



**The 'Wee Dig 2017' at Paisley Abbey Drain  
18 – 23 September 2017  
Data Structure Report  
Project 4685**

## The 'Wee Dig 2017' at Paisley Abbey Drain 18 – 23 September 2017

### Data Structure Report

**On behalf of:** Renfrewshire Council

**NGR:** NS 4849 6388

**Project Number:** 4685

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*This document has been prepared in accordance  
with GUARD Archaeology Limited standard operating procedures.*

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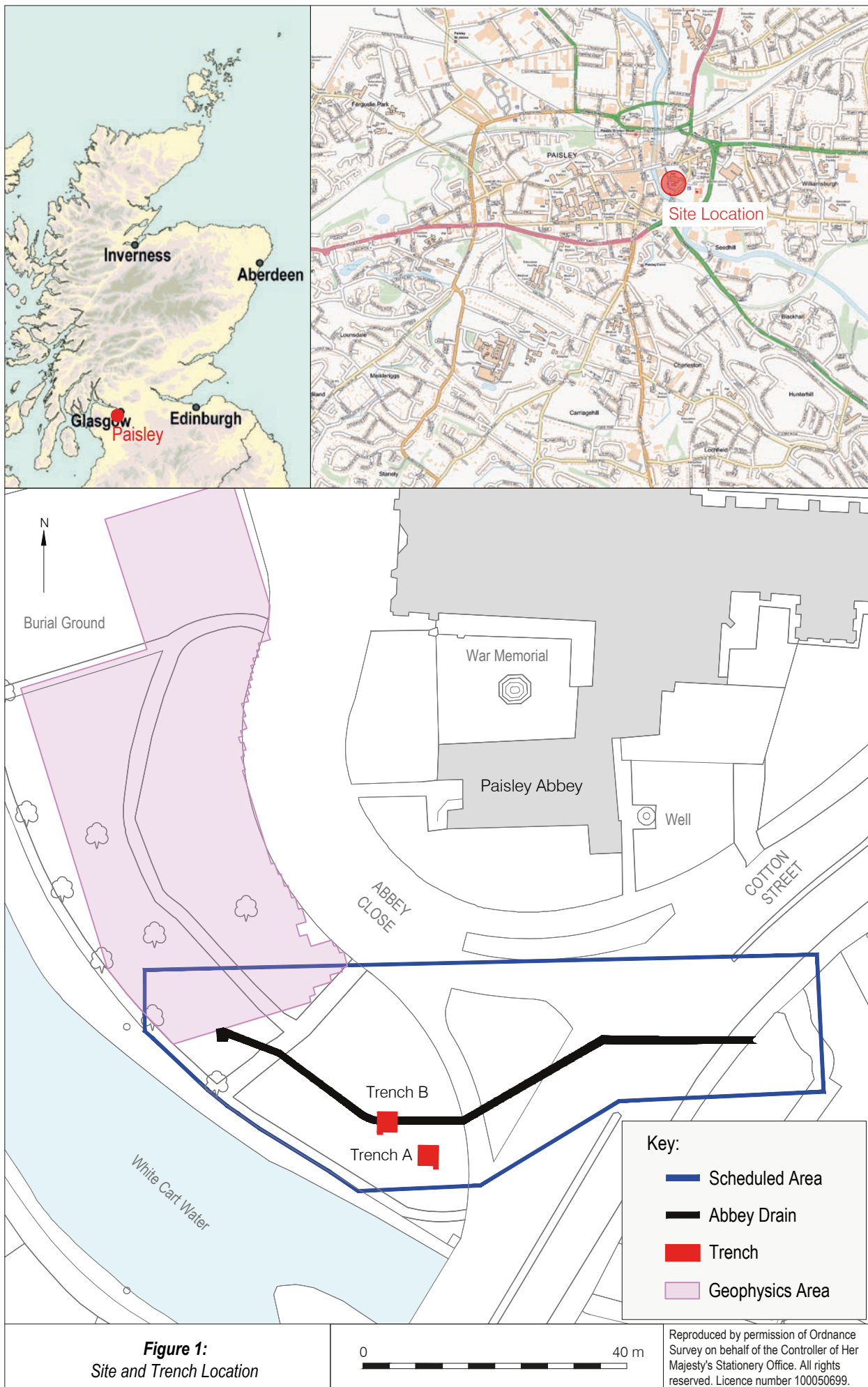
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## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Limited archaeological investigations were carried out by GUARD Archaeology Ltd between 18 – 23 September 2017 in the area immediately surrounding the medieval drain at Paisley Abbey in Paisley. The project was run in collaboration with Renfrewshire Council, the Heritage Lottery Fund and Renfrewshire Local History Forum. The investigations followed on from similar small-scale excavations that were carried out between 2009 and 2015 to investigate the construction of the drain and the deposits surrounding it. Although the foundations of tenement buildings, demolition material and recent levelling deposits were identified in the two trial trenches, there were areas of potentially undisturbed archaeological deposits. In addition to the trial trenching, geophysical survey was undertaken in the area to the west of the Drain. During the week-long investigations schools, local groups and visitors were able to take part in workshops within the Abbey, take part in the dig and attend lunchtime talks about the project in the Abbey. Overall almost one thousand people engaged with the project over the course of the week.
- 1.2 The Wee Dig Project 2017 was part of the Year of History, Heritage and Architecture and was supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund 'Stories, Stones and Bones' programme.

## 2. Introduction

- 2.1 This report details the results of a limited archaeological trial trenching undertaken by GUARD Archaeology Ltd in the area surrounding the medieval drain to the south-west of the Abbey. Two trenches were excavated and the fieldwork was carried out between 18 and 23 September 2017 to maximise publicity and to give visitors the opportunity to visit, to take part in the excavation and to learn about the history and heritage of Paisley. The project was developed by Renfrewshire Council, GUARD Archaeology and Historic Environment Scotland. Scheduled Monument Consent was granted based on the archaeological research objectives and methodology that was agreed in advance with HES (Will 2017). Work on site was carried out by volunteers under supervision of GUARD Archaeology staff, in addition passers-by were encouraged to take part and several joined in for one or two days or even for a few hours.
- 2.2 All elements of the fieldwork have been undertaken in line with the following policies and guidelines of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) of which GUARD Archaeology Ltd is a Registered Organisation.
- *By-laws: Code of Conduct (2014);*
  - Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Geophysical Survey (2014);
  - Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavation (2014), and
  - Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation (2014).

## 3. Site Location, Topography and Geology

- 3.1 The site is located in a small grassed municipal park and garden with trees to the south-west of Paisley Abbey next to the River Cart (NGR: NS4849 6388). The present banks of the River Cart are retained by a stone wall with iron railings, a footpath next to the wall, and then a row of trees and grass beyond. It is thought that the present retaining wall replaced an earlier wall and that the original river bank was further east in ground that has now been built up behind the latest retaining wall. In addition, a major modern sewage pipe was inserted next to the retaining wall. The trial trenches were located on the grassed area between the river Cart and the pedestrian precinct that curves round from Cotton Street past the Abbey towards the Town Hall.
- 3.2 The underlying drift geology consists of sand and gravel overlying glacial till of boulder clay (<http://digimap.edina.ac.uk/>).

## 4. Cultural and Heritage Led Regeneration

- 4.1 Renfrewshire Council is currently taking forward a set of ambitious and exciting plans designed to transform the area's future by highlighting Paisley's internationally-significant heritage and cultural assets. The aim of this is to understand and value Paisley's unique heritage which in turn will draw people together, strengthen community capacity and play an important role in the economic regeneration of the town centre. The historic assets, together with more contemporary cultural activities, such as sculpture and performance arts, hold the potential to attract additional visitors and will form a route to regenerate and revitalise the town centre. Paisley's rich heritage is centred on Paisley Abbey, the Abbey Drain, the Town Hall and River Cart which together form the Abbey and River Precinct. Further information is available in *Paisley: The Untold Story*, (Paisley Town Centre Heritage Asset Strategy) which was unveiled in summer 2014 (<http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/3485/Paisley-The-Untold-Story>) and also in Paisley Town Centre Action Plan 2016 - 2026 (<http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/4517/Paisley-Town-Centre-Action-Plan-2016-2026>).
- 4.2 As a first stage in September 2017 the HLF funded "Wee Dig" was a community focussed archaeological excavation around the Abbey drain site which was planned to lead on to a major dig in 2018 currently entitled *The Big Dig 2018*. The "Wee Dig" provided an opportunity to showcase the value of the Abbey Drain heritage, as an economic tool and as a platform to increase a sense of identification with, and an ownership of all aspects related to it for years to come.
- 4.3 Paisley's bid to become the UK City of Culture in 2021 was at the centre of these strategic plans and aimed to develop and showcase the fantastic cultural and heritage assets to maximise the benefits they can deliver to the quality of life of all the residents, the enjoyment of visitors and the sustainable growth of the local economy. With the Wee Dig in September, the timing for finding more about Paisley's medieval past and engaging its communities with heritage and archaeology could not have been better.
- 4.4 Despite not winning the recently-announced competition, the incredible journey of Paisley's bid for 2021 energised and galvanised efforts to drive forward the corporate policies and strategies discussed above.

