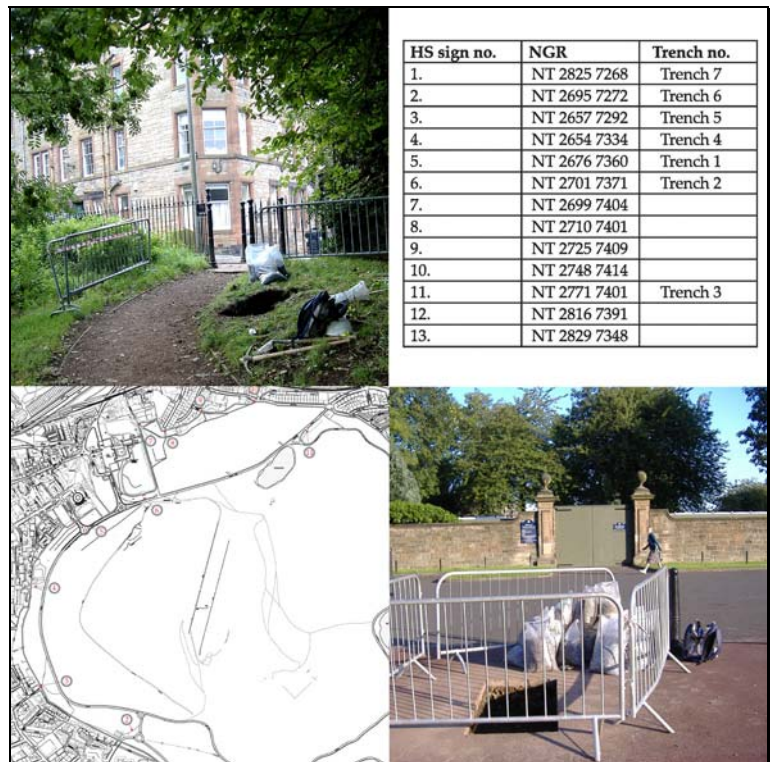


Historic Scotland  
Properties in Care  
Minor Archaeological Works 2008

**Holyrood Park:**  
Archaeological Monitoring,  
September 2008

HS PIC Index number: 90131  
Project code: HSCO-90131-2008-04



15 December 2008  
Kirkdale Archaeology

<b><u>Site</u></b>	Holyrood Park
<b><u>N.G.R</u></b>	Centred c NT 274 732
<b><u>Project Description</u></b>	Archaeological monitoring
<b><u>Project code</u></b>	HSCO-90131-2008-04

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*SUMMARY: September 2008: A series of watching briefs was maintained during the excavation of small trenches at various locations around Holyrood Park. This was to allow the installation of 13 orientation signs inside the entrances to the park. Where possible the signs were wall mounted or fixed to railings or gates. However, seven of the signs required trenches to be dug for concrete bases. The seven trenches measured a uniform 1.35 m x 600 mm and were 400 mm deep. The deposits encountered were predominantly of modern date, showing much recent disturbance or landscaping, although in some places there were undisturbed horizons, possibly 18<sup>th</sup> century in date.*

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Under the terms of its PIC call-off contract with Historic Scotland, Kirkdale Archaeology was asked to undertake a series of watching briefs during the installation of 13 orientation signs inside the entrances to the park. Where possible the signs were wall mounted or fixed to railings or gates. However, seven of the signs required trenches to be dug for concrete bases. The seven trenches measured a uniform 1.35 m x 600 mm and were 400 mm deep.

The following shows the trench numbers assigned, with the corresponding original HS trench numbers, and their locations.

The work was undertaken between 22 and 26 September 2008

<b>Kirkdale Trench No.</b>	<b>HS Sign No.</b>	<b>NGR</b>
1	5	NT 2676 7360
2	6	NT 2701 7371
3	11	NT 2771 7401
4	4	NT 2654 7334
5	3	NT 2657 7292
6	2	NT 2695 7272
7	1	NT 2825 7268

## 2.0 DESCRIPTION

### 2.1 Trench 1

Trench 1 was located roughly 10 m E of the entrance immediately SE of the Dynamic Earth building. It measured 1.35 m NW-SE, 600 mm in width and 480 mm deep.

The upper deposit, **101**, was turf and loose, light-mid grey, slightly sandy silt with 25%-30% small (30 mm by 20 mm on average) stones. **101** was seen throughout the trench and measured 350 mm in thickness.

