

Community Archaeology Programme

Summary Report



By OJT Heritage



For

Kinross (Marshall) Museum



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List of Community Archaeology Events:

	pages
1.0 Community Geophysical Surveys	2-5
1.1 Kilmagadwood Bronze Age Urns	
1.2 Old Portmoak Chapel	
2.0 Portmoak's 'Muckle Dig'!	5-9
2.1 Be an Archaeologist for a Day!	
2.2 Portmoak Primary School	
2.3 Michael Bruce Cottage Garden	
2.4 Dunmore Hillfort	
2.5 Old Portmoak Chapel (Glider Centre)	
3.0 Community Historic Graveyard survey	9-10
3.1 Digital workshop: Online mapping resource	

Summary

OJT Heritage were commissioned by Kinross (Marshall) Museum to deliver a programme of community archaeology events for local volunteers in Portmoak Parish as part of the Our Portmoak project throughout 2017. This was to form part of the Year of History Heritage and Archaeology. This brief document summaries the commissioned events that took place, the nature of the voluntary activities that were involved during each event, the heritage that formed the focus and the key archaeological findings that resulted. The community archaeology programme proved highly successful, attracting volunteers both young and old to get involved in exploring their local heritage, and in the process helping to tell some amazing new stories about Portmoak's ancient past.

1.0 Community Geophysical Surveys

Two archaeological geophysics events were organised for members of the public to participate in. At these events, volunteers could learn about how archaeologists use surveys to scan for hidden heritage and had the opportunity to gather new survey data:

- Each survey was supervised by a professional technician deploying a multi-sensor magnetometer that was towed by a 4x4 vehicle.
- A beginner's introduction to geophysics was given as a tutorial at the start of each day and then survey was carried out with the help of volunteers at two sites of archaeological importance, with the aim of answering questions about each site (Fig. 1.0a).
- Feedback back about the surveys findings were sent to the volunteers involved, circulated on social media and reported during talks and exhibitions at an open day event.



Figure 1.0a. Community volunteers learn about the geophysics equipment.

1.1 Kilmagadwood Bronze Age Urns

This survey was located to investigate the site of a Bronze Age cremation urn that was discovered during ploughing in a field in 1946, and the site of which was also adjacent to where several further urns that were excavated during 2012-13:

- The survey aimed to work with the local community to help uncover more about Portmoak's ancient prehistoric stories.
- A Sensys 16-sensor Magneto vehicle-towed magnetometer rig was used for the survey with a dedicated GPS over two days.
- The results included concentrations of magnetic spikes near the south-east end of the field, which may indicate the site of cremation urns and pits. Future excavation will be required to verify the results (Fig.1.1a).
- A sherd of medieval pottery and four flakes of worked flint were found during the survey and the find-spots recorded.

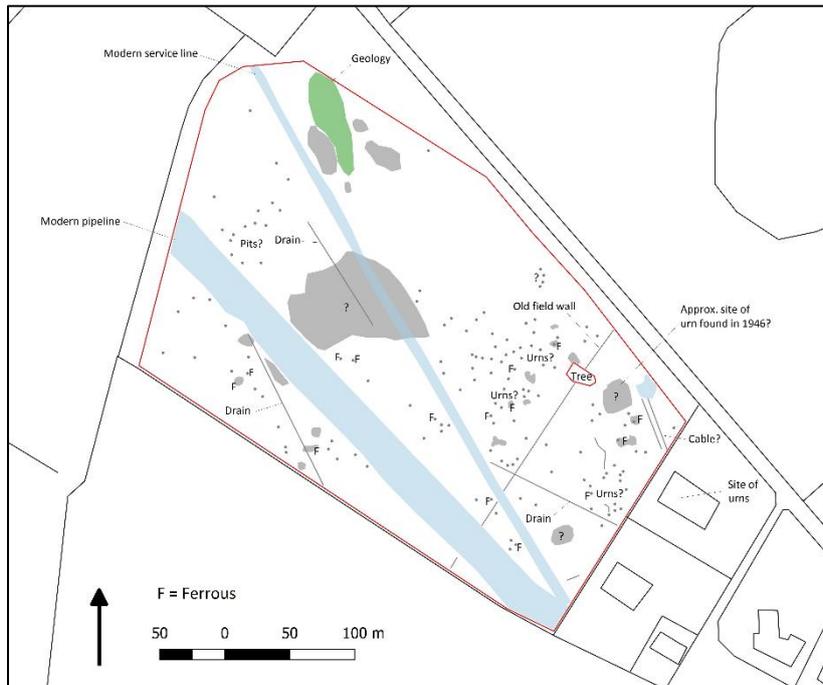


Figure 1.1a. Interpretive plan of geophysical survey results at Kilmagadwood.

1.2 Old Portmoak Chapel

This survey was located to investigate the environs of the site of the old parish church of Portmoak, which is now within the airfield of the Scottish Glider Centre.

- Medieval pottery and a corn-drying kiln were previously discovered in 1976 within the survey area.
- A Sensys 16-sensor Magneto vehicle-towed magnetometer rig was utilised for the survey with a dedicated GPS.
- The results mapped the outline of a possible large curvilinear enclosure, the former shoreline of Loch Leven, field drains, rig and furrow, a possible old roadway and other areas of magnetic disturbance (Fig. 1.2a).
- The survey results were subsequently investigated as part of the community excavation programme, also for the project.

