

Discovery and Excavation in Scotland

Updated on 15/06/2007

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Argyll and Bute
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Dunchraigaig Cairn
PROJECT CODE:	HSCO-90111-2015-01
PARISH:	Kilmichael Glassary
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Paul Fox
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Kirkdale Archaeology
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Watching brief
NMRS NO(S):	NR89NW 15
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SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	
NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)	NR 8335 9656 & NR 8326 9677
START DATE (this season)	2 June 2015
END DATE (this season)	3 June 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 two existing gates and the excavation of two trenches to house new gates at either end of the path linking the Ballymeanoch archaeological complex to the cairn at Dunchraigaig. 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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**HISTORIC SCOTLAND PROPERTIES IN CARE
MINOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS 2015/2016**

Dunchragaig Cairn • Watching Brief • June 2015

HS PIC Index Number: 90111

SITE: Dunchragaig Cairn, Dunchragaig, Kilmartin Glen.

N.G.R.: NR 8335 9656 & NR 8326 9677

DESCRIPTION: Archaeological watching brief during the removal of two existing gates and the excavation of two trenches to house new gates at either end of the path linking the Ballymeanoch archaeological complex to the cairn at Dunchragaig.

PROJECT CODE: HSCO-90111-2015-01

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INTRODUCTION

Under the terms of its PIC contract with Historic Scotland, Kirkdale Archaeology was asked to carry out an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of two trenches to house new gates and strainer posts at opposing ends of the footpath linking the Ballymeanoch archaeological complex to the cairn at Dunchragaig¹, in Kilmartin Glen, Mid-Argyll. Two wooden gates occupying the same positions were dismantled and removed.²

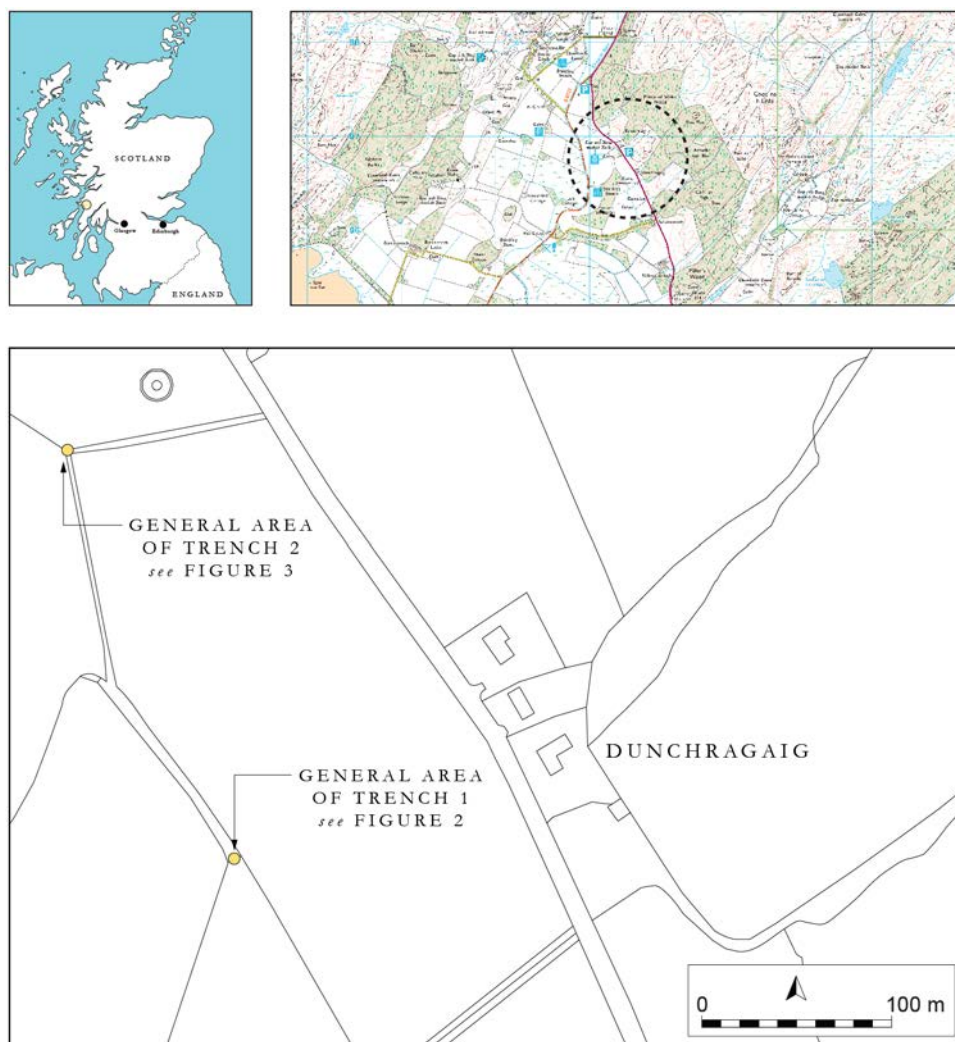


Figure 1: Plan showing the general locations of the two trenches.