Sealed by **101**, **103** was an 80 mm thick compact deposit of stones and lumps of concrete with approximately 20% mid brown sandy silt. Within **103** in the SE corner of the trench **102** was a single lump of concrete measuring over 300 mm E-W and 120 mm N-S (runs out of the trench to the S and E) and 60 mm thick.

Below **103**, **104** comprised compact mid grey silty clay and stones, 30% stones that are mostly sub angular and measure 120 mm by 80 mm on average. **104** measured 150 mm in depth.

The primary deposit excavated, **105** was fairly compact mid brown sandy silt with flecks of mortar and coal throughout. A depth of up to 100 mm of **105** was removed but it continued below excavated levels.

### 2.2 Trench 2

Trench 2 was located within the car park to the E of the S garden gate into Holyrood Palace, it measured 1.30 m N-S, 600 mm wide and up to 400 mm deep.

The current tarmac surface, **201**, measured 70 mm in thickness. Below **201**, **202** comprised clean red gravel that was a maximum of 50 mm thick. Filling the bottom 280 mm of the trench and continuing below the excavated level **203** comprised angular gravel and grey/green sand.

### 2.3 Trench 3

This trench was located in an area of grassland to the S of the car park inside the Meadowbank entrance to the park, roughly 2.50 m S of the car park and 800 mm W of the path running from it to St Margaret's loch. The trench measured 1.35 m E-W, 600 mm wide and up to 400 mm deep.

The upper deposit, **301**, was turf and mid brown clayey topsoil measuring 70 mm in depth. **301** sealed **302**, a 250 mm thick, quite compact deposit of mid-dark grey clay with roughly 10% small (20 mm diameter) rounded stones and one or two charcoal flecks.

The primary deposit seen, **303**, was compact mid grey slightly silty clay with one or two charcoal flecks. A depth of 80 mm of **303** was removed but the deposit was not bottomed.

## **2.4 Trench 4**

Trench 4 was located in the grassed area inside the footpath entrance to the E of the Dumbiedyke flats. It measured 1.35 m N-S, 600 mm wide and up to 500 mm in depth.

The upper deposit, **401**, was turf and dark brown clayey topsoil and measured up to 100 mm in depth. **401** sealed **402**, a 200 mm deep deposit of mid-dark grey clayey silt with occasional small (20 mm diameter) stones. Under **402**, **403** comprised ash and mid grey clay in a fairly even mix. **403** measured 100 mm in depth at the S end of the trench but although up to 150 mm was removed in the N part, the full extent was not seen.

Seen below **403** in the S 500 mm and E-W across the trench, **404** was a loose mix of ash and coal that measured 100 mm in depth. The primary context, **405**, was E-W across the S 250 mm of the trench and comprised angular stones, measuring 120 mm by 80 mm on average. **405** was not excavated.

## **2.5 Trench 5**

### *2.5.1 Overview*

Trench 5 was located in the grassed woodland at the top of a steep slope to the E of a footpath entrance in the area behind the St Leonard's Police Station. The trench measured 1.30 m E-W, 600 mm wide and up to 420 mm deep.

There were many patchy deposits in the trench meaning that the N and S sections were very different, the following description therefore describes both separately. Where there was an indication of the extent of a deposit this is recorded but some

were only seen in section.

### 2.5.2 *South Section*

The uppermost deposit, **501**, comprised turf and loose mid brown sandy clay topsoil that was heavily rooted. **501** measured 130 mm in depth and was seen throughout the trench.

Seen in the SW part of the trench, measuring 600 mm E-W, 350 mm N-S and up to 50 mm in depth, **511** was a deposit of compact orange brown sand with occasional charcoal flecks. Under **511** and extending through the S part of the trench **512** was a compact deposit of small angular gravel and grey green sand. **512** was seen in an area measuring 850 mm E-W, 450 mm N-S and up to 120 mm deep.

**002** was a 120 mm thick deposit of fairly compact mid grey sandy clay with occasional charcoal flecks found in most of the trench. **012** sealed **002**.

Under **002** in the SW of the trench **013** comprised 80% gravel (20 mm by 10 mm on average) and dark brown sand, it measured 950 mm E-W and 500 mm N-S.

**013** sealed **015**, a deposit of compact small (10 mm) angular gravel and grey/green sand. **015** measured 80 mm in thickness and was seen in the SE of the trench. Under the W side of **015**, **014** comprised stones, measuring 150 mm by 100 mm and 60 mm thick on average, and mid brown silty sand. **014** extended most of the way across the E end of the trench but not in the N section.

Sealed by **014**, **009** was an N-S line of boulders seen across the trench in an area measuring roughly 400 mm E-W. **009** had a fairly straight E edge across the trench but it was a bit more ragged to the W, it was not excavated.

