



**Traprain Law, East Lothian:  
Report on Archaeological Works for installation of water  
trough**

East Lothian Council Archaeology Service  
2<sup>nd</sup> October 2019  
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## **1 Introduction**

In May 2018, East Lothian Council Archaeology Service (ELCAS) monitored a metal-detecting survey undertaken across a small area of ground on the eastern flank of Traprain Law, East Lothian (Scheduled Monument SM755), prior to the installation of a new water trough. Subsequent archaeological monitoring (watching brief) was undertaken during the excavation of the foundation trench required for the installation of the new water trough, and an associated water toby.

The archaeological works were undertaken on behalf of East Lothian Council, the owners and managers of the site, under a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) approved by Historic Environment Scotland (HES) as part of the Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) for the works. SMC was granted by HES in March 2018 (Case ID 300024624). All archaeological work was conducted in accordance with standard ELCAS procedures and to the Codes of Conduct and relevant Standards for archaeological work published by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA, 2014a; 2014b).

## **2 Background**

Traprain Law is a volcanic hill located to the east of Haddington, East Lothian (Figure 1). It is the location of one of the largest hillforts in Scotland, which contains evidence for occupation and use dating from the Neolithic, Bronze Age, later Iron Age/Roman and Medieval periods. The site is also a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for its grassland vegetation. Conservation management of the Law has involved the introduction of 13 Exmoor ponies in 2013, whose grazing activity helps to maintain and enhance the grassland. Their activity has also helped to increase the visibility of low relief archaeological features present on the Law.

As part of the ongoing programme of conservation management on Traprain Law, East Lothian Council Ranger Service and ELCAS proposed the installation of a new water trough on the eastern flank of the Law (Figure 1). The new trough will provide an additional water source for the Exmoor ponies, encouraging more extensive grazing on the eastern and southern sides of the Law, and aiding in the grassland management here. The introduction of an additional water source will also hopefully relieve pressure on the summit pond, an important Iron Age feature containing sensitive archaeological deposits, which is now suffering erosion due to pony footfall.



Figure 1: Site location for trough base and hole for new water toby (purple star)

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### **3 Objectives**

The objectives of the archaeological works were to:

- Ensure that no ground-breaking work was undertaken beyond the area indicated within the SMC;
- Conduct an appropriate programme of archaeological work (metal-detecting survey and watching brief) prior to and during the excavation of the trench for the new water trough; and,
- Identify and record any remains of archaeological significance which may have been affected during the installation of the new water trough.

### **4 Methods**

Prior to any excavation taking place on site, a representative from the East Lothian Council Ranger Service marked out an area for the location of the water trough. A rectangular area measuring 0.8m by 1.8m was marked out on the ground with line-marker spray.

This marked out area was then subject to metal –detecting survey prior to excavation.

Subsequent excavation of the trench for the water trough base and the additional hole for the water toby was undertaken by hand, within the previously marked out rectangular area. All ground-breaking work was monitored under constant archaeological supervision.

Spoil from the excavated areas was placed in the vicinity of the excavation areas, and was examined throughout the excavation for artefacts.

All deposits encountered during the course of the excavation works were recorded stratigraphically, whether archaeological or not, and were recorded on standard ELCAS pro forma context sheets. A pictorial record was made (plans, sections and digital colour photographs) with site drawings made at 1:10 (section) and 1:20 (plan).

Any finds recovered were placed and stored appropriately, in clearly labelled finds bags by context.

The approximate location of the excavation areas were recorded using a Garmin hand-held GPSMAP 64s (accurate to 3m), and their position in relation to known features mapped on current OS mapping, recorded on the post-excitation plan.

The location of the excavation areas for the water trough base and the hole for the associated water toby are shown on Figure 1; Figures 2-4 are photographs showing the excavation areas, and Figure 5 is a photograph showing the newly installed trough and toby. Numbers in bold refer to context numbers, a list and detailed description of which can be found in Appendix 1.

### **5 Results**

#### ***Metal-detecting survey***

The metal detecting survey was undertaken across the marked out area on 19<sup>th</sup> May and monitored by ELCAS. Gary Craig, an experienced metal detectorist using an XP Deus PRO metal detector, conducted the survey.

A small section of modern fencing wire was identified in the north-eastern corner of the survey area. No finds of archaeological significance were identified during the survey.

### ***Watching-brief***

The watching brief was undertaken on the 24<sup>th</sup> May 2018. A small rectangular area measuring 1m by 0.7m by 0.15m deep was excavated for the foundation base of the trough; immediately adjacent and to the south, a sub-square area measuring c. 0.4m by 0.35m by 0.4m deep was excavated for the installation of a new water toby required for the operation of the new trough (Figures 2-4).

Deposits across the excavated areas comprised a dry, friable, stony sandy silt topsoil (**001**), 0.12m-0.2m deep, which overlay a subsoil (**002**), likely natural soil formation from hillwash etc., comprising a mid-orange brown sandy clay silt, measuring at least 0.2m deep in the area excavated for the new water toby. Natural geology was not reached in either excavation area.