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The trenches were excavated by hand, by Historic Scotland staff under archaeological supervision, and the work was carried out on 2nd and 3rd June, 2015.

¹ The Ordnance Survey spelling is Dunchraggaig, however the Historic Scotland *List of Scheduled Monuments* shows the name as Dunchragaig. The latter spelling has been used throughout this document.

² Although it was specified that the new gates be two-way in operation, the ones supplied could only open in one direction.

DESCRIPTION

Trench 1

Trench 1 was situated at the north-west angle of the field containing the monuments comprising the Ballymeanoch archaeological complex.

The existing gate was stripped down and removed, and the new trench was excavated to occupy the same position. The trench measured 3.65m (NE/SW) x up to 0.4 wide (NW/SE). The areas excavated to take the gate legs and strainer posts extended to a depth of up to 0.85m, while the excavated area for the recessing of the horizontal bar of the gate frame extended to a depth of 0.4m.



Plate 1: Post-excitation view of Trench 1, from the north-east.

The turf and mid-brown silty clay topsoil **101** contained numerous water-rolled pebbles, up to 15cm long. The layer (**101**) was 0.3m – 0.43m deep and covered a layer of bright orangey-brown clay natural **102** containing numerous small (<5cm) water-rolled pebbles with occasional larger rounded pebbles (<15cm). Layer **102** was up to 0.5m deep. Below **102**, the top of a natural layer of accumulated pebbles in a gravelly, sandy matrix **103** was exposed partially to a maximum depth of 0.05m. Layers **102** and **103** were truncated

to the south-west by a cut **104** to insert the pre-existing wooden gatepost. The upper portion of the cut was 0.2m wide, narrowing at its base. It was backfilled with re-deposited soil **105**, a mixture of layers **101** and **102**.

