

Discovery and Excavation in Scotland

Updated on 15/06/2007

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Perth and Kinross
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Meigle Museum
PROJECT CODE:	HSCO-90213-2012-01
PARISH:	Meigle
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Paul Fox
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Kirkdale Archaeology
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Watching brief
NMRS NO(S):	NO24SE 25
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	Museum
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	
NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)	NO 2871 4455
START DATE (this season)	28 February 2012
END DATE (this season)	29 February 2012
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	<p>A watching brief was maintained during excavations to extend the existing path into the yard fronting the museum, connecting it to a ramp to allow disabled access to the building. With a maximum excavation depth of 0.15m, it was likely that no <i>in situ</i> archaeological deposits would be encountered; however, the archaeological potential of the site and the importance of the locally-discovered artefacts in the museum's collection meant that a careful approach was required.</p> <p>A single sherd of medieval/post-medieval pottery, with a greenish-yellow glaze, was recovered during the excavations. The presence of the pottery sherd within the backfill of the drain/manhole trench suggests that where sufficient depth can be achieved, there may be intact archaeological horizons sealed by the later levelling.</p> <p>The levelling of the site has required the introduction of a large amount of imported material, though the precise depth of this material could not be determined due to the shallow nature of the excavation. However, the external topography suggests that this deposit should be shallower to the southeast and deeper to the northwest (as per the natural gradient of the hill).</p>
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**

Meigle Museum: Watching Brief, February 2012

HS PIC Index Number: 90213

SITE: Museum of Sculptured Stones, Meigle, near Coupar Angus

N.G.R.: NO 2871 4455

DESCRIPTION: Watching Brief during the excavation of trenches to install a new section of footpath and a ramp to allow disabled access to the museum

PROJECT CODE: HSCO-90213-2012-01

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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 at the Sculptured Stone Museum in Meikle, near Coupar Angus (Fig.1).

The museum collection is housed in an early Victorian school house dating to the 1840s. To the NE is the parish church and burial ground. Most of the stones in the museum's collection were recovered from the churchyard, suggesting that it was a centre of Pictish worship/burial, possibly an early monastic or church site. A path had previously been excavated and laid running through the neighbouring churchyard up to the fence at the NW angle of the museum. The purpose of the current works was to extend this path into the yard fronting the museum, connecting it to a ramp to allow disabled access to the building.

To the SW of the museum, the Dundee Road (B954) rises NW to SE up a reasonably steep hill. The properties fronting this hill have been terraced to make their entranceways level – it was therefore expected that a significant degree of landscaping would be encountered during the excavation. With a maximum excavation depth of 0.15m, it was likely that no *in situ* archaeological deposits would be encountered; however, the archaeological potential of the site and the importance of the locally-discovered artefacts in the museum's collection meant that a careful approach was required.

A single sherd of medieval/post-medieval pottery, with a greenish-yellow glaze, was recovered during the excavations.

The excavations were carried out manually by Historic Scotland staff under archaeological supervision, and the work took place between 28th - 29th February 2012.