## 5. Archaeological Background

- 5.1 The Cluniac Abbey of Paisley was founded as a priory at its present location in the late 1160s and became an abbey in 1219. The Abbey and its estates was one of the richest Cluniac foundations in the country but the Abbey suffered during the Wars of Independence and was burned down in 1307. It underwent an ambitious building programme in the 1450s under the direction of the Abbot Thomas Tervas but it was burned down again during the Reformation in 1561. Much of the Abbey as it survives today is the result of various renovations and re-buildings from the 19<sup>th</sup> century on top of the surviving walls and foundations although the choir is largely original.
- 5.2 Only the Abbey church and part of the cloistral ranges remain today but it would have stood at the heart of the monastic precinct that enclosed the area next to the River Cart. The layout of monasteries were fairly standardised but varied depending on the local topography and available land. The River Cart to the south would have formed a natural boundary to the abbey plan. Crossraguel Abbey in Ayrshire was the daughter house of Paisley and here the monastic precinct survives intact and it may provide a model for the layout at Paisley. At Crossraguel the Abbey lay to the north with the Abbot's house to the east and various buildings to the south and west.
- 5.3 Previous archaeological work around the Abbey has been quite limited: trial trenches to the north-east, to the south of the south transept and east of the 'Place' (remains of the east range). These trenches were excavated to a depth of 1.9 m and uncovered mainly 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century demolition and landscaping layers. An archaeological watching brief during 1994, approximately 10m to the west of the present trenches, during the construction of a large and deep sewer that went under the River Cart, uncovered the remains of a stone-built platform and revetment,

possible a jetty or wharf behind the present retaining walls along the river bank. These deposits were over 2.5 m below the present ground level (CFA 1994).

- 5.4 The major archaeological discoveries relate to the drain itself when it was re-discovered in 1990-92 (Malden 2000), at this time a large amount of silt was mechanically removed from the drain and carefully sieved for artefacts. During this operation a huge number and variety of artefacts were recovered including pottery, animal bone, lead seals, bone objects and a variety of other objects and materials. In addition, a small excavation was carried out inside the drain further to the east where it was much smaller and completely silted up. Here, it was possible to determine that there were securely stratified deposits within the drain that contained artefacts and important botanical remains (Johnston & Driscoll 1991). Subsequent analysis of the botanical remains has recovered a wide range of both food and medicinal plants (Dickson 2000). Following the archaeological work inside the drain in 1990-92 the Royal Commission of Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS, now part of Historic Environment Scotland) completed an internal survey of the drain, which identified several features including feeder drains and a possible medieval manhole.
- 5.5 In recognition of the national significance and importance of the drain, the drain and the immediate surrounding area has been brought under the protection of Historic Environment Scotland and is now a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM number 8078). As a result, Scheduled Monument Consent was applied for and granted for the 'Wee Dig' following consultation with Historic Environment Scotland. The West of Scotland Archaeology Service who advise Renfrewshire Council were also informed.

## 6. Aims and Objectives of the Wee Dig

- 6.1 The aim of the archaeological works was to identify:
- as yet unknown archaeological artefacts, features and deposits that may relate to the monastic precinct that would have surrounded Paisley Abbey;
  - determine the character, extent and significance of any archaeological deposits encountered in relation to the Abbey, the drain and the later development of the town;
  - assess the impact of recent building/demolition/landscaping on the structure of the drain;
  - inform future management and conservation requirements.
- 6.2 A key component of the project was to raise awareness of the heritage of Paisley and to encourage people to get involved. Therefore, in addition to the excavation and the geophysical survey the project also aimed to:
- Provide a week of archaeological activities to accompany the dig, providing opportunities to learn skills and engage with young people;
  - Hold interactive workshops for identified groups;
  - Hold lunchtime talks about the history and development of the Abbey and Drain
  - To record digitally the dig and to record participants experiences of the investigations.

## 7. Methodology

### 7.1 Excavation

- 7.1.1 As previous work had demonstrated that the upper layers consisted of recent demolition and landscaping it was agreed that once the turf was removed by hand the upper layers could be removed by machine. When this had been completed all subsequent excavation was by hand and undertaken by local volunteers under close archaeological supervision. The turf was stacked

to one side and replaced at the end of the excavation, backfilling was also by machine. A health and safety risk assessment and method statement was agreed before commencement of work with Renfrewshire Council and the site was enclosed within a Heras-type fenced compound, while reinforced plastic mesh fencing surrounded the actual trenches. All soil was stored within the compound. The location of each trench was scanned for services before work started to ensure that no services were located within the trenches.

7.1.2 All on-site recording - written, drawn and photographic documentation was to the standards normally pertaining in archaeological fieldwork. Weather conditions for the excavation were generally very good, dry and sunny with some rain.

## 7.2 Geophysical Survey

7.2.1 The geophysical survey comprised a resistivity survey rather than the magnetometry survey that was originally proposed in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Appendix D). It was decided not to undertake a magnetometry survey as this is sensitive to metal and electricity which can give false readings. In the survey area there were too many metal objects, benches, railings and buried electrical services not to mention watches, jewellery, buttons and other metal objects on peoples clothes that would have caused 'spikes' in the readings which would affect the overall results. Therefore it was decided to do a resistivity survey instead as this method is more straightforward, less susceptible to interferences from the surroundings and lends itself for both teaching and volunteer participation. The survey was conducted in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Geophysical Survey and the Archaeology Data Service Geophysical Data in Archaeology: A Guide to Good Practice (Schmidt 2002).

7.2.2 Obstacles such as trees and benches lay within the survey area, and it was not possible to carry out the resistivity survey over these obstacles. Therefore neutral or 'dummy' readings were substituted here and over the footpaths that crossed the area.

7.2.3 Measurements of earth electrical resistance were recorded using a Geoscan RM15 Resistivity meter with a mobile twin-probe array and a probe separation of 0.5m. A zig-zag traverse scheme was used and data logged in 20 m by 20 m grids. The resistance sensitivity was set to 0.1 ohm, the sample interval was 0.5 m and the traverse interval was 1 m, giving up to 800 survey points for each grid. This survey frequency allowed a good resolution of detail with the minimum impact in terms of the time required to complete the survey. The data was downloaded into Geoplot v3 for processing, analysis and plot production. The processed results are shown as annotated greyscale images and the raw data as trace plots. The resulting plots were overlaid onto the existing plan of the site, showing where any anomalies lay in relation to the surface features. On the greyscale illustration of the resistivity survey, areas of higher resistance are represented by dark grey, while lower resistance is shown as light grey/white. Therefore the general background readings in the survey area are shown as grey while areas of high resistance show as dark grey or black while low resistance appears as light grey or white. It is these differences that indicate potential archaeological features or anomalies as concentrations of high or low readings tend to stand out from the general background readings. The types of anomalies that can produce these are:-

- High resistance is recorded over stone (including bedrock), rubble and heavily compacted features such as paths and tracks;
- Low resistance is associated with negative-cut/soil-filled features such as pits and ditches, or on ground that is retaining a great deal of moisture

## 7.3 Community Engagement

7.3.1 A key component of the project was to encourage people to get involved and to learn about archaeology and the skills and techniques involved in undertaking geophysical survey and excavation. To achieve this several local groups were contacted in advance of the project beginning and encouraged to visit and to take part. Schools within Paisley and further afield