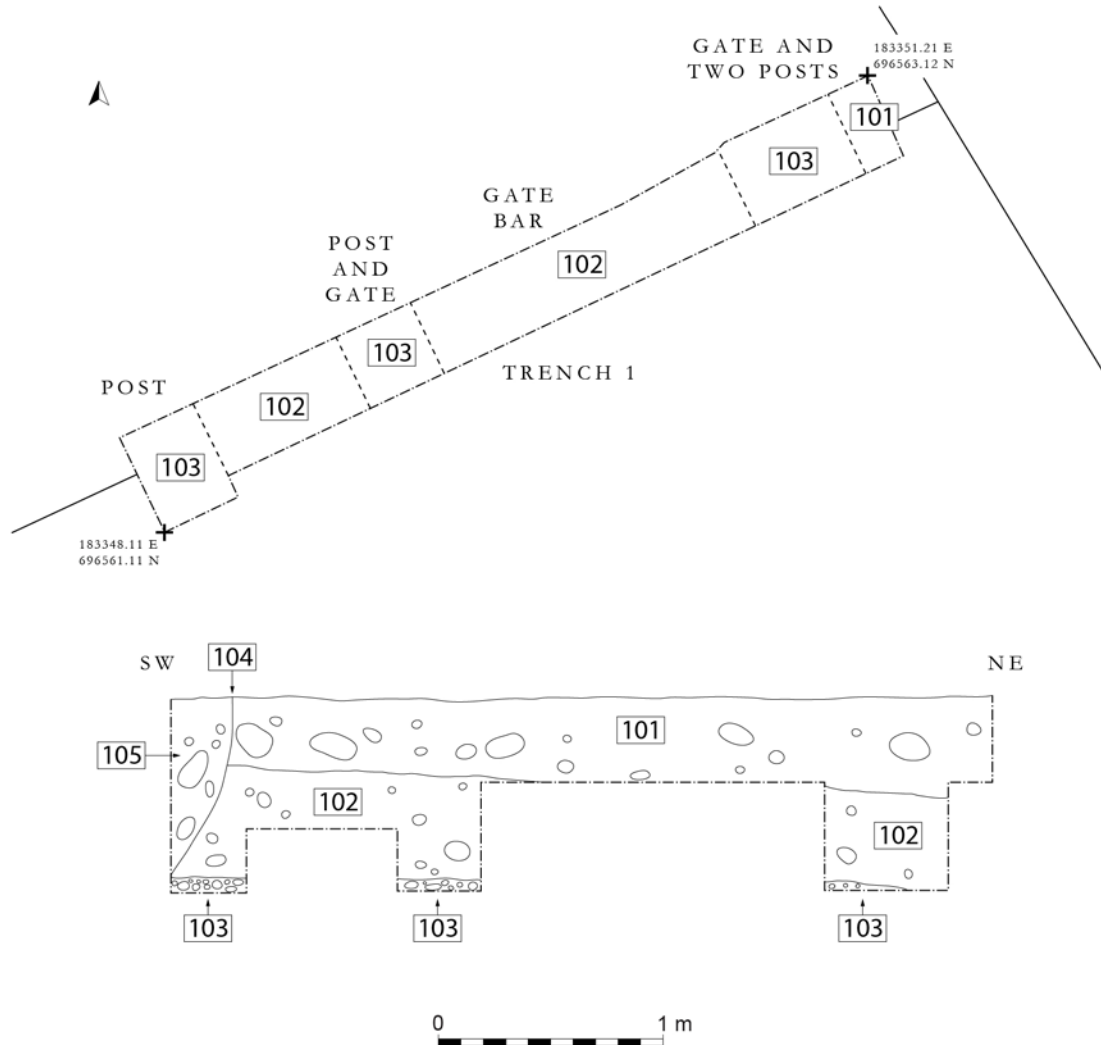


Figure 2: Post-excavation plan of Trench 1 (top) and SE-facing section.

Trench 2

Trench 2 was situated at the south-west angle of the fenced area containing the Dunchrugaig Cairn.

The existing gate was stripped down and removed, and the new trench was excavated to occupy the same position. The trench measured 2.2m (broadly E/W) x up to 0.4m wide (broadly N/S). The areas excavated to take the gate legs and strainer posts extended to a depth of up to 0.8m, while the excavation for the recessing of the horizontal bar of the gate frame extended to a depth of 0.5m.



Plate 2: Post-excitation view of Trench 2, from the east.

The turf and thin mid-brown silty clay topsoil **201** was 0.1m deep and covered a layer of Type 1 gravel **202**, some 0.1m deep. Below **202** was a layer of mid-brown silty clay topsoil **203** containing numerous water-rolled pebbles, up to 15cm long. This in turn covered a natural layer of accumulated pebbles in a gravelly, sandy matrix **203** which was exposed partially to a maximum depth of 0.36m. Layers **203** and **204** were truncated to the east by a cut **205** to insert the pre-existing wooden gatepost. The upper portion of the cut was 0.4m wide, narrowing at its base. It was backfilled with re-deposited soil **206**, a mixture of layers **203** and **204**.