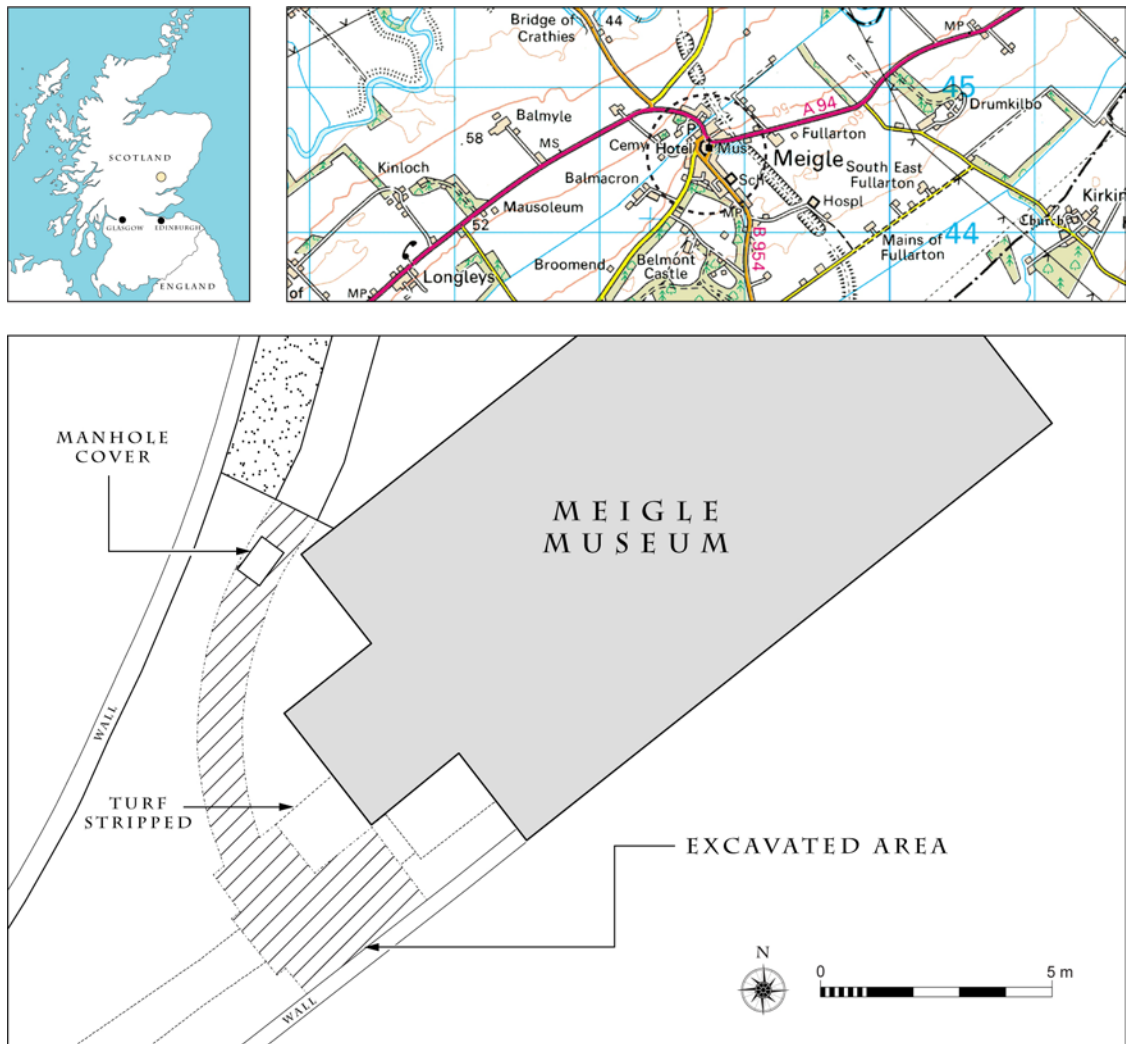


Figure 1: Plan showing the location of Meigle Museum, and the site of the present works.
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DESCRIPTION

A section of the modern, wooden edged gravel path **108**, measuring 4.10m NE/SW x 1.25m NW/SE (in area) leading up to the sandstone threshold slab **107** was removed initially. The slab was in two separate red sandstone pieces, each 0.15m deep. To the SE of the removed path section, an area 0.85m NW/SE x 6.10m NE/SW was excavated to a depth of 0.15m. The fills consisted of turf and dark brown silty topsoil **101** to a depth of 0.1m, over a bedding layer of pea gravel **102**, 0.05m thick. This cleared onto a levelling layer of rubble and re-deposited clay **103** of indeterminate depth. The area was bordered to the SE by a modern wall **106** of un-coursed rubble. This wall does not appear on the 1st edition OS map and is likely to date to the late 19th/early 20th century. At the required excavation depth of 0.15m,

below the layer of pea gravel **102**, was again the levelling layer of rubble and re-deposited clay, **103**. This appears to have been a levelling layer associated with the terracing of the ground, contemporary with the schoolhouse and dating to the 1840s. This layer had been truncated to the SE by the foundation cut **104** (0.2m wide) for the wall **106**. The cut had been backfilled with sandstone rubble and pointing debris (**105**).

