

Cross Tay Link Road – community benefits and social value from archaeological work

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The Cross Tay Link Road project is the largest infrastructure project ever delivered by Perth and Kinross Council. It delivers improvements to local road infrastructure, which facilitates sustainable development, improves air quality and reduces journey times and congestion within the Perth area in Scotland. During these works, Broxy Kennels fort and souterrain was excavated by GUARD Archaeology; the excavation was one of the largest of an Iron Age fort in Scotland in a generation.



Members of the public on an Open Day, adjacent to the souterrain (All photos: GUARD Archaeology)

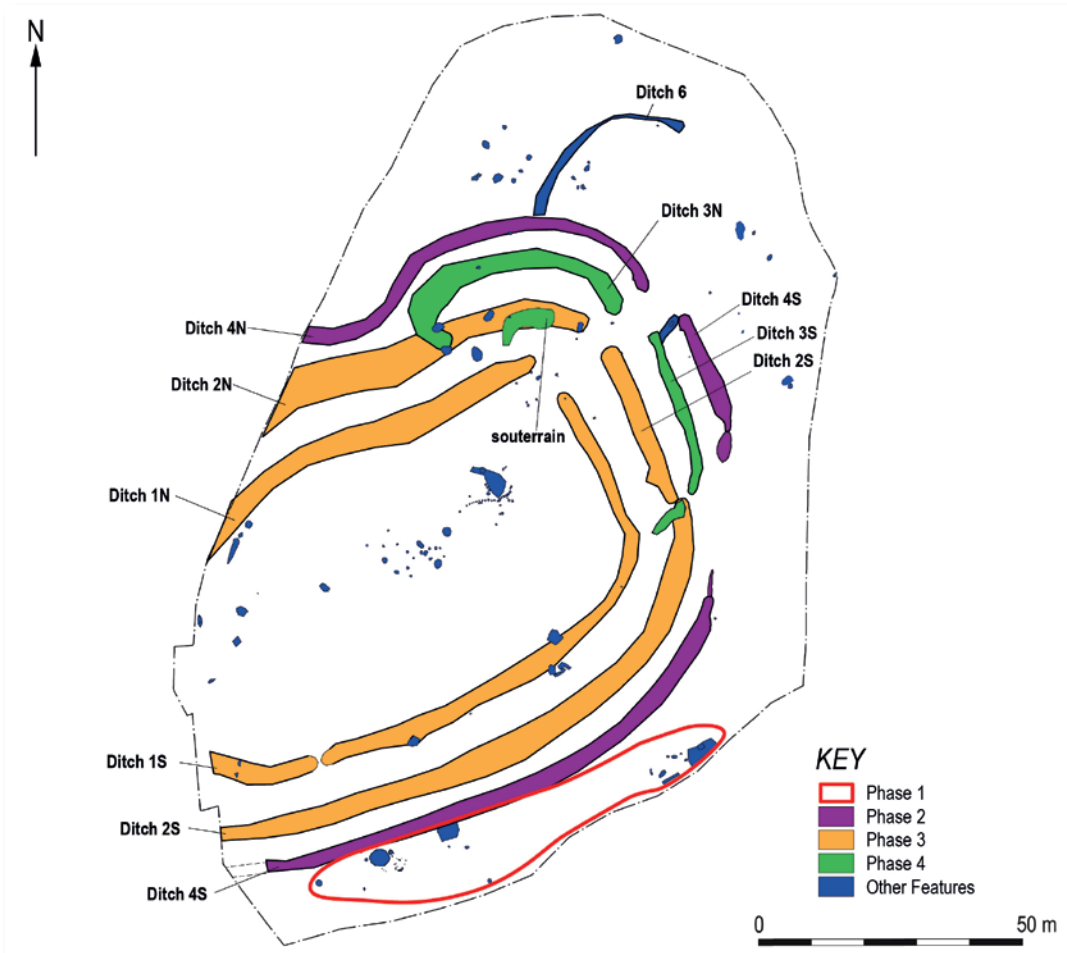
A previous geophysical survey and evaluation had already identified parts of this cropmark site and a metal detecting survey preceded the excavation, revealing a range of medieval artefacts within the topsoil. The topsoil was then stripped, uncovering four large ditches encircling the summit, and a stone-lined souterrain cut into one of the fort's ditches. For more detail, there is a video summarising the excavation on GUARD Archaeology's YouTube Channel <https://bit.ly/3K6TKmu>

The client, Perth & Kinross Council, ensured there was a requirement within this contract to prioritise and maximise social value and community benefits, leaving a project legacy in the local community. One of the deliverables on the contract was an outreach strategy, in

accordance with the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012. This Act calls for all public sector commissioning to factor in economic, social and environmental wellbeing in connection with public services contracts.

