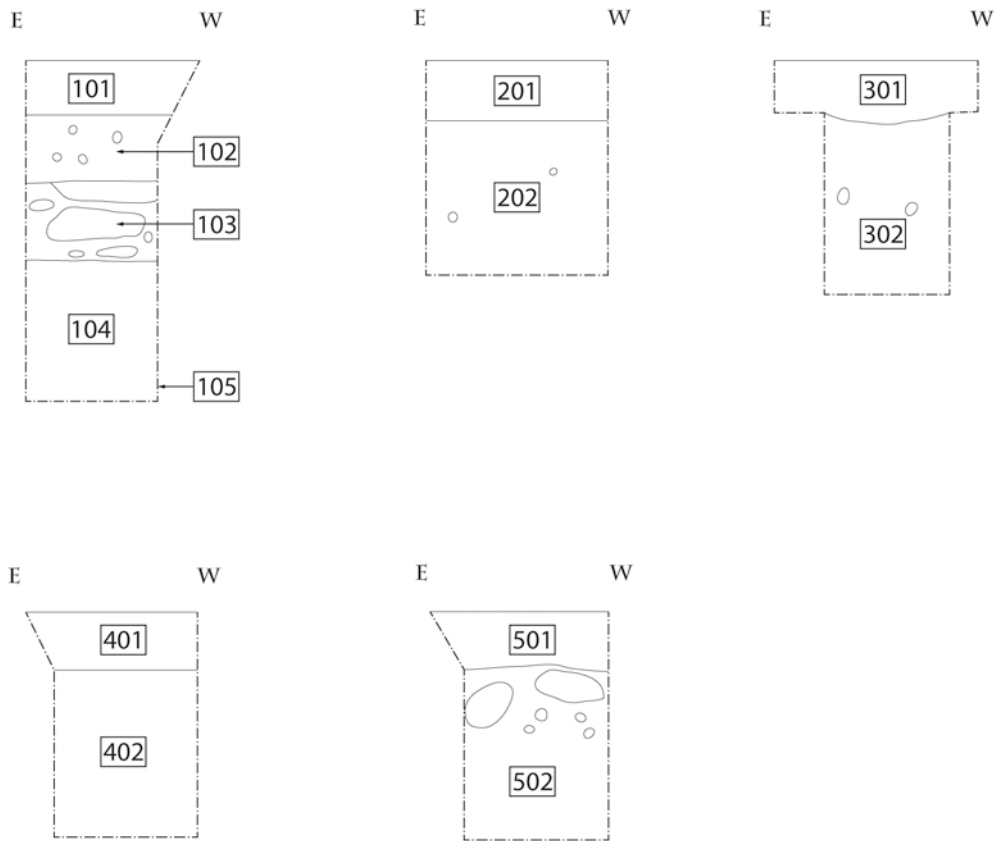


Figure 2: N-facing sections in Trenches 1 - 5 (Trench 1: top-left, Trench 2: top-centre, Trench 3: Top-right, Trench 4: bottom-left, Trench 5: bottom-right)

Trench 2

Trench 2 measured 0.32m N/S x 0.33m E/W x 0.38m deep. The turf (201) was 0.1m thick and sat on a layer of mid-brown silty topsoil (202), at least 0.28m thick, within which were some pieces of disarticulated animal bone. The presence of this material showed that the ground had again been made-up.

Trench 3

Trench 3 measured 0.3m N/S (narrowing to 0.21m below the turf) x 0.3m E/W x 0.42m deep. The turf, 301, was 0.1m thick and sat over a layer of mid-brown silty topsoil, 302, at least 0.32m thick, within which were some pieces of disarticulated animal bone. The presence of this material again showed that the ground had been made-up.

Trench 4

Trench 4 measured 0.25m N/S x 0.3m E/W x 0.4m deep. The turf, 401, was 0.1m thick and sat over a layer of mid-brown silty topsoil, 402, at least 0.3m thick, within which were some pieces of disarticulated animal bone. The presence of this material showed that the ground had been made-up.

