

Discovery and Excavation in Scotland

Updated on 15/06/2007

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	North Lanarkshire
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Antonine Wall (Croy Hill), near Kilsyth
PROJECT CODE:	HSCO-90011-2015-01
PARISH:	Cumbernauld
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Paul Fox
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Kirkdale Archaeology
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Watching brief
NMRS NO(S):	NS77NW 10
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	Roman Fort
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	
NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)	Centred c. NS 733 765
START DATE (this season)	21 July 2015
END DATE (this season)	21 July 2015
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. <i>DES</i> ref.)	
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	An archaeological watching brief was maintained during the removal of an existing sign and the excavation of four trenches to install new interpretation panels. Nothing but turf and topsoil was disturbed and there were no finds or features of archaeological significance.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Historic Environment Scotland
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ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	Archive to be deposited with Historic Environment Scotland

**HISTORIC SCOTLAND PROPERTIES IN CARE
MINOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS 2015/2016**

Antonine Wall (Croy Hill) • Watching Brief • July 2015

HS PIC Index Number: 90011

SITE:	Antonine Wall (Croy Hill), near Kilsyth, North Lanarkshire.
N.G.R.:	Centred c. NS 733 765
DESCRIPTION:	Archaeological watching brief during the removal of an existing cairn sign and the excavation of four trenches to install new interpretation panels.
PROJECT CODE:	HSCO-90011-2015-01
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AUGUST 2015

INTRODUCTION

Under the terms of its PIC contract with Historic Scotland, Kirkdale Archaeology was asked to carry out an archaeological watching brief during the removal of an existing cairn sign and the excavation of four trenches to install new interpretation panels (CROY 1, CROY 2, CROY 3 and CROY 4¹) at the Croy Hill fort on the Antonine Wall, near Kilsyth in North Lanarkshire (Fig.1).

