

Pirnhall Inn, Bannockburn, Stirling, Metal Detecting Survey:

Report

AOC Project 21751

27th January 2011



ARCHAEOLOGY

HERITAGE

CONSERVATION

Pirnhall Inn, Bannockburn, Stirling, Metal Detecting Survey: Data Structure Report

On Behalf of: Walsingham Planning on behalf of
Fletcher McNeil & Partners,
46 Manchester Road,
Chorlton,
Manchester
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National Grid Reference (NGR): NS 8023 8928

AOC Project No: 21751

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Abstract

This report represents the results of a Metal Detecting Survey undertaken by AOC Archaeology Group on the site of a proposed extension to the Premier Travel Inn, Pirnhall, Bannockburn, Stirling (Planning Application No.09/0057/FUL).

The survey was undertaken on a triangular plot of land, measuring approximately 500 m², lying to the east of the existing Premier Travel Inn, Pirnhall.

The metal detecting survey retrieved four artefacts, including three corroded iron objects associated with farming activity and a single copper button of post medieval date. No artefacts associated with the Battle of Bannockburn were discovered.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 AOC Archaeology Group was commissioned by Walsingham Planning, on behalf of their clients Fletcher McNeil & Partners Ltd, to undertake a programme of archaeological works consisting of a Metal Detecting Survey prior to an extension to the Premier Travel Inn, Pirnhall, Bannockburn, Stirling (Planning Application No.09/0057/FUL).
- 1.1.2 The proposed survey area measures approximately 500 m² and lies within the administrative area of Stirling Council, which is advised on archaeological matters by Ms Lorna Main, Archaeology Officer. The development area is located within the area of search for the Battle of Bannockburn, as identified in the 2005 report by the Battlefield Trust (Foard & Partida 2005). Ms Main therefore required archaeological works consisting of a Metal Detecting Survey in accord with *Scottish Planning Policy* (Scottish Government February 2010) and *Planning Advice Note 42* (SOEnd 1994). The survey sought to determine the location, character, condition, quality and date of any archaeologically significant metal artefacts within the Survey Area.
- 1.1.3 A *Written Scheme of Investigation* (AOC 2010) outlining the methodology to be used during the Survey was agreed with Ms Main in advance of the Metal Detecting being undertaken.

1.1 Location

- 1.2.1 The proposed development site (centred NGR: NS 8023 8928) is located immediately to the east of the existing Pirnhall Premier Travel Inn car park, Bannockburn, Stirling. The site is located within an agricultural field currently in use as pasture.

1.2 Archaeological background

- 1.3.1 Stirling was identified as a king's burgh in several charters early in the reign of David I (1124-53). The castle rock in Stirling no doubt offered a secure site, its location physically and visually dominating the main north/south routeway in eastern Scotland. It overlooked the neck of a narrow isthmus of land bridging difficult marshland which was not drained until the 18th century. In 1226 Alexander II granted Stirling the official right to hold a market every Saturday and maintain a merchant guild. Regarded as the 'gateway to the Highlands', Stirling was a place of strategic and political importance and it is of no surprise that it was the location for some of the most significant battles in Scotland's Wars of Independence (Gourlay & Turner 1978, 1-3). Indeed it is thought that at least half of the decisive battles of Scotland have been fought within sight of the Castle walls (Cant and Lindsay, 1948).
- 1.3.2 The site is located within the area of search for the Battle of Bannockburn, as identified in the 2005 report by the Battlefield Trust (Foard & Partida 2005).

