1   INTRODUCTION

1.1   BACKGROUND

Edinburgh Archaeological Field Society (EAFS) was requested in 1988 by Nicholas M McQ Holmes and by his successors, Mark Collard and John A Lawson of the City of Edinburgh Council Archaeology Service (CECAS), to examine and evaluate the area between the northern defences of the Roman fort and bathhouse which lie in ground owned by the City of Edinburgh Council.

The objectives of the excavation were to:

i)   to establish the existence of any Roman period deposits, structures or features;

ii)   to seek traces of old Cramond village;

iii)   to record the level of the old ground surface.

As the initial trench necessitated locating the N rampart of the fort, an Ancient Monument, Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) was sought from Historic Scotland and granted in 1990. In 1999, following enlargement of the Scheduled Area in 1998, SMC was again sought and granted.

The excavation was carried between 1988 and 2001 by some 120 members of the Edinburgh Archaeological Field Society, an amateur organisation, under the overall direction of the City Archaeologist and under the immediate supervision of Valerie E Dean. As this was done on a purely voluntary basis, work normally took place only on two days per week between Easter and November. This, naturally, led to a somewhat protracted excavation.

The excavation also acted as an introduction to archaeology for a large number of Society members, many of whom went on to gain further experience elsewhere. It also attracted a considerable amount of interest locally and visitors were anxious to be kept informed of developments.

1.2   LOCATION

The site is located between NT 1898 7692 and NT 1900 7701, to the N of Cramond Roman fort and SE of the village of Cramond, in the parish of that name (fig 1).

The local rocks are calciferous sandstones with dolerite intrusions, the latter breaking down to form a rich brown, fertile soil. Layers of boulder clay cover these; in places, this yellow, sandy clay creates a high water table. Excavations in 1978 in the former walled garden of Cramond House, to the E of the fort, located the water table at only 1.5m below the modern ground surface (Holmes 2003, 28).

Cramond Roman fort sits E of the mouth of the River Almond on the S side of the Firth of Forth (fig 2). The site slopes gently from S to N. The fort's N rampart is situated some 70m back from the edge of the 15m, late-glacial, raised beach, with its W flank protected by the river gorge. The bathhouse is located some 100m to the N of the fort, on the terrace of the lower, post-glacial, raised beach and is cut into the steep back slope below the higher shoreline. East of the fort lies a large annexe (fig 3) (Gooder 2003a).

The present Cramond village lies at the rivermouth with the Kirk, a short distance to the S, lying within the fort and situated immediately over the *principia*. (fig 4) From the village, Cramond Glebe Road runs in a southerly direction, cutting diagonally across the western side of the fort. A substantial part of the village formerly lay E of Glebe Road, with the original road, Old Street, running E of the Kirk; buildings may well have extended as far as the Kirk, to judge from comments by Rae (Rae 1962, 307).

1.3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Since a considerable amount of information is available on the history of Cramond, this has been used as a basis for the overall site phasing, as given below:

Phase 1 : Prehistoric

A Mesolithic presence on the Cramond raised beach has been known of since the 1970s (Charles Hoy, pers comm). A Bronze Age stone cist was found during building operations at 93 Whitehouse Road (Collard 1995, 53). Ard marks, of probable Iron Age date, were found underlying the Roman fort rampart during excavations in the Manse garden (Holmes 2003, 7). When the Romans arrived in Lothian the native tribes were the Votadini, or Gododdin, whose centre was the large fort on Traprain Law in East Lothian. They spoke an early form of Welsh, from which Cramond derived its name - *caer amon* translating as *the fort on the river* (Almond).

Phase 2 : Roman

No evidence has been found so far to confirm a first-century occupation at Cramond. The military presence would seem to have commenced around AD 140 as part of the Antonine Wall frontier system. Whether the fort remained partially occupied after the main Antonine withdrawal in the early 160s is uncertain, but it may have been abandoned in the 180s and 190s AD. It was fully back in use by the commencement of the main Severan campaign in AD 208 and probably not finally abandoned until cAD 215 (Holmes 2003, 156). Pottery from excavations in 2008 support the theory that there had been periodic reuse of the fort until as late as AD 240-250 (John Lawson, pers comm).

Phase 3 : Anglian and Medieval

The fact that Cramond Kirk is built directly on the site of the fort's headquarters building (fig 9), which would have been the most impressive structure remaining after Roman withdrawal, is no accident and suggests that this would have been the centre of early Christian activity. The lower part of the tower contains a number of stones displaying the characteristic Roman diagonal tooling and several very large rectangular blocks which no doubt were sourced from the *principia*.

Re-examination of the human remains found during the 1976 excavations of the Roman bathhouse provided C14 dates ranging from AD c420 to c655 (John Lawson, pers comm). Isotope analysis has indicated that most of the 8 or 9 adults were local to the area.

