

Discovery and Excavation in Scotland

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Argyll and Bute
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Iona Abbey
PROJECT CODE:	HSCO-90351-2015-01
PARISH:	KILFINICHEN AND KILVICKEON
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Paul Fox
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Kirkdale Archaeology
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Minor excavation
NMRS NO(S):	NM22SE 5 (Iona Abbey); NM22SE 5.01 (Iona Abbey Museum); NM22SE 5.02 (Michael Chapel)
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	Abbey, Chapel
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	
NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)	NM 2870 2453
START DATE (this season)	19 March 2015
END DATE (this season)	19 March 2015
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	A minor excavation was carried out to locate and repair a burst water pipe between Iona Abbey Museum and the Michael Chapel. No previously undisturbed ground was affected and excavation was restricted to areas of modern intervention. There were no finds or features of archaeological significance.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Historic Environment Scotland
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	4 Western Terrace, Edinburgh EH12 5QF
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ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	Archive to be deposited with Historic Environment Scotland

**HISTORIC SCOTLAND PROPERTIES IN CARE
MINOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS 2014/2015**

Iona Abbey • Watching Brief • November 2015

HS PIC Index Number: 90351

SITE: Iona Abbey, Iona.

N.G.R.: NM22SE 5 (Iona Abbey); NM22SE 5.01 (Iona Abbey Museum);
NM22SE 5.02 (Michael Chapel)

DESCRIPTION: A small scale excavation in order to locate and repair a burst water pipe
between the Michael Chapel and museum.

PROJECT CODE: HSCO-90351-2015-01

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MARCH 2015

INTRODUCTION

Under the terms of its PIC call-off contract with Historic Scotland, Kirkdale Archaeology was asked to undertake a small scale excavation at Iona Abbey in order to monitor the excavation of a trench to determine the location of a leak from a pipe which had flooded an area of ground between the Michael Chapel and abbey museum to the north-east of the main cluster of abbey buildings (Fig. 1).

The work was carried out by hand, by Historic Scotland staff under archaeological supervision, and took place on 19th March, 2015.

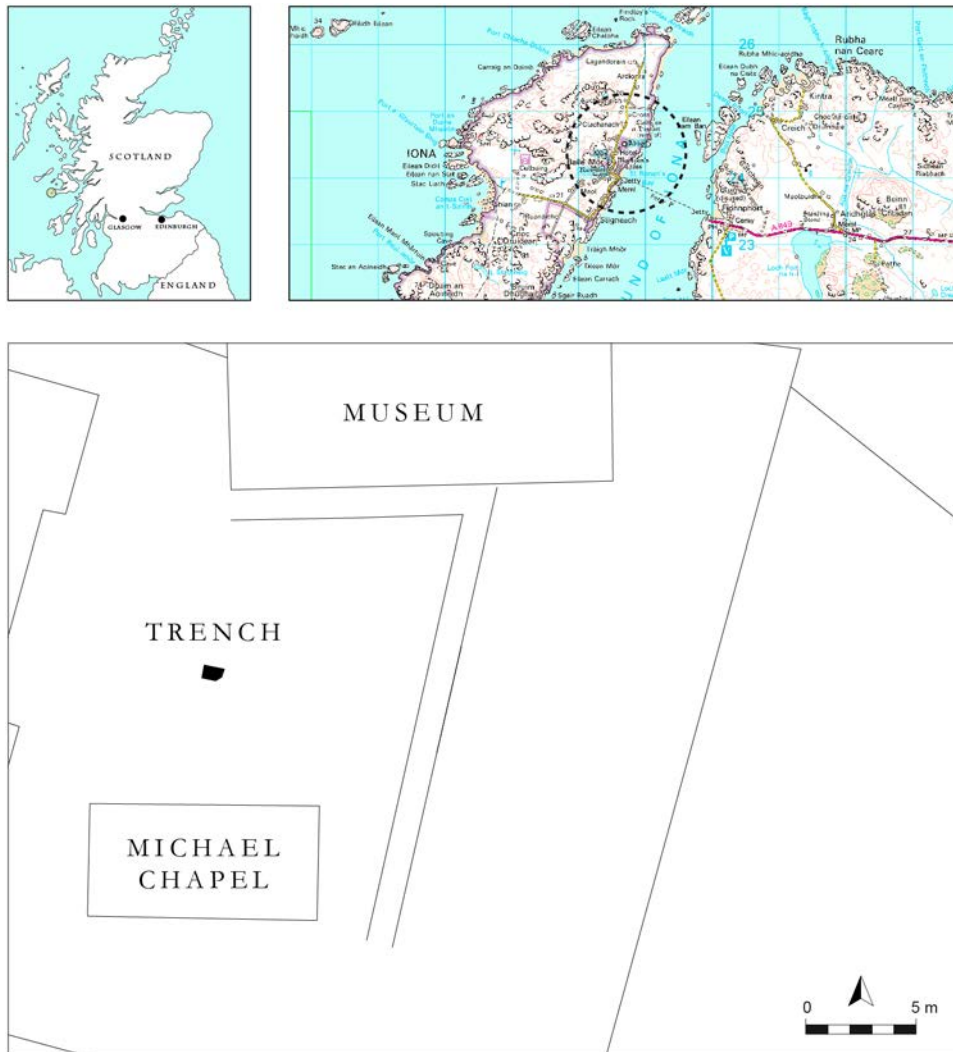


Figure 1: Plan showing the location of Iona Abbey and the area of works.