To the NW of the removed section of path **108**, a further area measuring 2.20m NE/SW x 1.50m NW/SE was excavated to a depth of 0.15m, showing the same layer-sequence of turf and dark brown silty topsoil **101** to a depth of 0.1m, over a bedding layer of pea gravel **102**, some 0.05m thick, in turn overlying a levelling layer of rubble and re-deposited clay, **103**.

The remaining section to the NE (abutting the porch of the museum) was excavated to a depth of 0.1m, exposing the top of the pea gravel layer **102**. This area measured 1.50m NW/SE x 1.45m NE/SW. This concluded the excavation of the footprint for the proposed ramp.

The following day, the section of path joining the ramp to the existing path through the churchyard was pegged out. The path was to be 1m wide by 0.15m deep. The section to the ramp was 4m long (measured NW/SE), before dog-legging in a NE/SW direction for 3.25m, to meet the existing churchyard path. The layers encountered were again the turf and dark brown silty topsoil **101**, to a depth of 0.1m, over a bedding layer of pea gravel **102**, some 0.05m thick, in turn overlying a levelling layer of rubble and re-deposited clay, **103**. To the NE, a sandstone manhole cover **109** covered a red brick box over the waste drain serving the museum. The box sat within a cut **110**, running NE/SW, and was 1.10m wide. The area around the box had been backfilled with mixed silt, clay and sandstone rubble, **111**.

Amongst this rubble was a sherd of medieval/post-medieval pottery with a greenish-yellow glaze, **SF001**.

CONCLUSIONS

The presence of the pottery sherd within the backfill of the drain/manhole trench suggests that where sufficient depth can be achieved, there may be intact archaeological horizons sealed by the later levelling.

The levelling of the site has required the introduction of a large amount of imported material, though the precise depth of this material could not be determined due to the shallow nature of the excavation. However, the external topography suggests that this deposit should be shallower to the SE and deeper to the NW (as per the natural gradient of the hill).

LIST OF CONTEXTS

No.	Description
101	Turf and dark brown topsoil
102	Pea gravel bedding for 101
103	Mixed stone and re-deposited clay levelling
104	Cut for SE wall
105	Sandstone and pointing debris fill of 104
106	Rubble wall
107	Threshold slab at museum entrance
108	Gravel path with wooden edging
109	Slabbed manhole cover and brick box
110	Cut for drainage and manhole through 103
111	Mixed clay, silt and rubble backfill of cut 110

LIST OF DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHS

No.	Description	From	Date
01	Pre-excavation shot of yard and museum	SW	28/2/2012
02	Pre-excavation shot of yard and museum	S	28/2/2012
03	Pre-excavation shot of path 108 and threshold slab 107	SW	28/2/2012
04	Pre-excavation shot of grass 101 and manhole slab 109	SW	28/2/2012
05	De-turfing in progress	SW	28/2/2012
06	Exposure of levelling layer 103	SW	28/2/2012
07	Initial area to SE at a depth of 0.15m	SW	28/2/2012
08	Wall 106, cut 104, fill 105 and levelling layer 103	W	28/2/2012
09	Excavation in progress	W	28/2/2012
10	NE-facing section of ramp footprint	NE	28/2/2012
11	Existing path and gate	NE	29/2/2012
12	Existing path and gate	N	29/2/2012
13	Excavation in progress	SW	29/2/2012
14	Post-excavation shot of ramp footprint	SW	29/2/2012
15	Post-excavation shot of excavated kinked path	S	29/2/2012
16	Excavated path showing 103	E	29/2/2012
17	Excavated path showing 103	N	29/2/2012
18	Post-excavation shot	SW	29/2/2012
19	Post-excavation shot	S	29/2/2012
20	NNE side of path excavation and manhole	SSW	29/2/2012
21	Manhole cover 109	SW	29/2/2012

LIST OF DRAWINGS

No.	Description	Scale
001	Trench plan	1:20

LIST OF SMALL FINDS

No.	Description	Context
SF001	Pottery body sherd with greenish-yellow glaze	111