Excavations opposite the Kirk at 23 Cramond Glebe Road (Lawson 1995, 53) have confirmed occupation there, with subsequent C14-dating providing a date of AD 650-950 (Lawson 2001b, 124; Collard & Lawson, forthcoming). Artefacts dating to the 8th to 10th centuries have been found close to the Kirk, such as an enamelled mount, possibly of ecclesiastical origin, (McDonald 1974, 316 no 18; Bourke & Close-Brooks 1989, 230-5) and a finger ring inscribed with runic characters, hinting at a Viking presence (Colvin 1872, 156; Stephens 1872, 458). Human remains were noted during re-excavation in 2008 of the fort granary, adjacent to the E wall of the kirkyard (Cook & Clements 2008,

14); these yielded an early date of c750-950 AD (John Lawson, pers comm).

In 1179 grain was being milled at the Cockle, or Cramond, mill when it was in possession of the Abbot of Inchcolm (Easson & Macdonald 1938, xxi).

Figure 9 : Cramond Kirk in the centre of the Roman Fort

Figure 10 : Cramond Tower (restored)

The Bishops of Dunkeld are believed to have owned land in Cramond in the 12th century (Dalrymple 1705, 397; Kelham 1982) but the first documented reference to the existence of Cramond Tower (fig 10) was dated 1409 (Wood 1794, 45). Evidence for medieval occupation is provided by the Kirk's location, Cramond Tower and the existence of the village of Nether Cramond, although very little is understood about the size or location of the early village. Medieval activity was evident in the remains of the Roman bathhouse (Holmes 2003, 26) and pottery sherds of 12th- to 13th-century type have been widely found in Cramond, although no structures have been located.

Phase 4 : Post-medieval building, occupation

The 17th-century village of Nether Cramond is known to have stretched from the river mouth almost to the Kirk and over the years had no doubt replaced earlier structures. It would have suffered during Hertford's assault on coastal villages and again during Cromwell's campaigns. The Inglis family became owners of the Tower in 1622 and subsequently built Cramond House (fig 11) in 1680 as their residence (Wood 1794, 44-47). Roy's map of 1747-55 shows village houses extending up to the Kirk, with small fields between them and the River Almond on the W (fig 5). A later map (Leslie 1821) shows another group of small fields or gardens to the E of the houses in the lower part of the village.

Phase 5 : 18th-century demolition, landscaping and boundary wall construction

Landscaping of the grounds was being done on a grand scale (Crichton 1996, 37) with an avenue of trees aligned on North Berwick Law being one of the features (Roy 1747-55). The growth of the riverside iron mills from the mid-18th century until their decline in the mid-19th century would have had a major impact on the population and on the amenity of the area (Cadell 1973). The original road into Nether Cramond passed between Cramond House and the Kirk (fig 6) and, in the 1770s, Sir John Inglis, the laird, negotiated a land exchange with the Kirk which enabled him to close the road (Crowther 1965, 3-5, 46). Any houses within the area were demolished around this time and

parkland created.

Traffic was diverted to what is now Cramond Glebe Road and the south and west drives would have been created at about this time. The village green became part of his park and a northern boundary wall closed off the former village street.   An early 19th-century plan of Cramond (Bauchop 1815) (fig 7) and one made six years later (Leslie 1821) (fig 8) show the remaining houses and the truncated Old Street**.**

Phase 6a : 19th-century, demolition

Figure 11 : Cramond House, east front

Figure 12 : Kennels interior, showing remains of buildings

These buildings in the lower part of the village were removed
in a second phase of demolition by Lady Torphichen, Sir John's daughter. The Ordnance Survey Name Book (OSNB 1852, 57) comments that:

> '.... the population and size of the village has been greatly decreased, especially about the year 1826 when no less than 36 houses were razed to the ground owing principally to the much annoyance they gave to the proprietor of Cramond House, about which they were in considerable numbers.'

The 'annoyance' may have been that caused by local nail-making, a cottage-industry offshoot of the riverside iron works (Skinner & Cadell 1996, 58). Comparison with the Cramond Estate plan of 1860/72 (Carfrae & Clouston 1860/Carfrae & Belfrage 1872) shows the disappearance of a large part of the village.

Phase 6b : Building, estate improvements
A courtyard building, seen in the above plan, has been known variously as hen houses, byre and dog kennels (Craigie-Halkett-Inglis 2001, 270) (fig 12); it first appears in 1853 on the 1st edition OS map (Edinburghshire sheet 1) and is situated in an area formerly occupied by village gardens or plots. The adjacent field became known as Cow Park (Craigie Halkett Inglis 2001, 269) .

Phase 7 : 20th-century activity : World War II allotments, car park clearance, bathhouse and other excavations
This area may well have remained as pasture until comparatively recently, with possibly the only cultivation being

small plots during and after World War II (CUCAP 1948). Since 1960, the ground has been the property of the City of Edinburgh Council and is now open ground, bordered by a mixture of mature trees and saplings, and crossed by a footpath in public use. The public car park was created in 1975, leading to the discovery of the Roman bathhouse.