- 1.3.3 Following the defeat of the Scots at Falkirk (1297) an English garrison lay in every Scottish castle (Christison 1960:5). In 1306 Robert the Bruce was crowned Robert I, King of Scotland and in the years immediately after he began the process of capturing and destroying those castles. In 1313 his brother Edward Bruce agreed with the Commander of the English garrison at Stirling Castle that if the castle was not relieved by the following year, the castle would submit to Robert I. As this was the last major castle still in English hands, this was a challenge that Edward II of England could not ignore.
- 1.3.4 The Battle of Bannockburn was fought between Robert I and Edward II on 23-24 June 1314. Edward II led a force, estimated by Lynch at some 15,000-20,000 men, against the 8,000 strong army of Robert, including 500 cavalry (1992:124). Alternative estimates of the forces involved abound but none deny the numerical superiority of the English army. There are no contemporary eyewitness accounts of the battle and we rely on sources dating from the 14th and 15th century to provide us with evidence for the details of the battle and its location.
- 1.3.5 On 23rd June the English army arrived before the Bannockburn ford. Bruce had rightly anticipated that they would arrive via the old Roman road and had set his positions accordingly, his division lining the road under the cover of forest in close proximity to where the Borestone now stands. The main bulk of the English forces crossed the Bannockburn and took up position facing the Scots. Several skirmishes occurred whilst the two armies faced one another including an unsuccessful attempt on Robert I himself by Henry De Bohun but full battle did not ensue. It is this area of the first minor scenes of the battle that the Borestone and national trust heritage centre commemorate. Following the skirmishes of 23rd June the English retired and made camp on the carse, some distance from the Scottish line. On the morning of 24th the English crossed the gorge at the Bannockburn, the Scots advanced and the battle ensued.
- 1.3.6 There exist four widely acknowledged contenders for the location of the final battle as summarized in a report by Watson and Anderson (2000):
- a) The Borestone, now marked by a visitor centre and statue. Chartershall and Park Mill are proposed as the points at which the English army crossed the Bannockburn.
 - b) On the dryfield of Balquhiddelock. The Bannockburn gorge between Beaton's Mill and Skeoch Mill is possibly the 'ditch' described in primary sources (Miller, 1932).
 - c) On the carse, near the confluence of the Forth and the Bannockburn, probably in the vicinity of Upper Taylorton/Muirton (Mackenzie, 1932).
 - d) On the carse in a triangle of much drier ground formed by the confluence of the Bannockburn and the Pelstream (Christison, 1959).
- 1.3.7 Despite a programme of trial-trenching, geophysics and metal detecting undertaken by Tony Pollard and GUARD (2002) as part of a television series, few artefacts from the

battlefield site dating from 1314 are known and to date consist merely of a stirrup, possible sword hilt and an iron arrowhead found on National Trust land in 2004. There is no record of previous archaeological works being conducted within the immediate vicinity of the development area.

2 OBJECTIVES

2.1 The objectives of the survey were:

- i)* to determine the location, character, condition, quality and date of any archaeologically significant metal artefacts within the defined Metal Detecting Survey Area;
- ii)* To report on the results of the Metal Detecting Survey.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Metal Detecting Survey

3.1.1 The Metal Detecting Survey was undertaken by an experienced archaeological detectorist using Whites M1 metal detectors (a primary detector and smaller unit for detailed location).

3.1.2 The metal detecting area was walked in transects 2 m wide. This allowed for a degree of overlap ensuring no part of the survey area was undetected. The transects were marked out prior to the start of the survey. All finds were surveyed with a Garmin GPS unit with the exception of obviously modern objects such as ring pulls and drinks cans.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The Metal Detecting Survey was undertaken on 17th January 2011. Weather conditions were generally fair, and good archaeological visibility was present throughout the entire survey. The following should be read in conjunction with the data presented in Appendix 1 and Figures 1 and 2.

4.1.2 The survey revealed a stony topsoil of friable loam up to 0.30 m in depth.

4.1.3 The metal detecting survey identified a large number of positive hits unfortunately almost all of these were modern items of rubbish, mostly ring-pulls and drinks cans. As the survey area is adjacent to a Public House such finds were not unexpected.

- 4.1.4 The metal detecting survey also retrieved three iron objects consisting of a nail, partial plate and large staple. These were all corroded and would appear to be related to modern farming activity. Finally a single small copper button of probable post-medieval date was also recovered.

5 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 No significant archaeological metal artefacts were identified during the Metal Detecting Survey.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 No further archaeological works are considered necessary within this portion of the proposed site extension. This recommendation will require confirmation by Ms Main on behalf of Stirling Council.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

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**Pirnhall Inn, Bannockburn, Stirling,
Metal Detecting:
Survey Data Structure Report**

Section 2: Appendices

APPENDIX 1: Small Finds Register

Find Number	Description	Material
SF 1	Nail	Iron
SF 2	Machine Plate	Iron
SF 3	Staple	Iron
SF 4	Button	Copper

APPENDIX 2: Discovery and Excavation in Scotland Report

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Stirling Council
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME	Pirnhall Inn, Bannockburn, Stirling Metal Detecting Survey
PROJECT CODE:	AOC 21751
PARISH:	Stirling
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Rob Engl
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	AOC Archaeology Group
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Archaeological Metal Detecting Survey
NMRS NO(S)	N/A
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	N/A
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	N/A
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	NS 8023 8928
START DATE (this season)	17 th January 2011
END DATE (this season)	17 th January 2011
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	N/A
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	<p>This report represents the results of a Metal Detecting Survey undertaken by AOC Archaeology Group on the site of a proposed extension to the Premier Travel Inn, Pirnhall, Bannockburn, Stirling. The survey was undertaken on a triangular plot of land, measuring approximately 500 m², lying to the east of the existing Premier Travel Inn, Pirnhall (NGR NS 8023 8928).</p> <p>The metal detecting survey retrieved four artefacts, including three corroded iron objects associated with farming activity and a single copper button of post medieval date. No artefacts associated with the Battle of Bannockburn were discovered.</p>
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	---
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