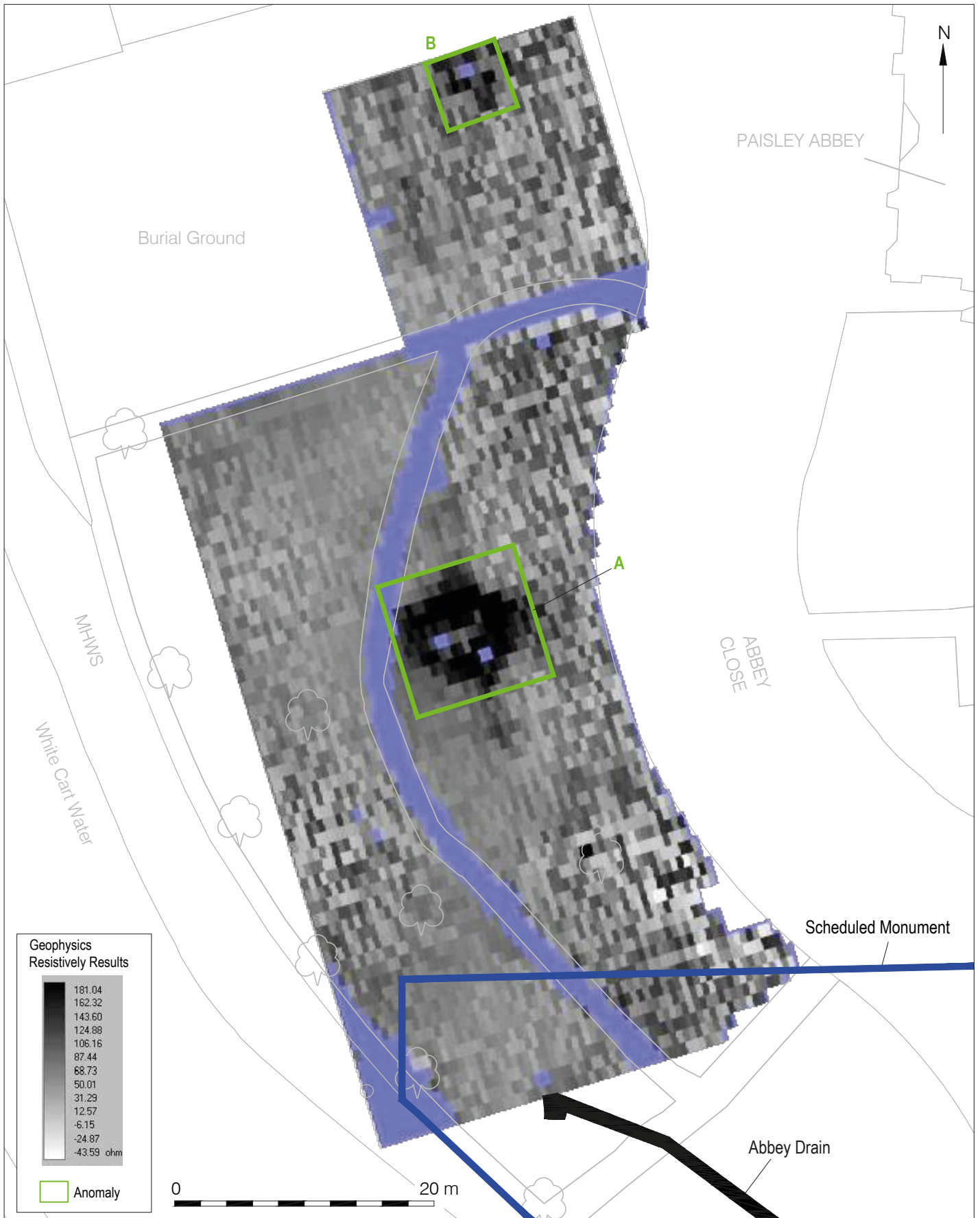


Figure 2:  
Geophysics Results

were also contacted in advance so that visits could be arranged. In addition there was a publicity campaign using national and local media, radio and TV as well as newspapers to tell people about the project and to encourage people to come along and to take part.

7.3.2 To facilitate community engagement GUARD Archaeology staff along with members of Renfrewshire Council, Renfrewshire Leisure and staff from Paisley Abbey arranged a series of workshops and hands-on events inside Paisley Abbey and at the excavation. These included artefacts that had been recovered from the Medieval Drain, an excavation sand box, recording and drawing exercises, a DVD on the Drain and lunchtime talks as well as a quiz for schools.

#### 7.4 Programme/methodology summary

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Excavation	Fencing, deturf & machine excavation with volunteers	Hand excavation with volunteers	Hand excavation with volunteers	Hand excavation with volunteers	Hand excavation with volunteers	Hand excavation with volunteers	Site closed	Backfill with volunteers
Geophysics	Survey with volunteers and process results	Survey with volunteers and process results	Survey with volunteers and process results	-	-	-	-	-
Community Engagement	Poster display, leaflets, informal site tours	Poster display, leaflets, informal site tours	Workshops and quiz in Abbey with invited school groups; digging with invited school groups in trenches; poster display, leaflets and informal tours of dig site	Workshops and quiz in Abbey with invited school groups; digging with invited school groups in trenches; poster display, leaflets and informal tours of dig site	Workshops with invited community group in Abbey; DVD in Abbey; digging with invited community group in trenches; lunchtime talk to invited community group; poster display, leaflets and informal tours of dig site	Workshops with members of public in Abbey; DVD in Abbey; digging with members of public in trenches; lunchtime talk to members of public; poster display, leaflets, informal tours of dig site	-	Informal tours of dig site

## 8. Project Results

### 8.1 Excavation

8.1.1 The results of the excavation should be read in conjunction with the detailed concordances found in Appendices B to E, as well as Figures 1 and 3 - 6.

#### *Trench A (figure 1 and figure 3-4, plate 2)*

8.1.2 This trench was the further east of the two trenches and was located on the grass west of Cotton Street. The trench was 3 m north/south by 3 m east/west. Based on the results of other work in the area it was known that there had been a lot of disturbance on the site when the nineteenth century tenements were demolished and the area landscaped. Therefore after the turf was removed by hand the upper layers which consisted of topsoil (001), modern demolition debris (002) and material from recent landscaping was removed by machine under archaeological supervision. Following this all excavation was by hand. Steps were cut in the south east corner for access. The topsoil (001) was up to 0.4 m thick and was removed to reveal a mixed layer of

light yellow brown coloured mortar and demolition debris including sandstone fragment (002) that was up to 0.35 m thick and was found throughout the trench. Below the demolition layer was a layer of grey/brown coloured silty clay with ash (003) that covered most of the trench and was up to 0.4 m thick. Partly sealed by this layer and the demolition layer above were several thin large stones (010) that were set on their edge and were located along the eastern trench edge so were only seen in section. As excavation continued a modern service pipe (cut 007, fill 006) was uncovered running diagonally across the trench, a slot was excavated across the line of the trench to reveal a ceramic sewer pipe. To the north of the service pipe the grey/brown layer (003) overlay a layer of light brown sand silt that contained brick fragments but appeared to be less disturbed than the layers above and several sherds of late medieval and post-medieval pottery were recovered. In the north-west corner was a discrete deposit 0.22 m thick of degraded yellow sandstone (005). To the south of the pipe trench the deposits were still disturbed and consisted of mid to dark brown silt with rubble and bricks (008). This layer was darker and contained more clay (009) in the south west corner of the trench. Excavation stopped at this point.