Trench 5

Trench 5 measured 0.25m N/S x 0.25m E/W x 0.4m deep. The turf, 501, was 0.1m thick and sat over a layer of mid-brown silty topsoil, 502, at least 0.3m thick, within which were some sub-angular stones (<0.12m) and some pieces of disarticulated animal bone. The presence of this material showed that the ground had been made-up.

C O N C L U S I O N S

The isolated position of Inch Kenneth, coupled with its known use from at least the Viking period onwards, suggests that it has great archaeological potential. Although nothing of archaeological interest was uncovered during this particular period of work, any further ground-breaking works should be accompanied by an archaeological watching brief.

LIST OF CONTEXTS

No.	Description
101	Turf
102	Mid-brown silty topsoil
103	Compact layer of mid-brown silt and stone
104	Compact landscaping layer of light brown silty clay flecked with charcoal
105	Layer of crushed stone
201	Turf
202	Mid-brown silty topsoil
301	Turf
302	Mid-brown silty topsoil
401	Turf
402	Mid-brown silty topsoil
501	Turf
502	Mid-brown silty topsoil containing angular stones

LIST OF DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHS

No.	Description	From	Date
01	De-turfed beach footpath	N	16/5/2012
02	De-turfed beach footpath	N	16/5/2012
03	De-turfed beach footpath	S	16/5/2012
04	De-turfed beach footpath	S	16/5/2012
05	Pre-excavation shot of proposed site of bow yett	N	16/5/2012
06	Pre-excavation shot of proposed site of bow yett	NE	16/5/2012
07	Pre-excavation shot of proposed site of bow yett	NW	16/5/2012
08	Sculptured stones against W wall of chapel	E	16/5/2012
09	Looking through N chapel door at proposed site of bow yett	S	16/5/2012
10	Interior of chapel	W	16/5/2012
11	View of external structure and burials	NW	16/5/2012
12	Cutting back existing wire fence	NW	16/5/2012
13	Post-excavation shot of Trench 1	N	16/5/2012
14	N-facing section of Trench 1	N	16/5/2012
15	W-facing section of Trench 1	W	16/5/2012
16	Post-excavation shot of Trench 1 and Chapel	N	16/5/2012
17	Shot of earth and stone embankment and Trench 1	SE	16/5/2012
18	Post-excavation shot of Trench 2	N	16/5/2012
19	N-facing section of Trench 2	N	16/5/2012
20	Trenches 1-5, work in progress	N	16/5/2012
21	Post-excavation shot of Trench 3	N	16/5/2012
22	N-facing section of Trench 3	N	16/5/2012
23	Trenches 1-5	N	16/5/2012
24	Post-excavation shot of Trench 4	N	16/5/2012
25	N-facing section of Trench 4	N	16/5/2012
26	Post-excavation shot of Trench 4	N	16/5/2012
27	Post-excavation shot of Trench 5	N	16/5/2012
28	N-facing section of Trench 5	N	16/5/2012
29	Post-excavation shot of Trenches 1-5	N	16/5/2012
30	Bow yett and earth-and-stone embankment	SW	16/5/2012

No.	Description	From	Date
31	Bow yett and earth-and-stone embankment	SW	16/5/2012
32	Bow yett and earth-and-stone embankment	SW	16/5/2012
33	Bow yett and earth-and-stone embankment	SW	16/5/2012
34	Possible paddock with chapel and burials in background	NE	16/5/2012
35	Extending Trenches 1-5 to the E	NE	16/5/2012
36	Extending Trenches 1-5 to the E	W	16/5/2012
37	Bow yett in position	NW	16/5/2012

LIST OF DRAWINGS

No.	Type	Description	Scale
01	Plan	Plan of trench	1:20
02	Section	N-facing section in Trench 1	1:10
03	Section	N-facing section in Trench 2	1:10
04	Section	N-facing section in Trench 3	1:10
05	Section	N-facing section in Trench 4	1:10
06	Section	N-facing section in Trench 5	1:10