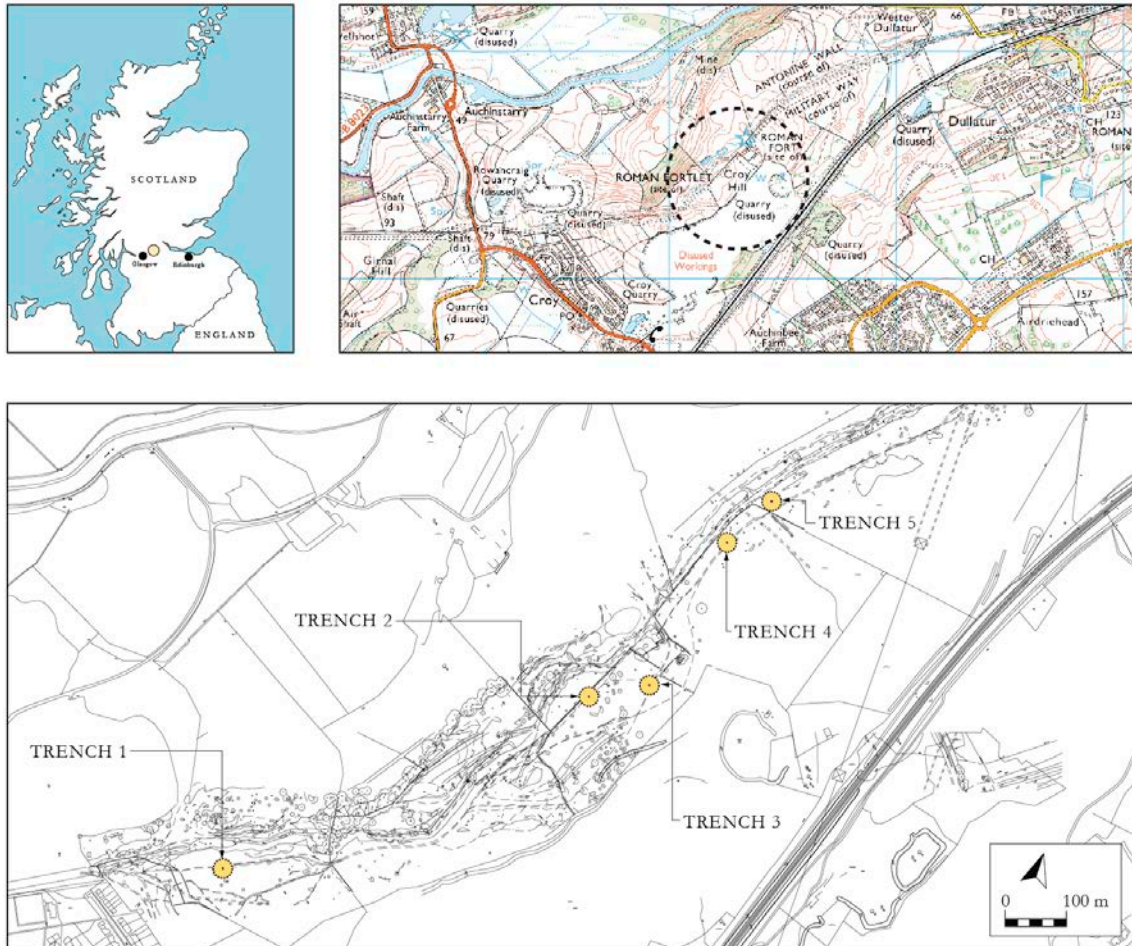


Figure 1: Plan showing the general locations of the trenches.

Mapping © Crown copyright. All rights reserved 2015. Licence number 100036933.

Excavation was undertaken by hand, by Historic Scotland staff under archaeological supervision, and took place on 21st July, 2015.

¹ Historic Scotland references.

DESCRIPTION

Trench 1 (for CROY 1)

This was located on the south side of the path running up the west side of the hill.

The trench measured 0.94m N/S x 0.61m E/W x 0.3m deep. The scrubby turf and topsoil **101** was ≈ 0.15 m deep, in two distinct black bands, and overlay a compact layer of light yellowish/brown silty-clay **102** with occasional charcoal flecks and sub-angular/sub-rounded pieces of stone (<10 cm). This layer was partially excavated to a depth of 0.2m. Nothing of archaeological interest was uncovered.



Plate 1: Trench 1, post-excavation.

Trench 2 (for CROY 2)

This was located on the south side of the path, on top of the rise to the west of the fort, in tall grass with shrubs.

The trench measured 0.94m N/S x 0.61m E/W x 0.3m deep. The scrubby turf and topsoil **201** was ≈ 0.1 m deep and overlay a compact layer of light yellowish/brown silty-clay **202** with occasional charcoal flecks and sub-angular/sub-rounded pieces of stone (<10 cm). At a depth of 0.3m, this cleared onto a distinctive further layer of clay **203** which had a surface that had clearly been subject to an episode of burning. This had left an intermittent charcoal spread while discolouring the colour of the clay to acidic yellows and reds.

As 0.3m was the required depth of excavation, it was decided to protect the surface with a sheet of visqueen vapour barrier before installing the information panel. The depth of the deposit (sealed as it was by a distinctive upper layer of clay) suggests that this is an historic burning episode, although whether this is related to controlled burning as part of landscape management or related to historic occupation or usage remains unclear.



Plate 2: Trench 2, post-excavation.

Trench 3 (for CROY 3)

This was located on the north side of the path, to the west of the fort buildings, within tall grass and scrub.

The trench measured 0.94m E/W x 0.61m N/S x 0.3m deep. The scrubby turf and topsoil **301** was ≈ 0.1 m deep and overlay a compact layer of light yellowish/brown silty-clay **302** with occasional charcoal flecks and sub-angular/sub-rounded pieces of stone (< 8 cm). This layer was partially excavated to a depth of 0.2m. Two large (≈ 20 cm x 10cm) sub-rounded boulders protruded basally at a depth of 0.25 – 0.3m.

These were both well bedded-in, with a possibility that they were in some way structural. As such, it was decided to leave these *in-situ* and to form the base for the sign around them.



