

## MANSE FIELD, WHITHORN

### EXCAVATIONS JULY-AUGUST 2003

Headland Archaeology ran a training excavation in the former Manse Field Whithorn, to the north of the priory, for a period of four weeks from 14<sup>th</sup> July to 8<sup>th</sup> August 2003. The students were first years from the University of Bradford, with no previous on-site experience. For one week a volunteer on a school work experience placement from Inverness joined the team.

The aim of the training was to provide the students with all the basic skills of field archaeology together with an understanding of how these techniques are put into practice in the context of commercial archaeology. The students received training in all aspects of excavation techniques, recording and surveying.



One of the students using the EDM

Training seminars on soils and sediments, environmental sampling, and an illustrated talk on the enclosure of ecclesiastical sites, with reference to the excavations at Hoddom were also provided. Field trips to local sites of archaeological interest were also organised.

Groups of locals and tourists visited the site each day and guided tours were given explaining new discoveries. By the end of the four weeks the students were also involved in explaining their areas to the visitors.

The location of the trenches can be seen in the attached plan. Two trenches were positioned to further expose features found during the 2001 evaluation, Trenches A and H. The majority of the trenches were located to target previously un-investigated areas of the field with three trenches extending to the north to detect any trace of an early boundary.

Most of the trenches excavated this summer contained some archaeological features. The west and north areas of the site contained mainly negative features such as pits and ditches. A small silver coin, as yet undated was found in the fill of an east west orientated ditch in trench B; several other substantial ditches contained fragments of medieval pottery. No features were found in the trenches extending to the north of the wall.



Building in Trench A being planned, looking northeast.

The area to the south east of the field revealed the remains of several buildings. The picture above shows the remains of several phases of building including a central drain and rough stone surface.



Building in Trenches F& G, looking southeast

At the south east corner of the field in Trenches F & G a structure was present so a larger area was opened up. A cobbled surface or track way abutted the north side of the building. The deposits within the building were mixed, finds from the layer below the topsoil included a sherd of beauvais ware, a local gritty ware sherd, several iron nails, and some copper alloy objects, none of which can be used to securely date the structure.

To the west of this building in Trench F, a large amount of slag was recovered during cleaning, patches of burnt clay and charcoal were also present.