

Discovery and Excavation in Scotland

Updated on 15/06/2007

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Edinburgh, City Of
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Holyrood Park: Whinny Hill
PROJECT CODE:	HSCO-13032-2013-01
PARISH:	Edinburgh, City Of
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Paul Fox
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Kirkdale Archaeology
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Archaeological evaluation
NMRS NO(S):	NT27SE 197; NT27SE 3938
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	Park; Field system
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)	Centred c. NT 279 735
START DATE (this season)	7 August 2013
END DATE (this season)	7 August 2013
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	<p>A condition survey on part of the NE portion of Whinny Hill in Holyrood Park after some areas of grass and gorse thickets were damaged by fire. Although the fire had revealed some areas, much of the area remained inaccessible due to the gorse. The survey identified and mapped the extent of the fire damage while taking the opportunity to assess any potential archaeology which could have been exposed as a result.</p> <p>The area affected measured c.200m E/W x 100m N/S. There are several walking paths winding up the steep slope of the NE side of the summit of Whinny Hill. The area is covered with large thickets of gorse separated by areas of open rough grassland. Four large gorse thickets were burnt-out, with the areas in between them scorched or badly burned. Each defined area of damage was given a specific area number, photographed and described.</p> <p>A potential low bank seen may possibly be part of the larger scheme of field banks (undated) which can be traced on the plan in RCAHMS Broadsheet No. 6: <i>Holyrood Park – The Archaeology of a Royal Park</i>, 1998.</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 2013**

Holyrood Park • Recording • August 2013

HS PIC Index Number: 10811

SITE: Whinny Hill, Holyrood Park, Edinburgh

N.G.R.: Centred c. NT 279 735

DESCRIPTION: Condition survey of an area of fire-damaged gorse thickets on Whinny Hill in Holyrood Park.

PROJECT CODE: HSCO-10811-2013-01

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INTRODUCTION

Under the terms of its PIC call-off contract with Historic Scotland, Kirkdale Archaeology was asked to undertake a condition survey on part of the NE portion of Whinny Hill in Holyrood Park after some areas of grass and gorse thickets were damaged by fire (Fig. 1).

Having arrived on site to carry out the survey it was clear that the burnt gorse thickets were impenetrable and that observation would be restricted to their margins. The damage was contained in a quite extensive, but discrete area. A further complication was the presence of volcanic extrusions of whinstone (from which the hill derives its name), tending to the columnar (as at Salisbury Crags), giving the impression of some sort of built structure as opposed to a natural formation. One possible angled denuded field boundary was noted but could not be properly attributed without excavation.

The work took place on 7th August 2013.