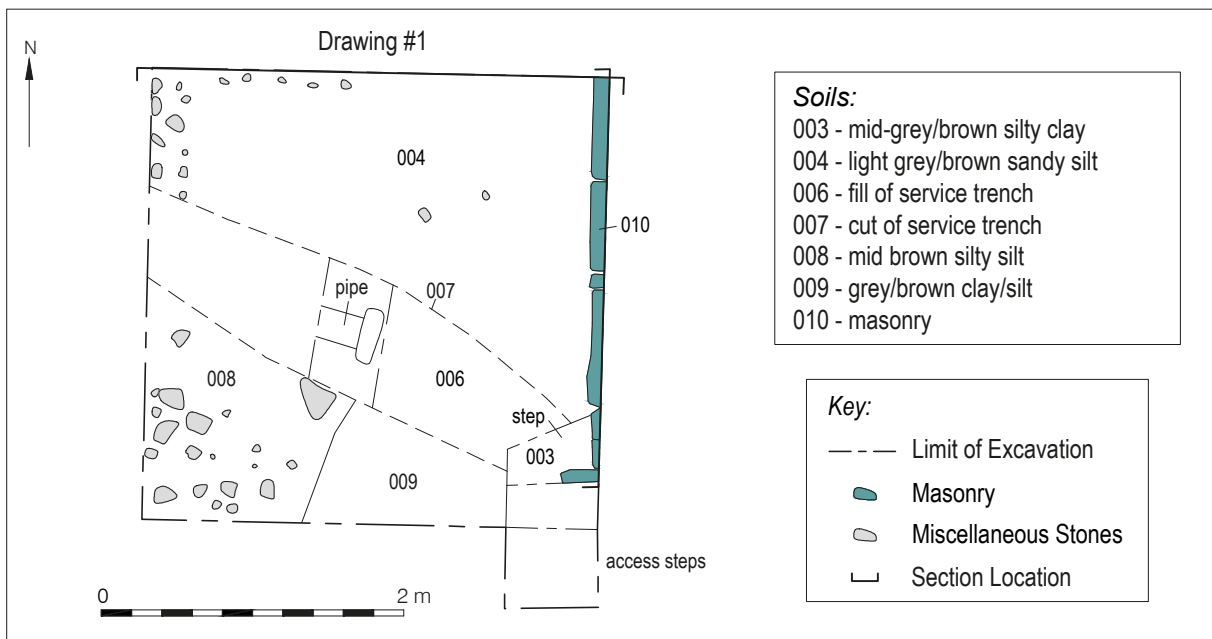


Figure 3: Trench A Plan

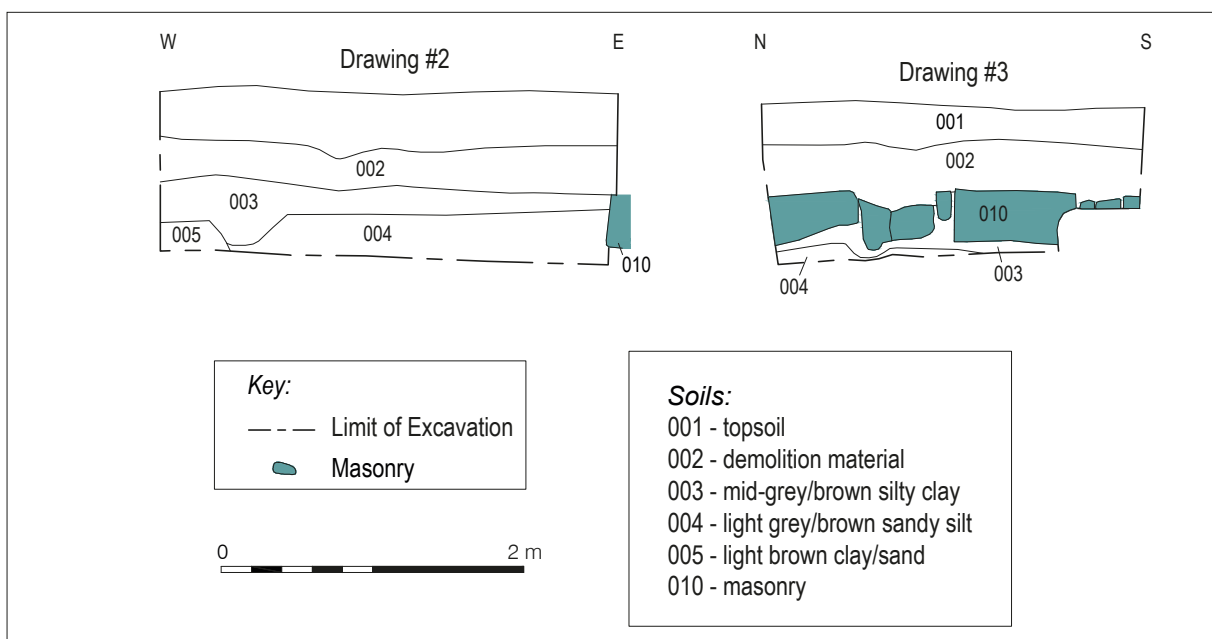


Figure 4: Trench A Sections



Plate 2: Trench A



Plate 3: Trench B

### Trench B (figure 1 and figure 5-6, plate 3)

- 8.1.3 The trench was located to the west of Trench A next to the manhole that provides access to the Abbey Drain. This location next to the manhole was chosen partly from the results of the geophysical survey but also because the roof of the Drain had been replaced at this point with a concrete slab and it was unknown how much disturbance to the Drain and the surrounding area had occurred.
- 8.1.4 As with Trench A the area was checked with a CAT scanner before excavation began to check for services. Once again the turf was removed by hand the upper layers were removed by machine. Steps were cut in the south west corner to provide access. The whole trench was cleaned to remove all the remaining loose soil left by the machine and to tidy up the trench edges.
- 8.1.5 Below the turf was a uniform layer of topsoil (001) 0.35 m thick. Below this largely confined to the eastern half of the trench was a layer of light brown demolition material (011) that included mortar rubble and bricks and was up to 0.3 m thick. Below this was brown silty clay 0.25 m thick that was largely confined to the north east corner. In the western half of the trench below the topsoil was a deposit (012) of brown sandy silt 0.3 m thick that contained stone fragments along with bricks. As this deposit was next to the access manhole it may relate to when the manhole was built. On the south side of the trench the top of a large boulder (024) approximately 0.9 m by 0.9 m was uncovered. Below 011 and 012/13 was an extensive layer of dark grey silt (014) that was 0.25 m thick with inclusions of coal, clinker and concrete. In the south east corner of the trench 0011 sealed a substantial layer (017) of light brown clay and silt up to 0.35 m thick that included modern debris. Below 017 and 016 was a thin lens of light brown sand (018) that covered a cobbled surface (020). The exposed cobbles covered an area of approximately 2m by 1m along the southern edge of the trench and the large boulder 024 was located on top of the cobbles. The boulder was probably part of the foundations or an earlier building that had been moved there possibly when the roof of the Drain was being repaired. The cobbles were roughly rectangular in shape and 0.2 m by 0.15 m by 0.15m in size. Below the sand (018) and extending north from the cobbles and below layer (016) was a grey silty ash layer (019) that was up to 0.25 m thick and may have acted as bedding material for the cobbles. Below this was another possible layer of cobbles (021) that comprised of small stones in a yellow mortar matrix (022) and covered an area 1.6m by 1.3 m from the main cobbles. In the remainder of the trench layer (014) covered a layer of light grey/brown silty sand (015) with inclusions of angular stones and pebbles. At the northern extent of (021) was a discrete deposit of light grey mortar (023) 0.08 m thick visible in the trench section. Excavation stopped at this point.

### Artefacts Recovered from the Excavation

- 8.1.6 While most of the artefacts recovered from the trenches date to the late 19th or 20th centuries a number of late medieval and post-medieval pottery sherds along with three fragments of medieval tile were recovered particularly from the lower deposits. The metal objects include a copper alloy thimble, dress pin and a brass plug.

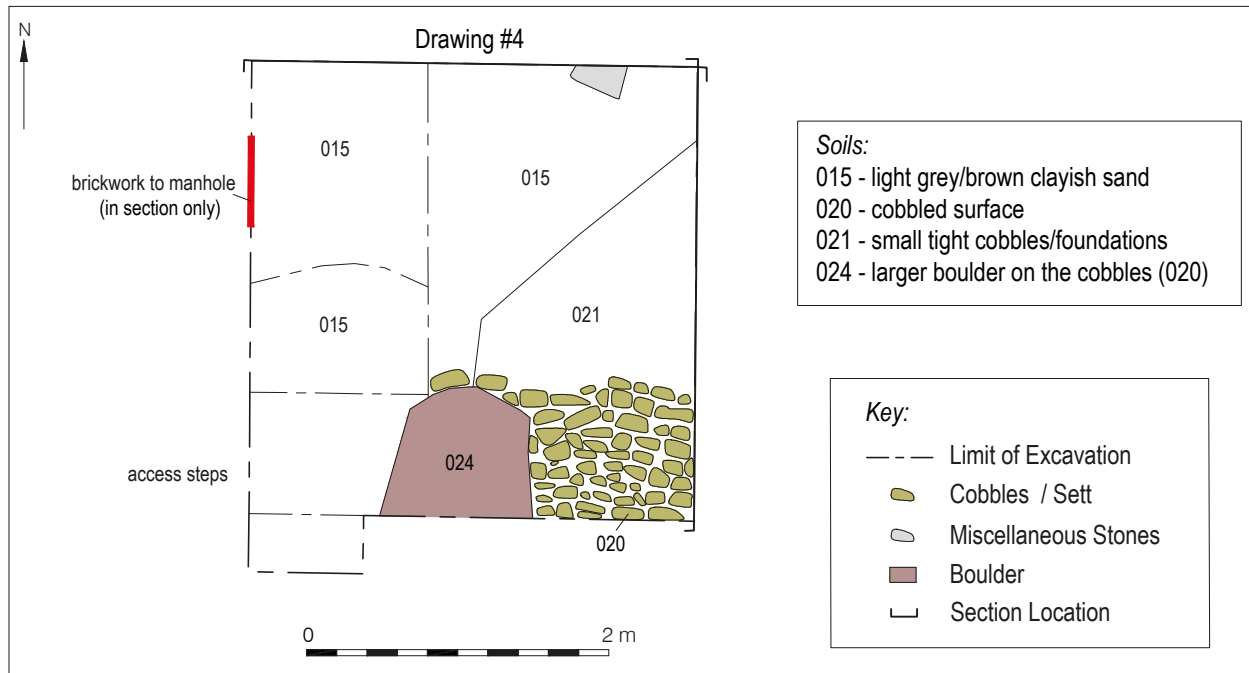


Figure 5: Trench B Plan

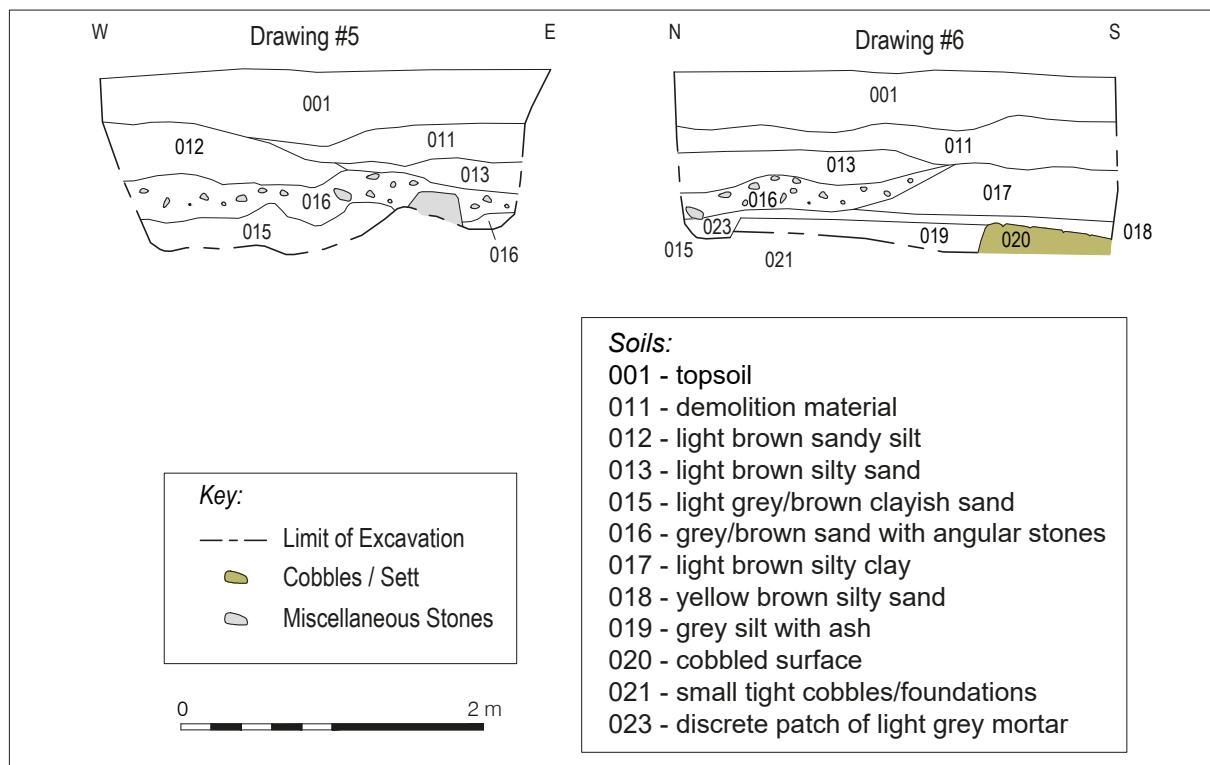


Figure 6: Trench B Sections

Artefacts		Description
Modern pottery White earthenware	68	Includes possible 'creamware', transfer printed and slip trailed decoration
Modern pottery Red earthenware	29	Includes several sherds from a large black glazed storage jar
Late medieval/post-medieval pottery	16	Includes a base sherd
Medieval tile?	3	unglazed
Brick/tile	22	Bricks and pan tile
Coin/token	1	unknown
Glass	22	Mainly from bottles including late 18 <sup>th</sup> /19 <sup>th</sup> century wine bottles & modern window glass
Clay tobacco pipes	10	Includes two bowl fragments
Metal copper alloy	4	Includes a thimble and a brass plug
Metal iron	26	Mainly nails & brackets
Animal bones	175	Includes teeth
shells	32	Mainly oyster shells