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DESCRIPTION

Water could be seen bubbling to the ground surface when the mains supply was switched on – this seemed to indicate that there was quite a localised leak in the immediate vicinity. This was therefore where the excavation was targeted.

Trench 1

Trench 1 measured 0.7m NE/SW x (up to) 1.05m NW/SE. Towards the north-west area of the trench, a 0.15m depth was achieved, while the main body of the trench was excavated to a depth of 0.5m. The 0.15m thick turf and mid-brown silty topsoil **101** overlay a re-deposited backfill **102** of sandy gravel containing numerous pebbles and large sub-rounded re-deposited boulders up to 0.3m long (although the cut within which this material sat was not apparent). An open-ended, three inch diameter pipe **103** (running approximately NW/SE) was encountered within this backfill (with its top 0.43m below the ground surface); it had been plugged with a piece of wood **104** wrapped in cloth. Having cleared around this redundant pipe junction, the water supply was turned on and it could clearly be seen to be the source of the leak. The pipe was re-plugged with rolled Denso tape and a plastic tube. The pipe end was then capped with a plastic cover held in place by a stainless steel jubilee clip and the whole was covered with more Denso tape. Concrete blocks were then used to box in the pipe and the arrangement was left open temporarily to ensure that there was no recurrence of the initial problem. The standing water in the area started to subside almost immediately after the pipe junction was secured.

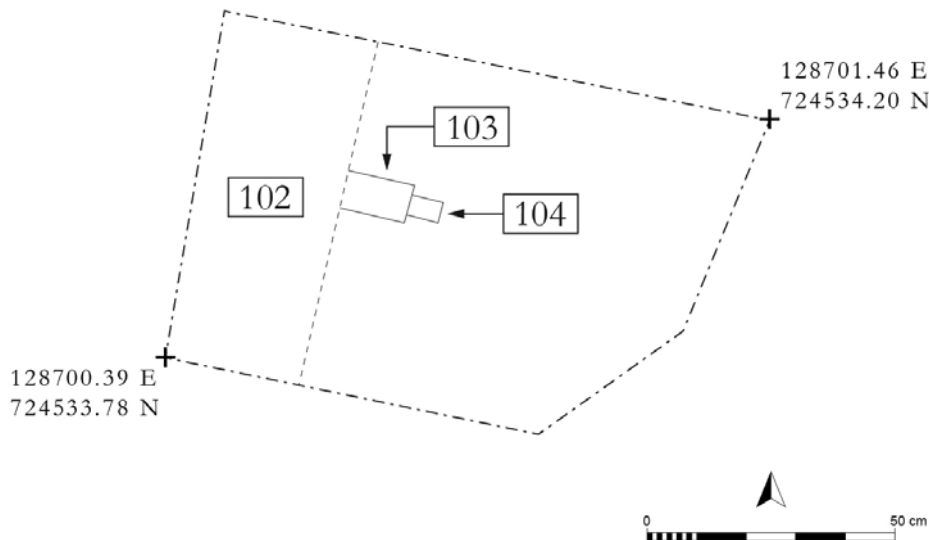


Figure 2: Post-excitation plan.

CONCLUSIONS

The excavation revealed extensive disturbance associated with the insertion of relatively recent drainage and services, along with associated episodes of levelling. Context **004** in particular appears to be associated with the levelling for the construction of the modern concrete step. Nothing further of archaeological significance was revealed during the course of the work.



Plate 1: A view of pipe 103 with leaking plug 104 exposed, from the south-east.

LIST OF CONTEXTS

Number	Description
101	Turf and topsoil.
102	Re-deposited mixed backfill.
103	Three inch diameter plastic piping.
104	Wooden plug with a cloth cover, within 103.

LIST OF DRAWINGS

No.	Type	Description	Scale
1	Plan	Post-excavation	1:50

LIST OF DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHS

No.	Description	From	Date
1	Waterlogged area between the museum and the Michael Chapel.	N	19/03/2015
2	Waterlogged area between the museum and the Michael Chapel.	SW	19/03/2015
3	Michael Chapel, abbey church and the waterlogged area.	NE	19/03/2015
4	Waterlogged area between the museum and the Michael Chapel.	E	19/03/2015
5	East façade of the Michael Chapel.	E	19/03/2015
6	Waterlogged area between the museum and the Michael Chapel.	S	19/03/2015
7	View of the abbey church and the Michael Chapel.	S	19/03/2015
8	North façade of the Michael Chapel.	N	19/03/2015
9	Waterlogged area and museum.	W	19/03/2015
10	Pipe 103 with leaking plug 104 exposed.	SE	19/03/2015
11	Pipe 103 with leaking plug 104 exposed.	SE	19/03/2015
12	Pipe 103 with leaking plug 104 exposed.	SW	19/03/2015
13	Pipe 103 with leaking plug 104 exposed.	NW	19/03/2015
14	Pipe 103 with leaking plug 104 exposed.	NE	19/03/2015
15	Repair in progress.	NE	19/03/2015
16	Pipe 103 repaired.	NE	19/03/2015
17	Concrete blocks emplaced around pipe 103.	NW	19/03/2015