A single piece of 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century glazed ceramic water pipe was recovered from the topsoil (**001**) in the trench for the water trough base. No other archaeological finds, features or deposits were identified.



Figure 2: Post-excitation of trench for trough base and hole for new water toby





Figure 3: Post-excitation of trench for trough base



Figure 4: Post-excitation of hole for new water toby



Figure 5: After water trough base and new toby installation



## 6 Subsequent works for water supply

Due to problems locating a buried piped water supply near to the trough, East Lothian Council's Landscape & Countryside Service proposed that a 100L clear plastic water storage tank be placed on approximately five wooden pallets, located adjacent to the new trough on its northern side so as not to block the farm access gate. The tank would be connected to the trough using the existing pipework (or additional above ground piping of the same specification as that already used for the trough).

Consultation with HES was undertaken regarding the proposed water tank on the 15<sup>th</sup> February 2019, and HES confirmed on 20<sup>th</sup> February that they were content with the proposals and that no additional SMC would be required.

The tank was subsequently installed in March 2019 (Figure 6).



Figure 6: Water tank and trough following installation

## 7 Conclusion

No significant archaeological finds, features or deposits were identified during the course of the archaeological works undertaken prior to, and during, the excavation of a trench for the installation of a new water trough base and a small additional hole for an associated water toby.

## 8 References

CIfA (2014a) *Code of Conduct*, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, University of Reading, Reading

CIfA (2014b) *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief*, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, University of Reading, Reading



## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Context Register

Context No.	Description and Interpretation
001	Topsoil: loose, friable, mid-yellow brown sandy silt with small angular gravel inclusions, 30-40% and occasional-frequent medium angular stones, 0.12m-0.2m deep. Modern twine identified within topsoil and one fragment of 20 <sup>th</sup> century ceramic glazed water pipe.
002	Subsoil: loose to firm mid-orange-brown, fine, slightly sandy clay silt with occasional roots and medium sub-angular to sub-rounded stones at least 0.2m deep. A single sub-angular sandstone cobble (not local quarried stone) noted.

### Appendix 2: Photo Register

Photo No.	Digital Photo No.	Direction Facing	Description
1	2728	ENE	Post-excavation shot of trench for trough base
2	2729	ENE	WSW facing section of trench for trough base
3	2730	NNW	Post-excavation shot of trench for trough base and hole for new water toby
4	2731	SSE	Post-excavation shot of trench for trough base and hole for new water toby
5	2732	ENE	Post-excavation shot of hole for new water toby
6	2733	ENE	WSW facing section of hole for new water toby
7	2734	W	General shot after water trough base and new toby installation

### Appendix 3: Drawing Register

Drawing No.	Description	Section/Plan	Scale
1	WSW facing section of trench for water trough base and new water toby	S	1:10
2	Post-excavation plan of trench for water trough base and new water toby	P	1:20
3	Plan of marked out area for metal-detecting survey	P	1:20

Appendix 4: Discovery and Excavation in Scotland Entry

<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY:</b>	East Lothian Council
<b>PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:</b>	Traprain Law New Water Trough
<b>PROJECT CODE:</b>	n/a
<b>PARISH:</b>	Prestonkirk
<b>NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR(S):</b>	Hélène Gray
<b>NAME OF ORGANISATION:</b>	East Lothian Council Archaeology Service
<b>TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:</b>	Metal Detector Survey and Watching Brief
<b>NMRS NO(S):</b>	NT57SE1.0
<b>SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):</b>	n/a
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS:</b>	n/a
<b>NGR</b> (2 letters, 6 figures)	NT 5856 7488
<b>START DATE</b> (this season)	19 <sup>th</sup> May 2019
<b>END DATE</b> (this season)	24 <sup>th</sup> May 2019
<b>PREVIOUS WORK</b> (incl. <i>DES</i> ref.)	None
<b>MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION:</b> (May include information from other fields)	<p>In May 2018, East Lothian Council Archaeology Service monitored a metal-detecting survey undertaken across a small area of ground on the eastern flank of Traprain Law, East Lothian (Scheduled Monument SM755), prior to the installation of a new water trough. Subsequent archaeological monitoring (watching brief) was undertaken during the excavation of the foundation trench required for the installation of the new water trough, and an associated water toby.</p> <p>The archaeological works were undertaken on behalf of East Lothian Council, the owners and managers of the site, under a Written Scheme of Investigation approved by Historic Environment Scotland (HES) as part of the Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) for the works. SMC was granted by HES in March 2018 (Case ID 300024624).</p> <p>No significant archaeological finds, features or deposits were identified during the course of the archaeological works</p>
<b>PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:</b>	n/a
<b>SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:</b>	East Lothian Council
<b>CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:</b>	n/a
<b>ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	East Lothian Council Archaeology Service, John Muir House, East Lothian Council, Court Street, Haddington, EH41 3HA
<b>EMAIL ADDRESS:</b>	heritage@eastlothian.gov.uk
<b>ARCHIVE LOCATION</b> (intended/deposited)	Archive to be deposited in NRHE.