## 8.2 Geophysical Survey (plate 1)

8.2.1 The most obvious feature recorded during the geophysical resistivity survey is the large area of higher resistance at about the centre of the survey (Anomaly A), shown in black within a green line on Figure 2. This area is irregularly shaped, and measures about 12 m east/west and 11 m north/south. Dummy readings (blue) were substituted at the location of a tree, and at two points where the electrical circuit could not be created due to high contact resistance.



Plate 1: Geophysical survey

8.2.2 A smaller area of higher resistance at the north of the survey (Anomaly B) also corresponds to the location of a tree and, again, dummy readings were substituted.

8.2.3 The resistivity survey recorded a great deal of ground disturbance throughout the area, shown as pixelated areas on Figure 2. These are most obvious on the east side of the survey area, but also occurred at the west. The pixelated effect is the result of high and low readings in the same area which indicates that the ground has been disturbed and may reflect a lot of stones or rubble below the garden soil. If the ground had not been disturbed the background readings would produce a more uniform colour

## 8.3 Community Engagement (plates 4-9)

### Workshops

8.3.1 Community engagement during the fieldwork took the form of a series of workshops, talks and site tours. The workshops for schools, groups and visiting members of the public were held over four days within Paisley Abbey. Each day there were two sessions which covered several themes: archaeology and archaeological techniques which involved a sand pit; artefacts which involved discussions on some of the artefacts recovered from the Drain and excavations and a guided visit to the excavations which involved 'digging' where appropriate. In addition GUARD Archaeology staff, Council and museum staff were on hand to answer questions. Over 160 school children visited and learned about the history and heritage of Paisley during these workshops. Also on Friday and Saturday a talk was given at lunchtime explaining the history of the Abbey and the project, this talk was also presented to visiting groups. From Friday to Saturday a video was also shown in the Abbey explaining the history of the Abbey and providing information on the Drain.

8.3.2 Over the six days 28 people mainly members of the Renfrewshire Local History Forum took part in the fieldwork investigations, many of whom attended on multiple days as well as a number of members of the public who 'dropped in' for an hour or two as they were passing.

#### Digital recording

8.3.3 As part of the Community Engagement element of the project two photography students, Paul Farquar (plates 1 and 7) and James Finlayson (plates 5 and 6), from West College Scotland were on site each day to record the activities that were taking place and to interview both participants and visitors. These photographs and interviews were then used to create a documentary dvd of the project. In addition a photographer was commissioned by Renfrewshire Council visited the site each day and as well as photographing what was taking place and providing images for press and media, he recorded a time lapse film of the whole excavation from beginning to end.

8.3.4 Further filming was undertaken by Tony Grace from the University of the West of Scotland who had previously produced a film on the investigations that had been undertaken between 2009 and 2012.

#### Site visits

8.3.5 During the course of the 'Wee Dig' there were several important visitors to the site, these included John Malden, former curator at Paisley Museum and Frank Snow formerly of Scottish Water, who together were instrumental in the re-discovery of the 'Drain' in 1991 and the subsequent archaeological investigations and artefact studies that then took place. Hugh McBrien from the West of Scotland Archaeology Service, who are Renfrewshire Council's archaeology advisors, also visited during the week. After John and Frank discovered the 'Drain' Hugh was the first archaeologist to enter the drain and was amazed at what he saw and has kept a keen interest in the 'Drain' ever since. Other visitors included Sandra Archer and John Malcolm from Historic Environment Scotland, they dealt with our Scheduled Monument Consent application to allow the 'Wee Dig' to take place. They were delighted with the archaeological results and the level of interest within the local community and schools for the project. These visitors and more all had good ideas and suggestions about the Abbey, the Drain and where to dig next.

8.3.6 In total between 800 -1000 people engaged in the project from volunteers to visiting groups and members of the public.



*Plate 4: Visitors*



*Plate 5: Sand box with kids*



Plate 6: School visit Abbey



Plate 7: Group visit



Plate 8: Visitors



Plate 9: Paisley 2021

## 9. Discussion

### 9.1 Excavation

- 9.1.1 The limited excavation revealed details of the buildings of Abbey Close in the nineteenth and early twentieth century and established that elements of these buildings still survive and were not grubbed up at the time of their demolition.
- 9.1.2 In Trench A evidence for later use of the site was found in the survival of a sewer pipe and a stone foundation but both these features appear to be at a higher level than any medieval deposits which may survive at a lower level. The level at which the excavation stopped appeared to be less disturbed than the layers above and several sherds of medieval pottery were recovered from the trench. The orientation of the modern sewer is similar to the possible void revealed by the GPR survey and it may be that this was picked up by the survey and not the medieval drain. Further analyses of the results from the GPR may shed further light on this.
- 9.1.3 In Trench B excavation revealed a cobbled surface from the nineteenth century along with a foundation or possible earlier surface below both of which had been partially removed. The edge of these surfaces may mark the extent of the trench that was excavated in the nineteenth

century to repair the roof of the Drain and to construct the concrete roof. The large boulder in Trench B although not in its original position could have been moved at this time and may have come from an earlier wall foundation possibly from one of the monastic buildings.

## 9.2 Geophysical Survey

9.2.1 The resistivity survey followed on from a ground-penetrating radar (GPR) survey carried out in 2012 that successfully located the course of the Abbey drain (Cuenca-Garcia and Jones). The 2012 GPR survey recorded the roof of the Abbey drain between 0.5 m and 0.8 m below current ground level, while earlier excavation uncovered the roof of the drain at a depth of about 1.4 m. The GPR survey also noted “noisy and complex radargrams” within the first metre below ground level (Ibid. 14) that were interpreted as disturbance from the demolition of the nineteenth and twentieth century buildings, levelling works and landscaping works.

9.2.2 The results of the resistivity survey concur with the interpretation that the site has been subject to very heavy disturbance within the uppermost sub-surface deposits. The pixelated appearance of the resistivity survey results is indicative of general ground disturbance, within which it is not possible to distinguish any sub-surface archaeological or historical remains.

9.2.3 The high resistance recorded at Anomaly B has almost certainly been caused by a tree sucking any moisture from its surroundings, and is unlikely to represent any underlying archaeological remains.

9.2.4 The high resistance at Anomaly A is less easy to interpret. Although the tree at this location will have sucked moisture from the ground, the dimensions of the anomaly far exceed those of Anomaly B, although there is little difference in the size of the trees. One of the trial trenches excavated in 2015 was close to Anomaly A, and two walls were uncovered within the trench, one aligned north/south and one aligned east/west. It is most probable that the readings from the resistivity survey recorded these walls, along with demolition debris, resulting in this irregular area of high resistance.

## 9.3 Community engagement

9.3.1 The number of volunteers digging at the excavation trenches, the number of schools visiting and participating in the workshop and the number of interest generated during ‘The Wee Dig’, indicates that there is a huge interest in Paisley’s heritage. The introduction of the app to the school kids provide them with a tool to expand their knowledge and interest of the Drain and other heritage buildings in the classroom

9.3.2 The broad community engagement, from schools to adult groups, indicates that the interest on the Drain and Paisley Abbey covers a large age range of individuals. The success of ‘The Wee Dig’ shows that there is an appetite for more similar events in Paisley and the surrounding area. Finally, the benefit of partnerships fostered with all the different groups and schools involved during ‘The Wee Dig’ will in the future facilitate the organization of similar events/activities.

## 10. Conclusions on The Wee Dig

10.1 This limited archaeological investigations were able to:

- reveal in Trench A that nineteenth century structures survive including a sewer pipe and that medieval remains may survive below them.
- In Trench B, the presences of cobble surfaces demonstrates that the 19th and 20th century buildings were demolished to a certain level but that the foundations were not grubbed out before the area was landscaped. The large boulder in Trench B could have come from the foundations of an earlier building.
- The geophysical survey confirmed that much of the surrounding area has been heavily disturbed by the demolition and landscaping associated with the demolition of Abbey Close in the early twentieth century.

- The results from Trenches A and B can be used in the future conservation, maintenance and management of the Drain as they confirm that the Drain is sealed by a deep deposit of modern material and that although that layer has been compromised in Trench B by the later works to repair the roof the disturbance caused by this appears to be limited.