In the base of the trench **010** was a compact deposit of brown/red clay and stones that was left unexcavated.

### 2.5.3 *North Section*

Under **001**, **002** was seen the full length of this elevation.

At the E end of this section **002** sealed **003**, a 30 mm thick deposit of compact orange brown sand and small (5 mm-10 mm) stones in a fairly even mix. Sealed by **003**, **004** is a fairly compact deposit of mid grey sandy clay with occasional charcoal flecks.

**004** measured only 20 mm thick against **009** but 80 mm thick when it ran into the E elevation. Sealed by **004**, deposit **005** comprised compact 10 mm angular gravel and grey/green sand in a fairly even mix. **005** measured 30 mm in thickness and sealed **006**, quite compact mid-dark grey sandy silty with many (roughly 40%) stone grits measuring up to 10 mm in diameter. **006** measured 100 mm in thickness.

Deposit **003** was over and E of **009** and **004**, **005** and **006** had built up against the E side of the same feature. These deposits were therefore seen in the E 500 mm of the N elevation.

At the W end of the elevation, sealed by **002**, **007** comprised compact 10 mm angular gravel and grey/green sand with patches of orange sand and gravel throughout. Directly under **007** there was a 50 mm thick of compact gravel and mid brown sand, **008**. **008** comprised 80% 5 mm-10 mm angular stones and 20% sand.

Both **007** and **008** had built up against the W edge of **009** and extended through the W 600 mm of the trench.

**009** and **010** were seen in and at the bottom the section respectively, as at the S elevation.

## 2.6 Trench 6

This trench was located to the N of the entrance at “St Leonard’s Lodge” in an area of grassland W of an N-S road joining two roundabouts. The trench measured 1.35 m N-S, 600 mm in width and was up to 450 mm deep.

The upper deposit, **606**, comprised turf and mid brown silty clay topsoil and it measured up to 60 mm in depth.

Sealed by **606**, **601** was a fairly compact, 300 mm deep, deposit of mid grey slightly silty clay with 15%-20% stones measuring 30 mm by 20 mm on average.

**601** overlay **602**, fairly compact light-mid grey silty clay with a few small, 10 mm diameter, stones. **602** generally measured 60 mm in depth but it was 110 mm deep over **604**.

At the base of most of the trench, there was a well-compacted surface of small (40 mm by 20 mm on average) sub rectangular stones, **603**. Toward the N end there was

a 50 mm deep dip in the surface of **603**, **604**, that measured roughly 250 mm N-S and extended E-W across the trench.

E-W across the S 300 mm of the trench, **605** is a slightly uneven surface of (40 mm by 20 mm) stones with occasional gaps where a deposit of grey ash and coal can be seen.

## **2.7 Trench 7**

Trench 7 was located inside (W of) the Duddingston entrance to the park, 1.20 m E of the SE corner of the car park on the N side of the road. The trench measured 1.35 m N-S, 600 mm wide and 420 mm deep.

The upper deposit, **701**, was very loose and heavily rooted mid brown sand silt measuring 170 mm in depth.

Sealed by **701** and extending E-W across the trench slightly to the S of central, **704** was a fairly steep sided cut excavated to a depth of 250 mm but not bottomed. The upper fill of **704**, **702**, was a deposit of very loose light brown slightly silty sand the filled the whole depth of the cut at the S elevation. Against the Edge of **704**, **703** comprised green sand and gravel in a fairly even mix. Deposit **703** was seen to a maximum depth of 60 mm but it was not bottomed.

In the N part of the trench, sealed by **701**, there was a compact deposit of light-mid brown sandy clay with 10%-15% small (20 mm-60 mm diameter) sub rounded stones, **705**. A depth of 350 mm of **705** was removed but it was not bottomed.

## **3.0 DISCUSSION**

### **3.1 Trench 1**

**105**, seen in the bottom of the trench and continuing below the excavated level, may show the ground level prior to the recent alterations in phase 2. It is difficult to date this deposit; although the finds may suggest it is of 19<sup>th</sup>-century date, a ground surface here may have been *in situ* for a considerable period seeing only a very gradual trample build up. **105** seems to represent the top of secure archaeological deposits in this area.



Deposits **101-104** produced modern rubbish, including a piece of plastic wrapper recorded in the S section. The likelihood is that this material is landscaping material dating to around 1999 and the construction of Dynamic Earth.

The finds recovered from **001** point to a late 20<sup>th</sup> century date, and although there may have been a couple of earlier sherds of pottery, there was also material of a similar date from **004**.