Plate 3: Trench 3, post-excavation.

Trench 4 (for CROY 4)

This was located on the path to the east of the fort, on the northern grass verge.

The trench measured 0.94m NW/SE x 0.61m NE/SW x 0.3m deep. The scrubby turf and topsoil **401** was \approx 0.1m deep and overlay a compact layer of light yellowish/brown silty-clay **402** with occasional charcoal flecks and sub-angular/sub-rounded pieces of stone (<10 cm). This layer was partially excavated to a depth of 0.2m. Nothing of archaeological interest was uncovered.



Plate 4: Trench 4, post-excavation.

Trench 5 (Removal of the existing cairn sign)

A short distance to the NE of Trench 4 was an existing cairn sign. The sign's footprint measured approximately 1m N/S x 1m E/W. This was manually dismantled and was revealed to be 0.15 – 0.25m below the ground surface. The cairn **501** was made of stone embedded in concrete, sitting on a thin concrete screed over a layer of compact yellowish/brown silty-clay with occasional charcoal flecks **501**. Nothing of archaeological interest was uncovered.



Plate 5: View of the area previously occupied by the cairn sign.

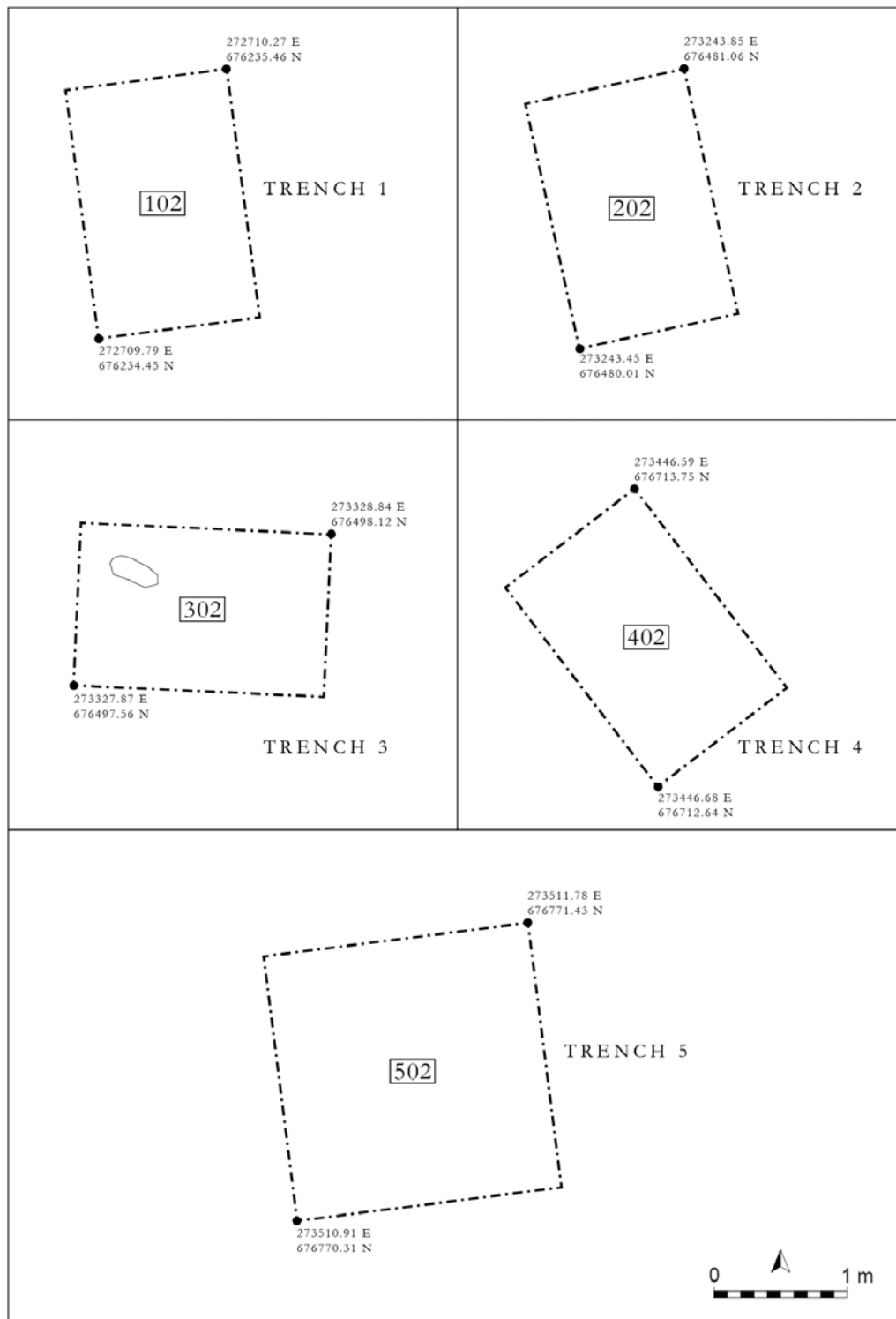


Figure 2: Post-excitation plans of the trenches.

CONCLUSIONS

Clearly the area is one of high archaeological potential. At a depth of 0.3m it is possible that historic horizons can be exposed. Although no significant artefacts were uncovered (the few topsoil finds were modern), it is recommended that any further ground-breaking activities be accompanied by an archaeological watching brief.

LIST OF CONTEXTS

Trench	No.	Description
1	101	Turf and mid-brown topsoil.
1	102	Compact layer of light yellowish/brown silty-clay with occasional charcoal flecks and sub-angular/sub-rounded pieces of stone.
2	201	Turf and mid-brown topsoil.