#### 10.2 Significantly the project also:

- Engaged between 800 -1000 people in the project from volunteers to visiting groups and members of the public
- Over 160 school children visited and learned about the history and heritage of Paisley
- Over the six days 28 people mainly members of the Renfrewshire Local History Forum took part in the investigations, many of whom attended on multiple days as well as a number of members of the public who 'dropped in' for an hour or two as they were passing
- Eight workshops were held over four days and three lunchtime talks
- Several local groups for both adults and children visited the Abbey and excavations.
- Established a good working relationship between various interested groups and individuals including Paisley Abbey.
- Enabled many people to become engaged and to participate in the project and the heritage and history of the drain, the Abbey and Paisley Town Centre.
- The 'Wee Dig' created a great deal publicity that was reflected in the media including social media and substantially raised the profile of the project and Paisley.
- The Wee Dig' fulfilled its projects aim and objectives with the number of public engagement and interest exceeding expectations.

## 11. Next steps for the future

11.1 The 'Wee Dig' established and confirmed that there is a great deal of interest and knowledge about the heritage of Paisley, the Abbey and the Drain. It also showed that there is huge potential and interest in community archaeology/heritage projects around the Drain/Abbey Complex. The next step is to build on that interest and to develop an excavation programme to investigate the archaeology of the Abbey and Drain as there is still a significant amount about the Drain and monastic precinct to discover. This will enable local people and community groups to become involved and to learn new skills and to develop existing skills while undertaking important research into Paisley's past which could be capitalised on and developed. Continuation with a pro-active engagement strategy as illustrated in the Wee Dig

- can reach groups that previously have not engaged with heritage/archaeology. Further investigation would also inform the destination potential of the Drain as part of the Abbey and River Precinct area of Paisley town centre.
- the benefits of a longer term Big Dig, in addition to the archaeological research, would be attracting families and individuals to take part and learn about the Abbey and its environs while learning new skills and building on existing ones
- the area around the Drain for this search could include part of the Scheduled Area as well as the precinct surrounding the Abbey and could include geophysical survey, excavation and historical research.

## 12. Acknowledgements

12.1 GUARD Archaeology would like to thank, Mark Hughes and Lynn Hollands from Renfrewshire

Council who were instrumental in setting up the project and a great help throughout the fieldwork also Ruth Aitken from Renfrewshire Leisure. Special thanks go to the members of the Renfrewshire Local History Forum and the rest of the volunteers whose help and commitment to the project was very much appreciated and who made the project happen: Greg Ball, Helen Calcluth, Stephen Clancy, Peter Crawford, Andrew Eadie, Jean Fulton, Alma Gordon, Anne Grant, Keith Hancock, Maggie Hancock, Craig Houston, June Kennedy, Neil McKay, Audrey McLaughlan, Scott McStreechin, Ethel Parker, Maimie Robin, Ian Robin, Katherine Scott, Michael Scott, Ailsa Smith, Ed Smith, Frank Snow, Bill Spiers, Justine Tarelli, Julie White and Barry and Callum.

- Thanks are also due to: Heritage Lottery Fund 'Stories, Stones and Bones Programme
- Paisley Abbey Reverend Alan Birss and his team of staff and volunteers in the Abbey, shop and cafe
- Historic Environment Scotland John Malcolm, Sandra Archer and Kevin Grant
- Hugh McBrien from West of Scotland Archaeology Service who advise Renfrewshire Council on archaeological matters
- Renfrewshire Council
- Paisley 2021
- Renfrewshire Leisure
- Kieran Chambers Photography who visited the site each day and provided a daily record of the project.
- Paul Farquar and James Finlayson from West College Scotland who photographed the whole process
- Brown Plant for supplying the JCB and driver.

**12.2** The GUARD fieldwork team comprised Bob Will, Iraia Araboalaza, Christine Rennie and Jennifer Simonson. Technical support was from Aileen Maule: the illustrations were produced by Jennifer Simonson. The report was desk top published by Gillian Sneddon. The project was managed for GUARD Archaeology by John Atkinson.

**The 'Wee Dig 2017' at Paisley Abbey Drain  
18 – 23 September 2017  
Data Structure Report**

**Section 2: Appendices**



[www.guard-archaeology.co.uk](http://www.guard-archaeology.co.uk)

## Appendices

### Appendix A: References

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### Appendix B: List of Contexts

Context No	Area	Description	Interpretation
001	Tr A & Tr B	brown/black silty loam	topsoil
002	Tr A	mixed light yellow/brown rubble	demolition material
003	Tr A	mid-grey/brown silty clay	occupation material
004	Tr A	light grey/brown sandy silt	some medieval finds
005	Tr A	light brown clay/sand	mixed lens
006	Tr A	light grey silt,	fill of service trench
007	Tr A	cut for service trench	modern service
008	Tr A	mid brown sandy silt	mixed layer
009	Tr A	grey/brown clay/silt	mixed layer/deposit
010	Tr A	line of stones/masonry	kerb/edging
011	Tr B	light brown coloured silt & rubble	demolition material
012	Tr B	light brown sandy silt	-
013	Tr B	light brown silty sand	-
014	Tr B	dark grey silt	-
015	Tr B	light grey/brown clayes sand	-
016	Tr B	grey/brown sand with angular stones	-
017	Tr B	light brown silty clay	-
018	Tr B	yellow brown silty sand	-
019	Tr B	grey silt with ash	-
020	Tr B	cobbled surface	associated with 19th century tenements
021	Tr B	small tight cobbles/foundations	lower cobbles
022	Tr B	white/yellow mortar matrix for cobbles 021	-
023	Tr B	discrete patch of light grey mortar	-
024	Tr B	large boulder on the cobbles 020	possibly derived from foundations of earlier building

## Appendix C: List of Finds

Site	Sample	Context	Trench	material	type	description
3388	1	10003	-	botanics	carb.veg.	-
3481	1	004	-	stone	coarse	worked?
3481	1	004	-	lithic	flint	flake / worked?
Find No	Area	Context No	No of Pieces	Material	Type	Description
001	Tr A	001	1	metal	Cu alloy	pin
002	Tr A	001	1	ceramic	medieval	body sherd
003	Tr A	001	9	ceramic	Modern	red earthenware jar with brown glaze
004	Tr A	001	2	ceramic	Modern	white tiles
005	Tr A	001	3	CBM	Modern	red tile/chimney fragments
006	Tr A	001	3	CBM	medieval	tile?
007	Tr A	001	8	ceramic	medieval	range of fabrics
008	Tr A	001	6	glass	Modern	bottle and window
009	Tr A	001	6	ceramic	tobacco pipe	1 bowl & 5 stems
010	Tr A	001	14	ceramic	Modern	white earthenware
011	Tr A	001	4	ceramic	Modern	red earthenware, 1 slip decorated
012	Tr A	001	2	shell	-	oyster
013	Tr A	001	88	bone	animal	mixed
014	Tr B	010	8	CBM	modern	brick/tile
015	Tr B	010	2	CBM	stone/tile	marble floor slab
016	Tr B	010	12	metal	iron	brackets & nails
017	Tr B	010	1	metal	Cu Allpy	buckle?
018	Tr B	010	31	ceramic	Modern	white earthenware
019	Tr B	010	10	ceramic	Modern	red earthenware
020	Tr B	010	4	bone	-	animal
021	Tr B	010	11	glass	Modern	-
022	Tr B	010	2	cbm	mortar	moulded/shaped
023	Tr B	010	24	shell	-	mixed
024	Tr B	010	2	ceramic	tobacco pipe	bowl & stem fragments
025	u/s	-	1	metal	Cu alloy	coin/token?
026	u/s	-	1	metal	cu alloy	brass plug
027	u/s	-	9	metal	iron	nails
028	u/s	-	1	metal	iron	rim of vessel
029	TrA	4	48	bone	-	-
030	TrA	4	8	ceramic	Modern	white/cream earthenware
031	Tr A	4	2	metal	iron	nail/bolts
032	Tr A	4	5	ceramic	medieval	body sherds
033	Tr A	4	4	CBM	Modern	brick/tile
034	Tr A	4	1	ceramic	tobacco pipe	stem
35	Tr A	4	1	glass	Modern	green bottle frag
36	Tr a	5	28	bone	animal	-
37	Tr A	5	3	CBM	Modern	brick/tile
38	Tr A	5	1	ceramic	medieval	base
39	Tr A	5	1	metal	iron	bolt
40	Tr A	5	3	glass	Modern	black bottle base
41	TrA	5	2	ceramic	Modern	white earthenware
42	TrA	5	1	ceramic	Modern	red earthenware
43	TrA	8	7	bone	animal	-
44	TrA	8	2	ceramic	Modern	white earthenware
45	TrA	8	2	ceramic	Modern	red earthenware
46	TrA	8	1	ceramic	tobacco pipe	stem
47	TrA	9	1	metal	Cu alloy	thimble
48	TrA	9	3	ceramic	Modern	white earthenware
49	TrA	9	3	ceramic	Modern	red earthenware

Find No	Area	Context No	No of Pieces	Material	Type	Description
50	Tr B	19	1	glass	Modern	black bottle
51	Tr B	19	1	metal	iron	nail
52	Tr B	19	6	ceramic	modern	white earthenware blue & white dec
53	Tr B	19	6	shell	-	-
54	Tr B	19	1	ceramic	medieval	body sherd

### Appendix D: List of Drawings

Drawing No	Area	Sheet No	Subject	Scale
1	Tr A	1	Plan	1:20
2	Tr A	1	South facing section	1:20
3	Tr A	1	west facing section	1:20
4	Tr B	2	plan	1:20
5	Tr B	2	South facing section	1:20
6	Tr B	3	west facing section	1:20