It was therefore imperative that the value of all aspects of the project, including archaeology, were carried out with the highest level of professionalism while maximising social value to the local and wider community.

GUARD Archaeology Ltd is a CfA Registered Organisation (CfA RO). The project was managed by a MCIfA accredited GUARD archaeologist and all site works were led by ACIfA accredited GUARD archaeologists. The excavation team comprised other staff



Possible phases of development at Broxy Kennels fort and (below) an aerial photo of the site with the A9 beyond, which is being realigned for the construction of the link road.



with PCIfA accreditation and also a fresh intake of new graduates working towards achieving PCIfA accreditation through GUARD Archaeology's ClfA Approved Training Plan. All work was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Archaeological Investigation that adhered to the ClfA Code of conduct and ClfA's Standards and guidance.

COLLABORATION

A collaborative approach to the excavation was taken with local curators Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust (ClfA RO), AMS Ltd (ClfA RO), Perth & Kinross Council, BAM Nuttall, GUARD Archaeology and other external specialists in the preparation and updating of a research framework and sampling strategy as the

excavation progressed, to guide the team investigating the site. Regular meetings were held which included the site director, project manager, representatives of the client, principal contractor, consultant, curator and relevant specialists where necessary. This ensured that all decisions were made collaboratively and that all parties were aware of new findings, progress and programme.

The fieldwork team received training on specific sampling techniques with assistance from specialists and through a series of toolbox talks. The souterrain at Broxy Kennels is probably the most detailed, sampled excavation of this type of site ever undertaken in Scotland and included the sampling of the entire floor level using a grid system to provide opportunities for detailed analysis and interpretation. The collaborative approach ensured that the entire archaeology team was on board and aware of the broader aims of the investigation while also focusing on their day-to-day excavations; as a result, the team was more invested in the project.

WIDER ENGAGEMENT

A key part of the work was to offer additional value in the form of public engagement and other outreach activities during the course



The souterrain from the east end



Archaeology team's excavation allowed ten placement students the opportunity to join in the fieldwork

of the excavation – no easy task on what was a live construction site just off the A9, one of Scotland’s arterial transport routes. Nevertheless, GUARD Archaeology facilitated visits from three local primary schools and provided site tours to local heritage groups and students and lecturers from the universities of Aberdeen and Glasgow. Four open days held during the course of the excavation allowed 400 members of the public to meet the GUARD Archaeology team and see first-hand what was being discovered on-site. Regular updates on progress and findings were also provided to the local press and council website. Following the excavation, GUARD Archaeology engaged with a local Young Archaeology Club in Dunkeld in November 2023 and gave a lecture to the Dunkeld Historical Society. GUARD Archaeology also presented at a project open day in October 2023 and gifted a ‘Behind the Scenes Tour’ of the post-excavation works at their lab as part of a charity auction in aid of a local mental health charity, The Lighthouse for Perth. A second project open day is planned for April 2024, with further lectures and public engagement planned for 2024 and beyond. In terms of a legacy for the archaeological works on this

project, GUARD Archaeology are assisting BAM Nuttall and Perth and Kinross Council to reconstruct the souterrain discovered at Broxy Kennels fort in an accessible area so the public can view it for generations to come.

The excavation also offered the opportunity for ten placement students from the University of the Highlands and Islands to gain experience in archaeological fieldwork, using bespoke training plans in core skills for archaeological fieldwork linked to Pathway to PCIfA standards. Each student also earned a Heritage Hero Award, courtesy of Archaeology Scotland, for their participation.

A FRAMEWORK FOR THE FUTURE

Careful planning, collaboration, coordination and a professional approach led to the successful delivery of the excavation to the standards expected by ClfA, as well as it being undertaken in tandem with an exceptional programme of outreach activities that sets a high bar for future development projects. Demonstrating the delivery of public benefit is increasingly important within development-led archaeology and programmes of archaeological work provide can provide an excellent opportunity for clients and developers to deliver social value outcomes.

This is why GUARD Archaeology now includes specific reference in all our method statements to the need to deliver public benefit and social value through the archaeological works we undertake. This inclusion is in accordance with the ClfA Standards and the guidance published by the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers Scotland, which is linked to the National Planning Framework 4 and embeds outreach as part of Archaeology Conditions in the planning system.

With credit to Perth and Kinross Council, AMS Ltd, BAM Nuttall, GUARD Archaeology Ltd and Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust.

KEY OUTCOMES/MESSAGES

- this large infrastructure project has provided significant community benefits, including an exceptional programme of outreach activities, in accordance with the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012
- the collaborative approach ensured that the entire team were more invested in the project
- careful planning, collaboration, coordination and professionalism led to the successful delivery of the excavations to the standards expected by ClfA