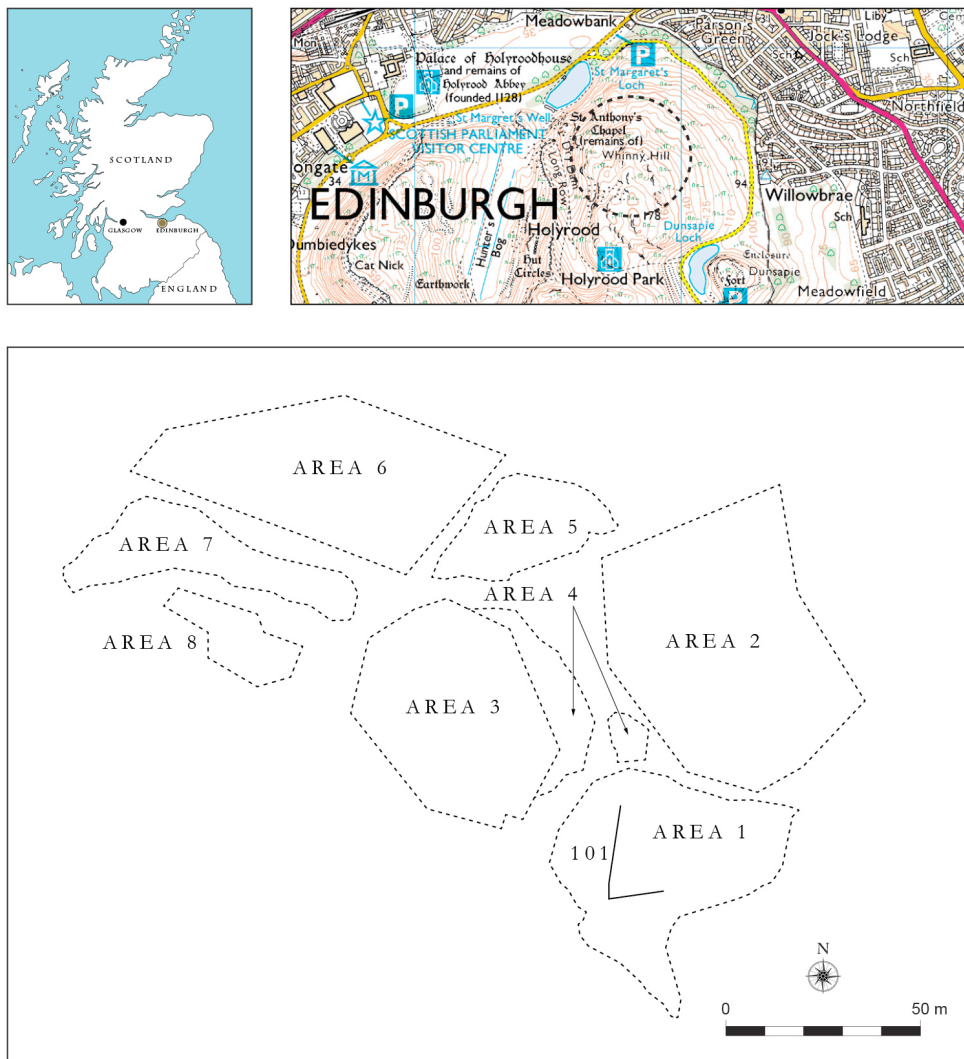


Figure 1: Plan showing the location of the areas of damage, 1 - 8.
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DESCRIPTION

The area affected measured c.200m E/W x 100m N/S. There are several walking paths winding up the steep slope of the NE side of the summit of Whinny Hill. The area is covered with large thickets of gorse separated by areas of open rough grassland. Four large gorse thickets were burnt-out, with the areas in between them scorched or badly burned. Each defined area of damage was given a specific area number, photographed and described:

Area 1

Mixed scorched rough grass and charred gorse. Within Area 1 a possible low spread bank **101**, 1.5m across x c.0.1m – 0.15m high was noted running for c.10m NE/SW up the slope before returning to the E where it petered out after c.4m - 5m. The identification as some sort of field bank is tentative and would have to be confirmed by excavation.

Area 2

Large charred gorse thicket – no features noted within.

Area 3

Large charred gorse thicket – no features noted within.

Area 4

Scorched rough grass in one small and one large patch between Areas 2 and 3 – no features noted within.

Area 5

Scorched rough grass in between Areas 2 and 6 – no features noted within.

Area 6

Large charred gorse thicket – no features noted within.

Area 7

Scorched rough grass between Areas 6 and 8 – no features noted within.

Area 8

Small charred gorse thicket – no features noted within.

CONCLUSIONS

The survey has identified and mapped the extent of the fire damage while taking the opportunity to assess any potential archaeology which could have been exposed as a result. The potential low bank in Area 1 may possibly be part of the larger scheme of field banks (un-dated) which can be traced on the plan in the RCAHMS Broadsheet No. 6 (*Holyrood Park – The Archaeology of a Royal Park*, 1998). Some degree of excavation would probably be recommended in order to positively identify the feature.



Plate 1: Area 1, possible field boundary running SW/NE

LIST OF CONTEXTS

Number	Description
101	Area 1 possible field boundary running SW/NE, returning to the W

LIST OF DRAWINGS

No.	Type	Description	Scale
1	Plan	Sketch plan of fire-damaged area	NTS
2	Plan	General area plan	NTS
3	Plan	Annotated site area plan	NTS
4	Plan	Plan from RCAHMS Broadsheet showing surveyed field systems	NTS

LIST OF DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHS

No.	Description	From	Date
1	Area 1 grass and gorse damage	N	07/08/2013
2	Area 1 grass and gorse damage	E	07/08/2013
3	Area 1 grass and gorse damage	S	07/08/2013
4	Area 1 possible field boundary running SW/NE	N	07/08/2013
5	Area 1 possible field boundary running W/E	E	07/08/2013
6	Area 2 gorse damage	NE	07/08/2013
7	Area 2 gorse damage	N	07/08/2013
8	Area 3 gorse damage	NW	07/08/2013
9	Area 2 gorse damage	NW	07/08/2013
10	Area 4 grass damage	W	07/08/2013
11	Area 4 grass damage	S	07/08/2013
12	Area 4 grass damage	SE	07/08/2013
13	Area 5 grass damage	W	07/08/2013
14	Area 6 gorse damage	NW	07/08/2013
15	Area 7 grass damage	NW	07/08/2013
16	Area 8 gorse damage	W	07/08/2013