

***Discovery and Excavation in Scotland – OASIS-type Form (2006)***

<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY:</b>	Stirling
<b>PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:</b>	The King's Knot, Stirling
<b>PROJECT CODE:</b>	HSCO-90288-2012-03
<b>PARISH:</b>	Stirling
<b>NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	Gordon Ewart
<b>NAME OF ORGANISATION:</b>	Kirkdale Archaeology
<b>TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:</b>	Archaeological recording
<b>NMRS NO(S):</b>	NS79SE 7
<b>SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):</b>	Earthwork, Garden
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS:</b>	None
<b>NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)</b>	NS 7899 9368
<b>START DATE (this season)</b>	14 November 2012
<b>END DATE (this season)</b>	14 November 2012
<b>PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)</b>	
<b>MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION:</b> (May include information from other fields)	An archaeological record was made of disturbed ground caused by the collapse of a hawthorn tree located close to the Kings Knot. The excavation was located against the NE edge of a low terrace which extends SW to meet the more pronounced NW and NE sides of a regular, well constructed bank. The latter appears to be in character with the more prominent elements of the King's Knot, in contrast with the feature cut by this excavation – a lower and more ephemeral earthwork. The findings of the excavation suggest that this feature is a shallow and eroded terrace, affected by both the hawthorn roots and by water penetration. The latter appears to have been exacerbated by the stone wall which lies opposite and parallel to the terrace, to the NE. The wall and the terrace edge have created a ditch-like effect, mainly characterised by waterlogging. Despite the limits of the exercise, the evidence suggests that the low terrace immediately adjacent to the hawthorn might be a relic of an earlier layout rather than part of the (more prominent) present King's Knot, generally assumed to date from the early 17th century. In terms of construction, the terrace is essentially a single clay-rich deposit, possibly revetted and/or reinforced with unbonded stone fragments. On this basis, it is a 'mineral' rather than a horticultural feature, part of the fabric of a formal earthwork plan, of as yet unknown function, predating both the 17 <sup>th</sup> -century layout, and the Victorian park (defined by the hawthorn).
<b>PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:</b>	
<b>CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:</b>	
<b>SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:</b>	Historic Scotland
<b>ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	4, Western Terrace, Edinburgh, EH12 5QF
<b>EMAIL ADDRESS:</b>	g_ewart@hotmail.com
<b>ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)</b>	Archive to be deposited in NMRS

HISTORIC SCOTLAND PROPERTIES IN CARE  
MINOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS 2011

King's Knot • Archaeological Recording • November 2012

HS PIC Index Number: 90288

SITE: The King's Knot, Stirling

N.G.R.: NS 7899 9368

DESCRIPTION: Recording of disturbed ground due to the collapse of an historic  
hawthorn tree

PROJECT CODE: HSCO-90288-2012-03

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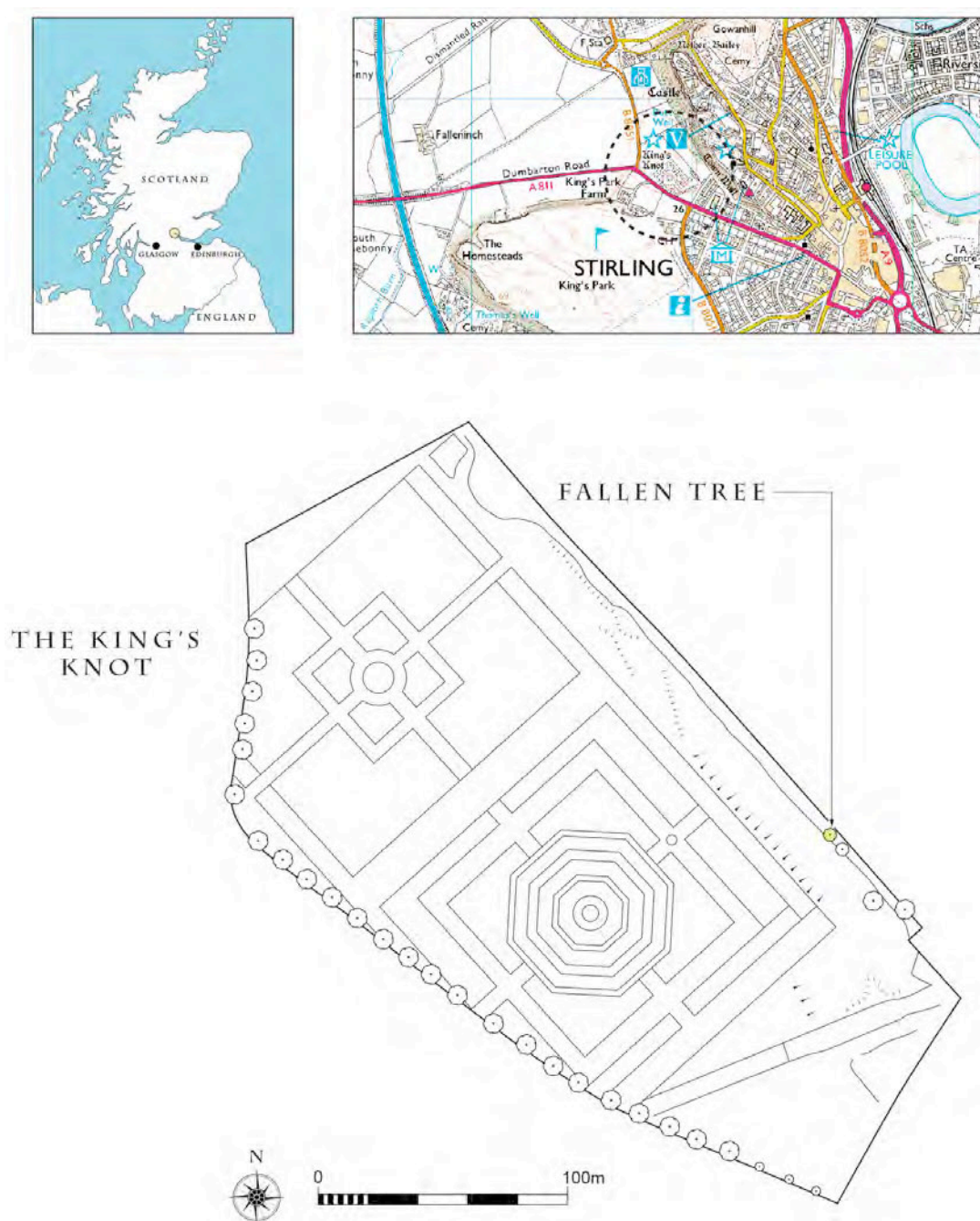


