

**Site**      **Newark Castle**

**N.G.R**      NS 328 745

### **Project Description**

A Watching Brief was maintained during the excavation of a pit for a sewage tank on the line of an existing service pipe. The area concerned was a grassy strip just outside and to the N of the barmekin wall, and to the S of a sea wall. The trench measured c. 2 m N-S x 2.5 m E-W and was up to 2.6 m in depth.

The Watching Brief took place at the end of January 1996.

### **Report**

The site lies on the S shore of the Clyde, a little to the E of Port Glasgow, which was itself begun in the later 17th century.

Newark Castle comprises a late 15th-century tower-house, built by George Maxwell, with a late 16th-century addition by Patrick Maxwell, transforming it into a Renaissance palace. The 15th-century gatehouse and part of the barmkin wall remain, attached to the doo'cot. The castle and its grounds were sold in 1614, and remained occupied until the early 19th century. Early 19th-century prints within the castle show it standing on a rocky promontory, jutting into the Clyde. Its originally strategic position is now lost due to land reclamation in the Clyde estuary, but its former importance is highlighted by the fact that James IV saw fit to stay here in 1495, en route to the Western Isles.

### **Excavations (Fig. 1)**

Turf (F001) sealed the service pipe trench and fill (F002, cut F003), and topsoil deposits (F004), which contained much demolition and industrial refuse. Beneath this general topsoil level was a layer of dark pink clay with much stonework (F005), the surface of which had been cut by the service pipe. F005 was exposed throughout the entire trench, but no features were visible within it. F005 may have been relatively modern infill behind the sea wall. A Penny of 1919 was recovered from F002, overlying this material.

F005 was removed the following day, by machine. It was >1.20 m in thickness, and was seen to contain large stones (>0.70 m), with occasional fragments of coal, slate and ceramic drain. Beneath F005 was F006, an old beach deposit of 0.15 m depth. This in turn overlay a clean dark pink clay, at least 0.75 m deep, and representing natural estuarine clay deposits.

### **Interpretation**

The trench deposits reflected relatively recent activity, probably dating to the erection of the sea wall, which contained concrete in its make-up. The 1919 Penny in overlying deposits provides a *terminus ante quem*.

## *SOUTHERN REGION CALL-OUT CONTRACTS*

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### **Finds**

<u>Context</u>	<u>Finds</u>
002	1 x 1919 Penny 2 x clay pipe stems 9 x sherds misc. ceramics 1 x Cu alloy object
005	Ceramic drain pipe fragments - discarded

### **Contexts**

<u>Context</u>	<u>Description</u>
001	Topsoil c. 0.15 m thick
002	Fill of pipe trench
003	Cut for service pipe
004	Lower topsoil 0.30 m thick
005	Infill behind sea wall, 1.20 m thick
006	Old beach deposit, 0.15 m thick
007	Estuarine clay, at least 0.75 m thick