2	202	Compact layer of light yellowish/brown silty-clay with occasional charcoal flecks and sub-angular/sub-rounded pieces of stone.
2	203	Compact clay layer; the surface had been subject to burning.
3	301	Turf and mid-brown topsoil.
3	302	Compact layer of light yellowish/brown silty-clay with occasional charcoal flecks, sub-angular/sub-rounded pieces of stone and two large sub-rounded boulders.
4	401	Turf and mid-brown topsoil.
4	402	Compact layer of light yellowish/brown silty-clay with occasional charcoal flecks and sub-angular/sub-rounded pieces of stone.
5	501	Cairn made of stone embedded in concrete, sitting on a thin concrete screed.
5	502	Compact yellowish/brown silty-clay with occasional charcoal flecks.

LIST OF DRAWINGS

No.	Type	Description	Scale
1	Plan	Trench locations.	1:20

LIST OF DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHS

No.	Description	From	Date
1	Existing cairn sign.	S	21/07/15
2	Existing cairn sign.	E	21/07/15
3	Trench 4, pre-excavation.	NE	21/07/15
4	Trench 4, pre-excavation.	SE	21/07/15
5	Trench 4, pre-excavation.	NE	21/07/15
6	Trench 4, post-excavation.	NE	21/07/15
7	Trench 4, post-excavation, NW-facing section.	NW	21/07/15
8	Trench 3, pre-excavation.	S	21/07/15
9	Trench 3, post-excavation.	E	21/07/15
10	Trench 3, post-excavation.	S	21/07/15
11	Trench 3, post-excavation, S-facing section.	S	21/07/15
12	Post-removal shot of cairn sign.	N	21/07/15
13	Post-removal shot of cairn sign.	E	21/07/15
14	Trench 2, pre-excavation.	W	21/07/15
15	Trench 2, post-excavation.	W	21/07/15
16	Trench 2, post-excavation.	N	21/07/15
17	Trench 2, post-excavation, E-facing section.	E	21/07/15
18	Trench 2, post-excavation.	E	21/07/15
19	Trench 2, detail of burnt layer 203.	E	21/07/15
20	Trench 1, pre-excavation.	E	21/07/15
21	Trench 1, post-excavation.	N	21/07/15
22	Trench 1, post-excavation.	W	21/07/15