4 Western Terrace, Murrayfield, Edinburgh EH12 5QF

NOVEMBER 2012

## INTRODUCTION

Under the terms of its Properties-In-Care (PIC) call-off contract with Historic Scotland, Kirkdale Archaeology was asked to record the disturbed ground caused by the collapse of a hawthorn tree located close to the Kings Knot, an earthwork lying to the SE of Stirling Castle. The work followed on from a the cutting of the fallen trunk for dendrochronological dating (see HSCO-90288-2012-02). The work was carried out on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2012.



**Figure 1:** Plan showing the location of the King's Knot and the fallen tree.  
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## **DESCRIPTION**

### **Trench 1**

Trench 1 measured 1.5m long (NE/SS) x 0.5m (NW/SE). It was located immediately SE of the hawthorn tree stump, against the NE facing slope of a low artificial terrace, at a point where roots from the hawthorn had been ripped out when the tree fell, exposing a variety of deposits. The trench straightened the existing area of disturbance to create a short section across the exposed surfaces and deposits. No further damage to any historic earthwork, other than the cutting of the ragged turf edge and the cleaning back of exposed deposits, occurred. Once recorded, the trench was backfilled.

The exercise exposed turf and topsoil (001), generally 150mm deep which sealed 004 towards the SW end of the trench. This deposit was a loose grey brown clay rich matrix up to 200mm deep, sealing 002. The latter was very similar to 004, only firmer. This deposit was not excavated and formed the base of the recorded section (S end). Elsewhere, F004 sealed F003, which covered the N end of the trench. This again was essentially similar to F004/F002 but was more disturbed by root action. Both F002 and F003 featured a few randomly disposed angular stones