### **3.2 Trench 2**

**203** was imported "Type 1" hardcore and **202** levelling material, both were imported for the construction of the current car park. **201** is the tarmac surface of the car park and it dates to very late in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

There were no finds from this trench.

### **3.3 Trench 3**

**103** is thought to be the *in situ* ground level, below the disturbances in this area. It is not possible to date this material as there were no datable finds (a couple of animal bones and a lump of iron) in the excavated area of it. The upper face of this deposit seems to represent the top of archaeologically sensitive material in this area.

The upper deposits **301** and **302** have probably been disturbed and may be part of landscaping undertaken when the car park to the N of the trench was constructed. The finds from **302** include 20<sup>th</sup> century ceramics and bottle glass.

### **3.4 Trench 4**

It was thought possible that **404**, at the W end of the trench, was a remnant of an earlier ash path and **405** part of the base for it to be laid onto. The excavation did not provide any dating evidence for this feature but it is worth noting that the top of **404** is 400 mm below the present ground surface, suggesting a considerable amount of landscaping since it went out of use.

**401**, **402** and **403** make up the landscaping and are thought most likely to date to the 20<sup>th</sup> century although there was no dating evidence recovered from these deposits. The only finds recovered were two animal bones from **403**.

### 3.5 Trench 5

N-S across the base of the centre of the trench **509** may be part of an early boundary wall but is more likely to be a fortuitous line in the bedrock. Elsewhere in the base of the trench **510** is the natural boulder clay. There was no excavation of **509** or **510**.

In the S section angular gravel and grey/green sand, **515** looked to be *in situ* remnant of an earlier path and stones **514** part of a base for it. The material used at **515** was like that seen in patches above and it seems unlikely to date to before the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In the NE corner of the trench it looked like **506** was build up and **505** a surface formed against the E side of **509** bringing the ground surface up to that level. To the W of **509**, **507** formed a level surface against these stones and **508** were bottoming for it. Once again the most likely date for these is in the 20<sup>th</sup> century although the only potsherd recovered from **507** may have dated to the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

**501** is recently disturbed topsoil and it seals a series of patchy deposits; **511**, **512**, **502**, **503** and **513**. These deposits seem to include material from a recent green sand and gravel path. The patchy nature of the deposits was at least partly due to the heavy rooting in this area but there also seems to have been some recent landscaping. The finds from **502** included 20<sup>th</sup> century pottery sherds.

### 3.6 Trench 6

**603** looks to be the surface of a road or path and **604** may be a wheel rut within it. At the S end of the trench **605** was a less consistent surface, with more gaps between the stones, perhaps indicating a path beside a road or a disturbed area of the same surface. The surface at **603/605** is c 350 mm below the present ground surface.

**602** was a fairly compact silty clay deposit that was 60 mm thick over **603**, this may have been gradual build-up over the surface.

**606** and **601** were thought to be build-up deposits that were probably imported when the current tarmac roads were put down. Three sherds of pottery from **601** suggested a 20<sup>th</sup> century date for that deposit.

### 3.7 Trench 7

The upper deposit, **701**, is recently disturbed topsoil and it produced 20<sup>th</sup> century finds.

**704** was a fairly steep that appeared to be associated with the recently constructed path to the S of the trench.

In the N part of the trench **705** may be the ground surface that was *in situ* prior to the recent disturbances. There were no datable artefacts recovered from **705**.

Tr.	Ctxt	Type	Description	#	Date
1	101	Oyster shell.		2	
1	101	Animal bone.	Complete animal long bone, measures 120mm long and 15mm thick. Probably from a sheep.	1	
1	101	Animal bone.	Fragment of a long bone, probably sheep.	1	
1	101	Animal bone.	End fragment of a long bone, cattle.	1	
1	101	Ceramic	White earthenware body sherds, undecorated.	3	Probably 20th century.
1	104	Ceramic	Base and body fragment of a red earthenware bowl with a 15mm high foot rim. Brown external and white internal glaze.	1	Probably 20th century.
1	104	Ceramic	Red earthenware bowl body sherd with a red external and white internal glaze.	1	Probably 20th century.
1	104	Ceramic	Red earthenware body sherd, blue floral decoration on the exterior.	1	Probably 20th century.
1	104	Ceramic	Large stoneware body sherd, probably from a bottle or jug.	1	18th/19th century.
1	104	Ceramic	Large fragment of red tile.	1	18th-20th century.
3	302	Ceramic	Red earthenware body sherd, pale yellow external glaze.	1	Probably 20th century.
3	302	Ceramic	Base and body sherd of a white earthenware bowl.	1	Probably 20th century.
3	302	Ceramic	White earthenware body sherd.	1	Probably 20th century.
3	302	Ceramic	Unglazed red earthenware body sherds.	2	Probably 20th century.
3	302	Glass	Sherd of bottle glass.	1	Probably 20th century.