### Appendix E: List of Photographs

Film No.	001			
Frame	Area	Context No.	Subject	Taken from
1	Tr A	-	general maching open trench	E
2	Tr A	-	general maching open trench	E
3	Tr B	-	cleaned up after machine	S
4	Tr B	-	cleaned up after machine	E
5	Tr B	-	cleaned up after machine	N
6	Tr A	-	cleaned up after machine	W
7	Tr A	-	cleaned up after machine	N
8	-	-	general working shot with visitors	W
9	-	-	general view processing geophysics	-
10	-	-	general posters & visitors	-
11	-	-	general posters & visitors	-
12	-	-	general posters & visitors	-
13	-	-	general posters & visitors	-
14	-	-	void	-
15	Tr A	-	further cleaning	W
16	Tr B	-	further cleaning	W
17	Tr A	-	pipe trench appearing	W
18	-	-	trenches fenced off at the end of the day	W
19	-	-	trenches fenced off at the end of the day	NW
20	-	-	trenches backfilled	W
21	-	-	trenches backfilled	NW
22	Tr A	-	backfilled & turf re-laid	E
23	Tr A	-	backfilled & turf re-laid	SE
24	Tr B	-	backfilled & turf re-laid	SE
25	Tr B	-	backfilled & turf re-laid	SE
26	Tr A	-	backfilled & turf re-laid	W
Film 2				
Frame	Area	Context No.	Subject	Taken from
1	Tr B	-	after cleaning	S
2	Tr B	-	after cleaning	E
3	Tr B	-	after cleaning	N
4	Tr A	-	after cleaning	S
5	Tr A	-	after cleaning	W
6	Tr A	-	after cleaning	N
7	Tr A	-	after cleaning	S

Frame	Area	Context No.	Subject	Taken from
8	Tr A	-	service pipe trench appearing	S
9	Tr A	-	service pipe trench appearing	W
10	Tr A	-	service pipe trench appearing	SE
11	Tr A	-	pipe exposed	S
12	Tr A	-	south facing section	S
13	Tr A	-	west facing section	W
14	Tr A	-	west facing section	W
15	Tr A	-	plan view of stone structure in section	S
16	Tr A	-	east facing section	E
17	Tr A	-	east facing section	E
18	Tr A	-	plan view	E
19	Tr A	-	north facing section	N
20	Tr A	-	plan view	N
21	Tr A	-	detail of stone slab	N
22	Tr B	-	west facing section & cobbles	W
23	Tr B	-	west facing section & cobbles	W
24	Tr B	-	detail of cobbles	N
25	Tr B	-	north facing section & cobbles	N
26	Tr B	-	south facing section	S
27	Tr B	-	east facing section	E
28	Tr B	-	east facing section	E
29	Tr B	-	plan view	S
30	Tr B	-	plan view	N
31	Tr A	-	final plan	N

## Appendix F: Discovery and Excavation Scotland Entry

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Renfrewshire
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Paisley Abbey Trial Trenching
PROJECT CODE:	4685
PARISH:	Paisley
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	R Will
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	GUARD Archaeology Ltd
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Limited excavation
NMRS NO(S):	NS46SE 2.05, NS46SE 2.00, NS46SE 2.07
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	Medieval Abbey precinct
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	--
NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)	NS4849 6388
START DATE (this season)	18 September 2017
END DATE (this season)	25 September 2017
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	--
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	Limited archaeological trial trenching was carried out by GUARD Archaeology and volunteers from the Renfrewshire Local History Forum in September 2017 to the south of Paisley Abbey in Paisley met to the medieval 'Drain'. This excavation followed on from a similar small scale excavations between 2009 and 2015 to investigate whether buildings associated with Paisley Abbey and the drain survive within surrounding area. Two trial trenches were excavated and uncovered deep demolition layers and recent levelling deposits along with stone and brick foundations from buildings that occupied the site in the nineteenth century. Although no definitive medieval structures were uncovered a number of sherds of medieval pottery were recovered. The survival of late medieval deposits suggest that there is the possibility that medieval buildings or foundations may survive in the area.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	--
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	--
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Renfrewshire Council and Heritage Lottery Fund.
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	--
EMAIL ADDRESS:	--
ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	Archive to be deposited in NMRS. Report lodged with WoSAS SMR and NMRS

**Appendix G: Research Design and Written Schemes of Investigation**

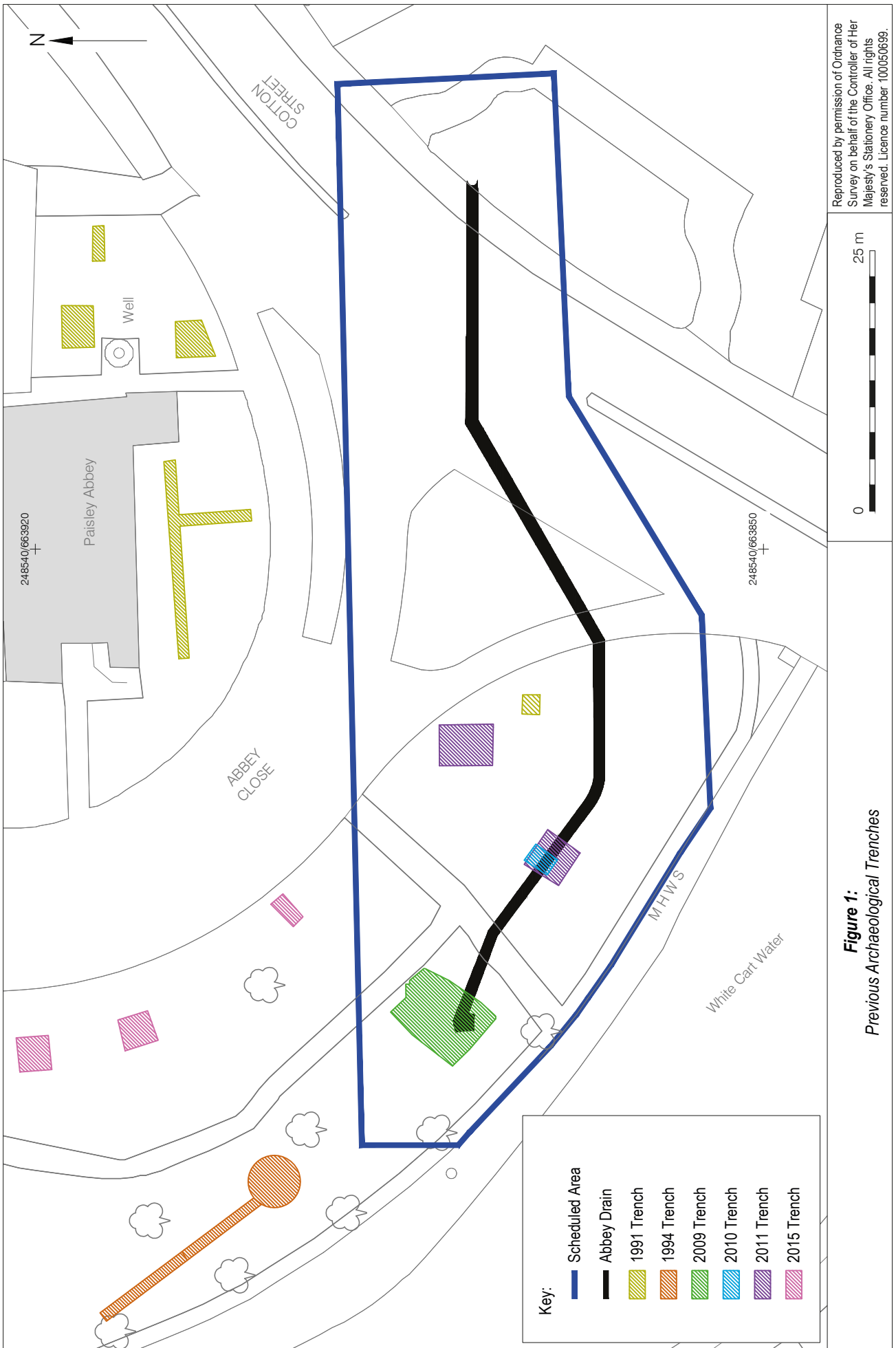
# PAISLEY ABBEY DRAIN 'WEE DIG 2017'

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCHING

RESEARCH DESIGN AND WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION

PROJECT 4685





## Executive Summary

- 1.1 GUARD Archaeology Ltd, with the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) 'Stories, Stones and Bones fund', Renfrewshire Council, Paisley Abbey and Paisley Museum aim to carry out a small archaeological investigation close to Paisley Abbey Drain over six days in September 2017. The aim of the investigations is to uncover elements that relate to the monastic precinct associated with the Abbey, and to investigate how this relates to the later development of Paisley. The work will be carried out by volunteers from Renfrewshire Local History Forum and other local organisations under supervision of GUARD Archaeology staff. In addition, several workshops will be held in the Abbey for schools, groups and members of the public to provide information and training in relation to the Abbey, its drain and the heritage of Paisley. This project is part of Renfrewshire Council's project to regenerate the centre of Paisley and an important part of the Paisley City of Culture 2021 bid

## Introduction

- 2.1 This document details the methodology to be used during geophysical survey and trial trenching around Paisley Abbey Drain that is due to take place between 18-23 September 2017. These archaeological works will be undertaken to establish the presence, extent and nature of any significant archaeological remains that relate to the development of the Abbey and the town of Paisley. In line with Historic Environment Scotland's document on *Managing Change in the Historic Environment*, this the project has been designed to maximise the results of the investigations with minimum disturbance to the archaeological deposits and structures while providing access and information to members of the public. The location of the trial trenches have been chosen based on the results of geophysical survey, the interior survey of the Drain and areas of potential recent disturbance.