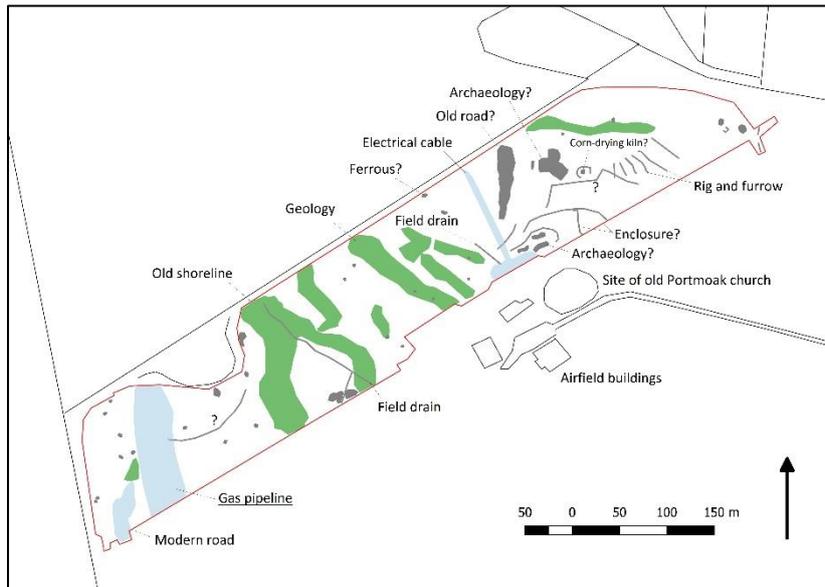


Figure 1.2a. Interpretive plan of geophysics results at Old Portmoak Chapel.

2.0 Portmoak’s ‘Muckle Dig!’

The ‘Muckle Dig!’ was a series of community excavation events that provided opportunities for local communities and volunteers to participate in live archaeological excavations, to learn new skills and to help find new information out about their local area’s past. The programme of short digs was divided into four parts, the first two parts were for local young people and schools, and the second two parts were for the community in general. Test pits were excavated to explore archaeological remains and to record finds.

2.1 ‘Be an Archaeologist for a Day!’

A competition was held with pupils at Portmoak Primary School for two winning pupils to have the opportunity to be ‘an archaeologist for a day’, by which a professional archaeologist would help them and their family to excavate a test pit in their garden. Pupils were invited to write about why they wanted to be an archaeologist for a day and to draw a picture of themselves as an archaeologist or what they might expect to find or people from the past. The winning entries were selected by the Chair of Kinross Museum:

- Ella Forbes P5/6 (Kinnesswood) and Heather Cox P4/5 (Scotlandwell) created the winning entries (Fig. 2.1a).

- Medieval pottery sherds were found and a range of other post-medieval objects (pottery, nails, glass, clinker), which related to the heritage of Kinnesswood before the school was built, including evidence for nearby limekiln sites and medieval settlement.



Figure 2.2a. Families taking part in the 'Muckle Dig!' at Portmoak Primary School.

2.3 Michael Bruce Cottage Garden

A further open community test pit excavation was held at the Michael Bruce Cottage Museum in Kinnesswood, to coincide with the community test pit at Portmoak Primary School:

- Local volunteers helped to excavate a 1m x 1m trench in the north-west side of the upper garden lawn.
- Finds included a small amount of post-medieval objects including ceramic roofing pan-tiles.

2.4 Dunmore Hillfort

A community test pit excavation was opened on Dunmore Hill above Portmoak to investigate the remains of a possible Iron Age hillfort:

- Teams of volunteers helped to uncover part of a previously unknown defensive wall and found remains of metal-working debris in the form of several slag nodules (Fig. 2.4a).

- A record was made of the wall and plans were developed by the Museum to investigate the results further, including raising additional funds to have radiocarbon dating undertaken on charcoal samples that were recorded during the dig.



Figure 2.4a. Community volunteers excavating at Dunmore Hillfort.

2.5 Old Portmoak Chapel (Glider Centre)

A community test pit excavation was undertaken near the site of Old Portmoak parish church, which is located on the Scottish Glider Centre's airfield (Fig. 2.5a). This dig followed on from a successful community geophysical survey at this location:

- A slot was excavated across a possible site of an enclosure shown on the geophysics results.
- The volunteers helped to reveal a previously unknown ditch, overlain by plough scars that contained medieval pottery sherds.
- This ditch could be the remains of an early medieval monastic vallum around the old church site, which would be a significant find for the local area's heritage.
- Further post-excavation study and radiocarbon dating is being pursued by the Museum, following on from the project, which should will help to clarify these findings.



Figure 2.5a. Community volunteers and visitors joining in the 'Muckle Dig!' at Old Portmoak.

3.0 Community Historic Graveyard survey

Volunteers were invited to help record and conserve the heritage of Portmoak Parish Church historic graveyard. This involved a community archaeological survey, where volunteers were given the chance to try using a survey-grade GNSS device to help create a detailed map of all historic memorial stones in the graveyard (Fig. 3.0a):

- Around 190 memorial stones were mapped and checked against archival records.
- The results informed the creation of an online information resource about the site.



Figure 3.0a. Volunteers participate in mapping the graveyard.

3.1 Digital workshop: Online Mapping Resource

Following on from the community graveyard mapping survey a digital training workshop was held at Kinross (Marshall) Museum:

- This aimed to help volunteers learn how to undertake data-entry tasks for enhancing an online digital mapping resource that was created to provide access to the graveyard survey results, as well as local metal-detectorist finds and information about archaeological sites (Fig. 3.1a).
- A written guide was issued to the Museum so that future volunteers can continue to enhance the resource after the end of the project.



Figure 3.1a. A screenshot of the mapping resource enhanced by volunteers as part of a digital workshop.