Tr.	Ctxt	Type	Description	#	Date
3	303	Bone	Long bone of a small animal, dog? Rabbit?	1	
3	303	Bone	Long bone, probably from a sheep.	1	
3	303	Fe	Unidentified lump of iron.	1	
4	403	Bone	Animal long bones, probably sheep.	2	
5	502	Fe	Strip of iron with pins along either long edge. Some sort of strap.	1	Probably 20th century.
5	502	Fe	Strip of iron bent to a right angle. Modern fitting.	1	Probably 20th century.
5	502	Fe	Iron nail.	1	Probably 20th century.
5	502	Fe	Graphite with a spot of iron attached. Marker/pencil.	1	Probably 20th century.
5	502	Glass	Sherd of bottle glass.	1	Probably 20th century.
5	502	Ceramic	Undecorated white earthenware body sherds.	4	Probably 20th century.
5	502	Ceramic	Red earthenware rim sherds, flowerpot.	2	Probably 20th century.
5	502	Ceramic	Red earthenware rim fragment, brown external and white internal glaze.	1	Probably 20th century.
5	502	Ceramic	Red earthenware body fragment, brown glaze both external and on the interior.	1	Probably 20th century.
5	507	Ceramic	Small white earthenware basal sherd with splash of green glaze on the exterior.	1	Probably 19th century.
6	601	Ceramic	White earthenware body sherd.	1	Probably 20th century.
6	601	Ceramic	White earthenware body sherd with dark blue floral external decoration.	1	Probably 20th century.
6	601	Ceramic	Redware body sherd with dark red glaze on both faces.	1	Probably 20th century.
6	602	Ceramic	Stoneware body sherd with speckled red external decoration.	1	Possibly 18th century.
6	602	Ceramic	Large rim fragment of a stoneware jar.	1	Possibly 18th century.

Tr.	Ctxt	Type	Description	#	Date
7	701	Fe	Large fragment of a ceramic drain.	1	
7	701	Fe	Iron fragment, probably a nail.	1	
7	701	Fe	Bent nail.	1	
7	701	Ceramic	Bowl body sherd.	1	Late 20th century.
7	701	Ceramic	Rim fragment of a stoneware bowl.	1	Probably 20th century.
7	701	Ceramic	White earthenware body sherd, blue floral external decoration.	1	Probably 20th century.

## A2.0 APPENDIX 2: LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

#	Description	From	Date
1	S section of trench 1.	N	22/09/08
2	Location of trench 1.	E	22/09/08
3	N section of trench 2.	S	22/09/08
4	Location of trench 2.	E	22/09/08
5	N section of trench 3.	S	23/09/08
6	Location of trench 3.	NW	23/09/08
7	Opening trench 4.	SW	23/09/08
8	Base of trench 4 post excavation.	N	23/09/08
9	405 at the S end of trench 4.	N	23/09/08
10	Location of trench 4.		23/09/08
11	S section of trench 5.	N	24/09/08
12	Base of trench 5, 509 and 510.	N	24/09/08
13	N section of trench 5.	S	24/09/08
14	Location of trench 5.	E	24/09/08
15	Base of trench 6, 603.	SW	25/09/08
16	Base of trench 6, 603.	NW	25/09/08
17	E section of trench 6.	W	25/09/08

#	Description	From	Date
18	Possible wheel rut, 604.	SW	25/09/08
19	Detail of surface 603.	W	25/09/08
20	E section of trench 7.	W	26/09/08
21	E section of trench 7.	W	26/09/08
22	Location of trench 7.	SW	26/09/08
23	Cut 7004 in the base of trench 7.	W	26/09/08



HS sign no.	NGR	Trench no.
1.	NT 2825 7268	Trench 7
2.	NT 2695 7272	Trench 6
3.	NT 2657 7292	Trench 5
4.	NT 2654 7334	Trench 4
5.	NT 2676 7360	Trench 1
6.	NT 2701 7371	Trench 2
7.	NT 2699 7404	
8.	NT 2710 7401	
9.	NT 2725 7409	
10.	NT 2748 7414	
11.	NT 2771 7401	Trench 3
12.	NT 2816 7391	
13.	NT 2829 7348	



**Fig. 1 : Map showing location of signs 1-13 and trenches 1-7**