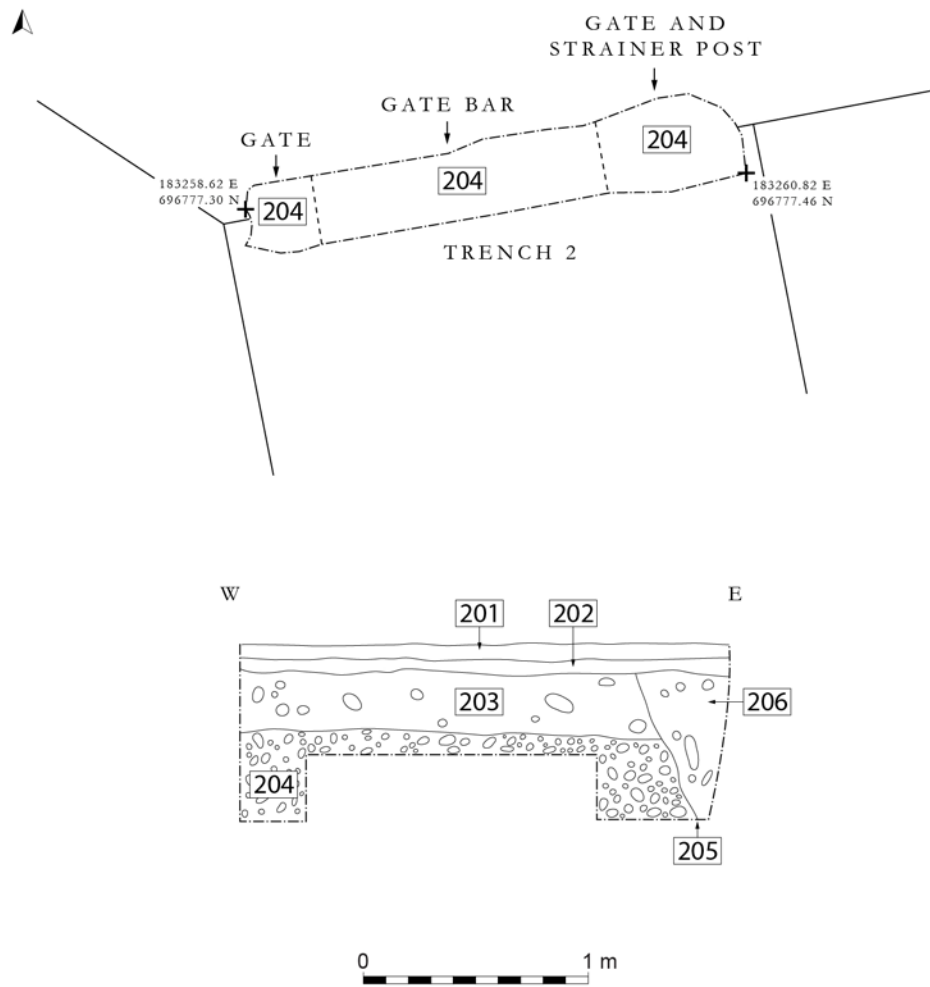


Figure 3: Post-excavation plan of Trench 2 (top) and S-facing section.

CONCLUSIONS

Other than the presence of the water rolled pebbles, which possibly allude to a significantly different environmental setting in the immediate locale of the monuments to that seen today, little of archaeological interest was recovered during the works. The area must clearly still be considered to be archaeologically sensitive, and it is therefore recommended that any further ground-breaking activities be accompanied by an archaeological watching brief.

LIST OF CONTEXTS

No	Description
101	Turf and mid-brown silty clay topsoil with pebbles.
102	Layer of bright orangey-brown clay natural containing numerous small-to-medium sized pebbles.
103	Natural layer of accumulated pebbles in a gravelly, sandy matrix.
104	Cut through 101 and 102 for previous gate post.
105	Backfill of 104 (mixed fill of 101 and 102).
201	Turf and thin mid-brown topsoil.
202	Layer of Type 1 gravel below 201.
203	Mid-brown silty clay topsoil with pebbles.
204	Natural layer of accumulated pebbles in a gravelly, sandy matrix.
205	Cut through 203 and 204 for the previous gate post.
206	Backfill of 205 (mixed fill of 203 and 204).

LIST OF DRAWINGS

No.	Type	Description	Scale
1	Plan	Trench 1, post-excavation.	1:20
2	Section	Trench 1, SE-facing.	1:20
3	Plan	Trench 2, post-excavation.	1:20
4	Section	Trench 2, S-facing.	1:20

LIST OF DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHS

No.	Description	From	Date
1	Pre-excavation shot of Trench 1.	SE	02/06/2015
2	Pre-excavation shot of Trench 1.	SE	02/06/2015
3	Pre-excavation shot of Trench 1.	NW	02/06/2015
4	Dismantling the gate at Trench 1.	SE	02/06/2015
5	Dismantling the gate at Trench 1.	S	02/06/2015
6	Post-excavation shot of Trench 1, SE-facing section.	SE	02/06/2015
7	Post-excavation shot of Trench 1, SE-facing section.	SE	02/06/2015
8	Post-excavation shot of Trench 1, SE-facing section.	SE	02/06/2015
9	Post-excavation shot of Trench 1, SE-facing section.	SE	02/06/2015
10	Post-excavation shot of Trench 1.	S	02/06/2015
11	Post-excavation shot of Trench 1.	NE	02/06/2015
12	Post-excavation shot of Trench 1.	N	02/06/2015
13	Break in field wall and path at Trench 1.	NW	02/06/2015
14	Pre-excavation shot of Trench 2.	N	03/06/2015
15	Pre-excavation shot of Trench 2.	SW	03/06/2015
16	New gate and strainer posts in position in Trench 1.	NW	03/06/2015
17	Trench 2 location shot showing the ridge to the SW.	NW	03/06/2015
18	Post-excavation shot of Trench 2, S-facing section.	S	03/06/2015
19	Post-excavation shot of Trench 2, S-facing section.	S	03/06/2015
20	Post-excavation shot of Trench 2, S-facing section.	S	03/06/2015
21	Post-excavation shot of Trench 2.	S	03/06/2015
22	Post-excavation shot of Trench 2.	E	03/06/2015
23	Post-excavation shot of Trench 2.	NE	03/06/2015
24	Trench 2 with new gate and strainer posts.	NE	03/06/2015