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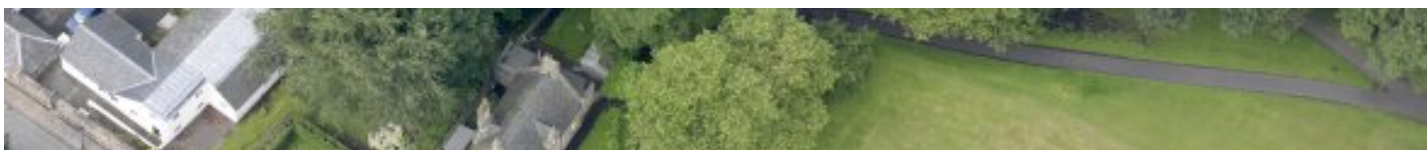
NATIONAL RECORD OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT



## Archaeology InSites

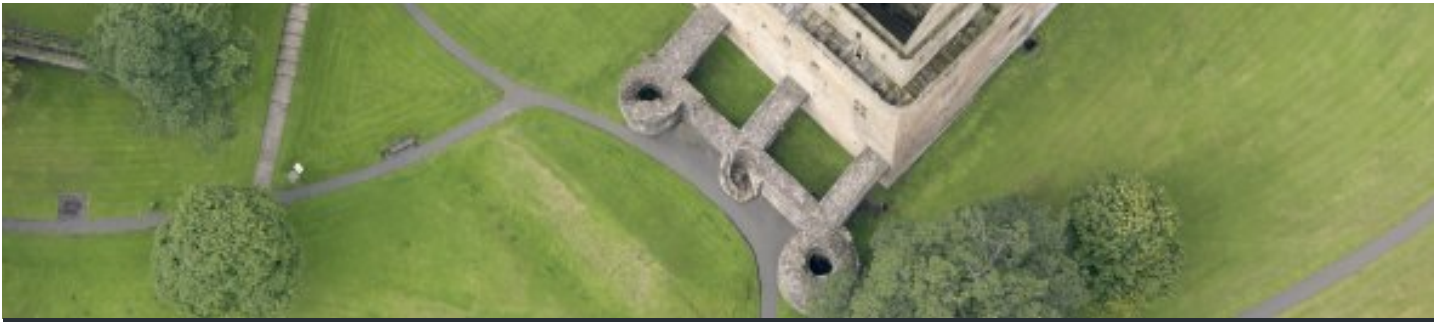


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## Linlithgow Palace - Linlithgow, West Lothian





## A Princely Palace and a Palace Puzzle

*Linlithgow Palace sits on a promontory, overlooking Linlithgow Loch, the largest natural freshwater loch in the area. It has a quadrangular layout, the four ranges dating to different periods. At the centre is one of the oldest working fountains in the country. Around the interior walls, magnificent carved stones give further insight to the lavish structure that played host to royal parties, theatre and even parliament.*

*The traditional narrative of Linlithgow Palace states that it was begun in the 1420s by James I of Scotland. A royal manor, presumed to have been made of timber, had existed since the 1100s but was destroyed by fire in 1424. This gave James the opportunity to build a new residence, designed to emulate those royal buildings he had seen during his time in England and France. The grand east entrance, with its magnificent royal coat of arms and statues (now lost) proclaimed James's status for all to see. His successors would gradually add to it, until it took on the quadrangular form we know today.*

*The trouble is, the traditional narrative is not fully supported by the evidence. And in fact new evidence is changing our understanding of the development of this monument. Following a Chanel event held at the Palace in 2012, Kirkdale Archaeology were commissioned to carry out a standing building survey at the site. For the first time, sections of the surviving masonry were subjected to close, systematic study.*

*This examination focused on the south west corner of the Palace, traditionally dated to the reign of James IV in the later 1400s, with adaptations in the following century by James V. But revealed by this study was the survival of an earlier structure, predating James IV's work. Archaeologists now think that the earlier royal manor was made of stone. Far from being completely destroyed in the 1424 fire, much survived and was incorporated into the new Palace. This makes sense when we consider the documentary record. James I visited Linlithgow as early as 1425 and stayed here on numerous occasions throughout his reign, often with his queen. This suggests that there were suitable accommodations available for them, which is more likely if we accept the survival of at least part of the older residence.*

*The work at Linlithgow Palace is ongoing, and more recently the archaeologists have turned their attention to the east range. Here too they believe they have found evidence of an earlier structure, possibly a gatehouse, embedded within the work of James I. This study is being complemented by research into the surviving sculpture. Dr Sally Rush of the University of Glasgow is conducting detailed art historical research to enable us to understand more about the messages successive Stewart kings were trying to convey. Dr Rush is also trying to establish the most likely subjects of the sculpture we have lost. She has been aided in this by work being undertaken by H.E.S. Conservation Group. Peter Ranson and Christa Gerdwilker carried out a close survey of several key elements of the carvings in 2016, giving Dr Rush the rare opportunity to get up close and personal with the sculpture. Conservation work is beginning on the sculpture to help ensure its survival in the future. Over the coming years, this new knowledge will be used to inform fresh interpretation for the Palace.*



## Linlithgow Loch

*An ongoing problem with Linlithgow Loch is it is susceptible to periods of algal bloom. The historical industrial use of the loch, compounded with the loch acting as a basin for many surrounding inflows may have contributed to the water in the loch becoming eutrophic – or nutrient rich – resulting in periods of algal bloom. Unfortunately, during these bloom periods, water sports activities have to be restricted or stopped entirely. Historic Environment Scotland has been working closely with a number of partners and stakeholders including West Lothian Council, SEPA and Centre for Ecology and Hydrology to tackle these issues.*

*We are using cutting-edge technology to gain insights into the form and depth of Linlithgow Loch to help tackle the ongoing problem of algal bloom. As the first stage in this project HES has commissioned Wessex Archaeology (Scotland), specialists in maritime survey work, to digitally measure and map the loch using an automated surface vessel. The bathymetric survey uses echo-sounder and sonar to measure the depth of the loch and to build up a highly accurate and detailed model of the loch bed. This survey will for the first time provide baseline data on the form of the loch that will inform future management strategies, and at the same time, we hope, provide us with hitherto unknown data on archaeological remains. The data will be assessed by experts from Wessex Archaeology (Scotland) and Historic Environment Scotland for any archaeological remains within the loch, as well as providing crucial data that will be used to help determine future management options for the loch.*

Nicki Scott, Cultural Resources Advisor and Richard Strachan, Senior Archaeologist





<https://canmore.org.uk/site/49261/linlithgow-linlithgow-palace>  
<http://portal.historicenvironment.scot/designation/SM13099>  
<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/visit-a-place/places/linlithgow-palace/>



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