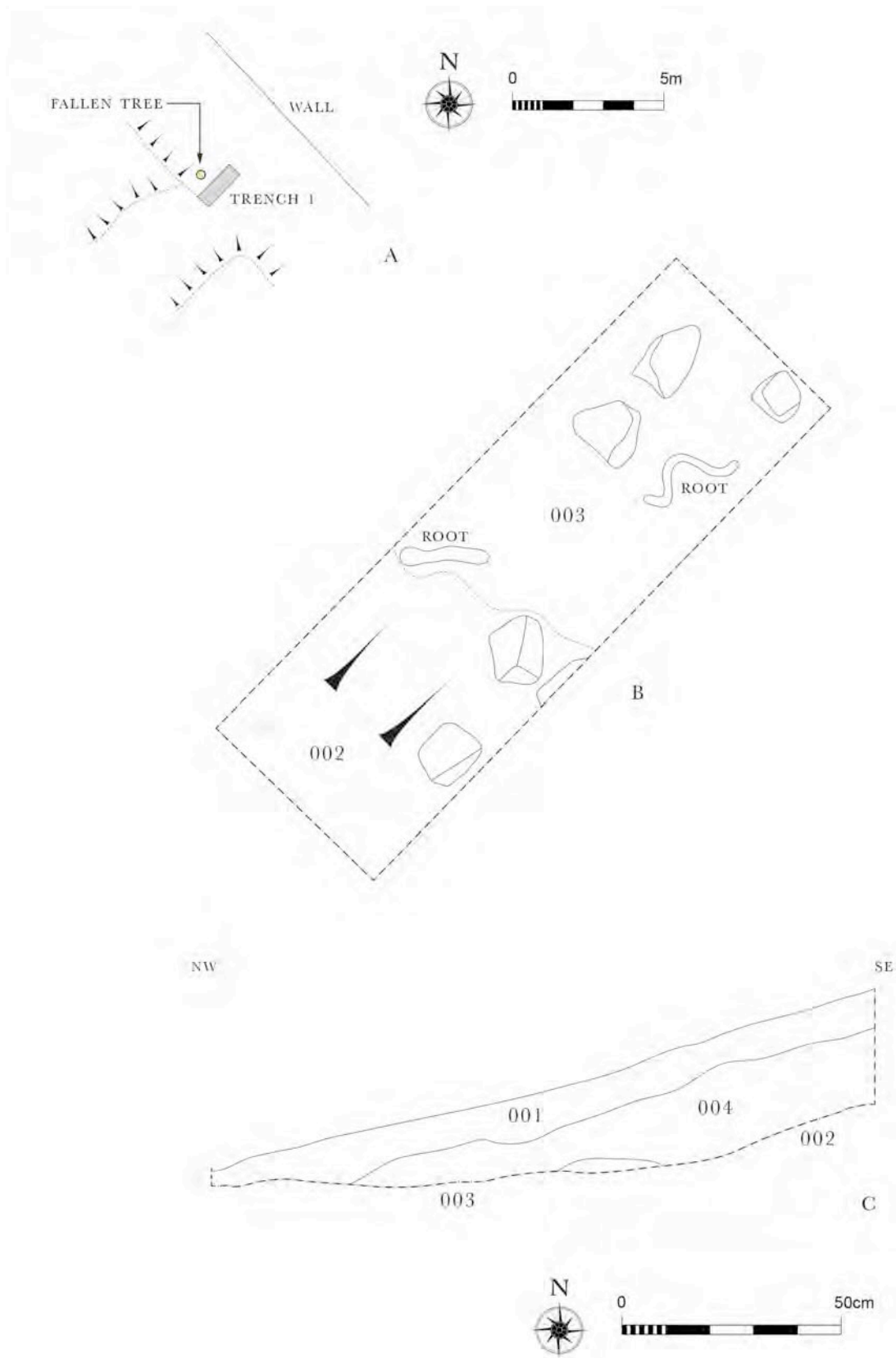


Figure 2: A: Trench 1 location plan; B: Plan of Trench 1; C: SW-facing section in Trench 1

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Trench 1 was located against the NE edge of a low terrace which extends SW to meet the more pronounced NW and NE sides of a regular, well constructed bank. The latter appears to be in character with the more prominent elements of the King's Knot, in contrast with the feature cut by Trench 1 – a lower and more ephemeral earthwork. The findings of the excavation suggest that this feature is a shallow and eroded terrace, affected by both the hawthorn roots and by water penetration. The latter appears to have been exacerbated by the stone wall which lies opposite and parallel to the terrace, to the NE. The wall and the terrace edge have created a ditch-like effect, mainly characterised by waterlogging.

Despite the limits of the exercise, evidence suggests that the low terrace immediately adjacent to the hawthorn might be a relic of an earlier layout rather than part of the (more prominent) present King's Knot, generally assumed to date from the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. In terms of construction, the terrace is essentially a single clay rich deposit, possibly revetted and/or reinforced with unbonded stone fragments. On this basis, it is a 'mineral' rather than a horticultural feature, part of the fabric of a formal earthwork plan, of as yet unknown function, predating both the 17<sup>th</sup> century plan, and the Victorian park (defined by the hawthorn).

## LIST OF CONTEXTS

No.	Description
001	Turf and topsoil – up to 150mm deep
002	Mid-brown / light grey clay rich material
003	As above, but disturbed by tree roots
004	As per 002 but soft and loose due to water and root penetration

## LIST OF DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHS

No.	Description	From	Date
013	Trench 1	N	14/11/2012
014	Trench 1	NE	14/11/2012
015	Trench 1	NE	14/11/2012
016	Trench 1	N	14/11/2012
017	Trench 1 with more prominent earthworks in the background	NE	14/11/2012
020	Tree stump	NW	14/11/2012
021	Trench 1 and tree stump, with larger banks in the background	N	14/11/2012

## LIST OF DRAWINGS

No.	Type	Description	Scale
01	Plan	Plan of Trench 1	1:10
02	Section	NW-facing section in Trench 1	1:10