1.4   ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Previous work in this area had been undertaken by Alan and Viola Rae between 1954 and 1966 (Rae & Rae 1974, 163-224), when the position of the fort was established and a portion of its interior investigated. At the commencement of that excavation, a trench was dug for 255 feet (75m) perpendicular to the N wall of the churchyard and extended 'into a field from which the Roman surface proved to have been ploughed away (fig 8); no ditch was found'. (Rae & Rae 1974, 165-7). Later, the line of the N rampart and the position of the N gateway were located; traces of some of these trenches are still identifiable and can be related to their plan of the excavation (Rae 1962, 305-8).

In 1975 Holmes opened two trenches in an endeavour to locate a) the N ditch of the fort, and b) the roadway exiting from the N gateway (fig 8). In the event, neither ditch nor road was located (Holmes 2003, 3, Site II). Later work by Holmes established that the inner ditch on the E side of the fort extended N of the line of the N rampart as located by Rae (Holmes 2003, 3, site VI). This suggested that continuation of this ditch N to the Forth could have bounded an annexe contained between the fort, the River Almond gorge and the shore of the Forth.

In 1975, the present public car park was created, during which process the Roman bathhouse was discovered (Holmes 2003, 12-27). The soil removed from this area had been spread for c30m up the face of the slope above and to the S of the bathhouse, to a depth of 1m. A flat area between it and the slope was reserved for the site hut and working area. That excavation was covered with plastic sheeting and partially backfilled in 1976, pending future consolidation and display.

In 1986, during creation of a footpath between Cramond House drive and the public car park, EAFS members were asked to investigate the site of a large stone slab (fig 8). A brief account is included in the following report.

During the EAFS excavation, Trenches D and E produced evidence of a Mesolithic settlement dated to around 8500 BC. Excavation of these contexts was undertaken in 1995 by CECAS (Lawson 2001a, 124; Lawson & Saville, forthcoming).

1.5   METHODOLOGY

The excavation commenced at the location of the north rampart of the Roman fort, as identified by the Raes (Rae & Rae 1974, fig 3), and terminated when the Roman bath house was reached. The base line was set out parallel to and 5m W of the stone-lined drain which ran along the W side of the roadway exiting the N gate of the fort (fig 13). The first trench was cut 2m W of the base line and ran in a northerly direction. Subsequent trenches continued in this line (fig 8).

Figure 13 : Setting out the base line
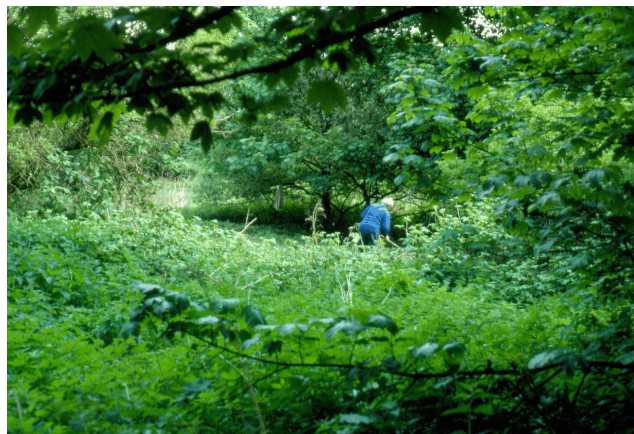
For ease of recording, site north was used; this was 19^0 to the east of grid north.

In all, eight trenches, A to H, were hand dug. Their nominal width was 2m, but in trenches F and G it was necessary to widen these by one to two metres to examine particular features. They varied from 4.5m to 38m long, giving an overall length of 105m. As the excavation progressed, it was necessary to step the trenches gradually 10m to the W in order to avoid disturbance caused by the mid-19th century construction of a kennels building.

Each trench was excavated down to the subsoil and, in some instances, into it. They were backfilled on completion and natural plant regeneration has taken place.

The above-mentioned drain was tidied up and recorded, as also were Holmes' 1975 trenches, one of which crossed the line of the drain.

1.6   FUNDING

The excavation was sponsored by the City of Edinburgh Council Archaeology Service with funding in kind and project management advice. Equipment and conservation facilities were also provided by CECAS. Funding for specialist reports is being sought; to date, grants have been received from the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, the Russell Trust, Awards for All and the Robert Kiln Trust. The Roman pottery report was funded by EAFS. Specialist reports yet to be done include lithics, metalwork, medieval and later pottery and items of stone. Illustration of the worked bone and metallic artefacts was by Craig Williams, Headland Archaeology. Further illustrations will be required.

1.7   DISPOSAL OF FINDS AND RECORDS

Finds recovered totalled 38,519 and, with the exceptions noted below, they have been stored by CECAS pending their examination by specialists. However, a copper alloy thimble of possible 15th-century date SF176 was mislaid during reorganisation of CEC stores. The vast numbers of shells (16,931) were identified and recorded and some 400 retained, the remainder being deposited in the N end of Holmes' Trench IIB. Some 1,200 of the 2,748 of the pantile fragments were similarly recorded and disposed of. This is shown in the finds' records for each trench. A quantity of the hypocaust tile fragments was retained for educational purposes at Cramond Heritage Trust's Maltings Interpretation Centre. Ultimately, the finds will be dealt with by the Finds Disposal Panel. Site records will be deposited with the National Monuments Record of Scotland.

1.8   ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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