If significant archaeological remains are uncovered they will not be excavated, but protected and preserved *in situ*. This document has been produced in consultation with Historic Environment Scotland and Renfrewshire Council.

## Site Location

- 3.1 The trial trenches will be located in a small grassed municipal park and garden to the south of Paisley Abbey next to the River Cart (NGR: NS4849 6388). The present banks of the River Cart are retained by a stone wall with iron railings, a footpath next to the wall, and a row of trees and grass beyond. It is thought that the present retaining wall replaced an earlier wall and that the original river bank was further east, in ground that has now been built up, behind the latest retaining wall. In addition, a major modern sewage pipe was inserted next to the retaining wall.
- 3.2 A map regression exercise and an aerial photography search has shown how the immediate area to the east and south of the Abbey was occupied by streets and buildings up until the 1920s. The Council then bought the land, demolished the buildings, and landscaped the area to form the present day street plan and gardens, which is quite different to the original setting of the Abbey.

## Cultural and Heritage Led Regeneration

- 4.1 Renfrewshire Council is currently taking forward a set of ambitious and exciting plans designed to transform the area's future by using Paisley's internationally-significant heritage and cultural assets.
- 4.2 In retelling the story of Paisley's rich heritage to the world, we hope to inspire major regeneration projects, attract tourism, create jobs, tackle negative perceptions of the town and build pride in Paisley and all it has to offer.
- 4.3 The background detail to this vision for Paisley is contained within the Paisley Town Centre Heritage Asset Strategy, also known as *Paisley: The Untold Story*, which was unveiled in summer 2014.
- 4.4 The purpose of the Paisley Town Centre Asset Strategy is to understand and value Paisley's unique heritage that lies largely undiscovered. Heritage, character and story draw people together, strengthen community capacity and play an important role in the economic regeneration of town

centres. The historic assets, together with a consideration of more contemporary cultural activities, such as sculpture and performance arts, hold the potential to attract additional visitors and increase spend. The focus is therefore to harness this potential and prepare a realistic, deliverable and integrated asset strategy that plans a route to regenerate and revitalise the town centre.

- 4.5 Under the broader policy document of the Town Centre Asset Strategy, The Paisley Town Centre Action Plan 2016-2026 sets out a vision for the regeneration of Paisley centred on its world class cultural and heritage assets. The plan includes five key areas for action one of which is the area broadly referred to as the Abbey Quarter.
- 4.6 The revitalisation of the Abbey Quarter is intended to reinforce the cluster of important heritage assets already located there namely: the 12th century Paisley Abbey, the magnificent Town Hall, the mysterious Abbey drain and River Cart. This area is a keystone of our rich heritage in Paisley.
- 4.7 Interventions included in the action plan for this area include: developing the visitor experience of the Abbey, the Abbey's medieval drain, the town hall, and improving the public realm and access to the River Cart.
- 4.8 The Abbey Drain is a 90 m long tunnel running alongside the River Cart. While currently inaccessible to the public, the drain is shrouded in mystery, and has been the subject of several archaeological digs.
- 4.9 As a first stage in September 2017 the HLF funded "Wee Dig" will be a community focussed archaeological excavation around the Abbey drain site which is planned to lead on to a major year-long dig in 2018 currently entitled *The Big Dig 2018*. The "Wee Dig" will provide an opportunity to showcase the value of the Abbey Drain heritage, as an economic tool and as a platform to increase a sense of identification with, and an ownership of all aspects related to it for years to come. The project will work closely with local schools, community groups and local passers-by getting them involve in the trial trench excavation and geophysical survey. It will provide diverse educational activities throughout different workshops involving indoor learning about archaeology and its techniques and interpretation sessions which will take place in the Abbey and will include guided tours of the Abbey and the excavations. Practical hands-on session on the analysis and handling of artefacts recovered from the Abbey Drain itself will also be undertaken in the Abbey and the DVD of previous investigations will be shown. In addition Renfrewshire Council will be promoting the project through their website and press office, this has already started and a press release has been issued. Once finished, the results of the project will be passed on to the local community by means of a public talk. Information will also be available to promote other heritage assets within Paisley that are currently being promoted through an 'app' and tablets will be available during the workshops for school groups to use the app to explore the town.

### 2021 UK City of Culture

- 4.10 Our bid for Paisley to become the UK City of Culture in 2021 is at the centre of these plans. We will use this to develop and showcase our fantastic cultural and heritage assets and make sure we maximise the benefits they can deliver to the quality of life of all our residents, the enjoyment of our visitors and the sustainable growth of our economy.
- 4.11 The exciting news of Paisley being shortlisted for this competition is energising and galvanising efforts to drive forward the corporate policies and strategies discussed above. With the Wee Dig in September, the timing for finding more about Paisley's medieval past and engaging its communities with heritage and archaeology could not be better.

## Archaeological Background

- 5.1 The Cluniac Abbey of Paisley was founded as a priory at its present location in the late 1160s and became an abbey in 1219. The Abbey and its estates was one of the richest Cluniac foundations in the country but the Abbey suffered during the Wars of Independence and was burned down in 1307. It underwent an ambitious building programme in the 1450s under the direction of the Abbot Thomas Tervas but the tower collapsed into the choir in the 1550s, just before further disturbances and damage during the Reformation in 1561, when the Abbey transferred into private hands. Much

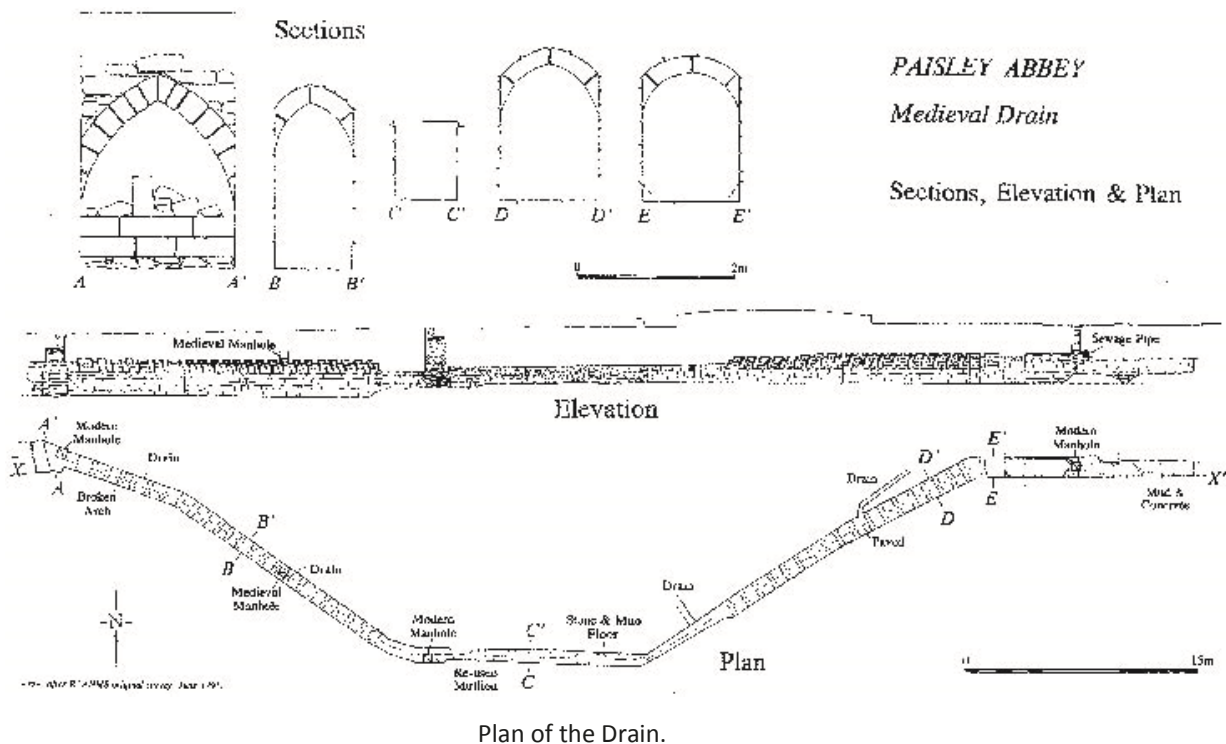
of the Abbey as it survives today is the result of various renovations and re-buildings from the 19th century on top of the surviving walls and foundations, although the nave is largely original.



Pont's map produced between 1583-1614 not long after the Abbey tower collapsed.

- 5.2 Only the Abbey church and part of the cloistral ranges remain today but it would have stood at the heart of the monastic precinct that enclosed the area next to the River Cart. The layout of monasteries were fairly standardised but varied depending on the local topography and available land. The River Cart to the south would have formed a natural boundary to the abbey plan. Crossraguel Abbey in Ayrshire was the daughter house of Paisley, and here the monastic precinct survives intact, and it may provide a model for the layout at Paisley. At Crossraguel, the abbey lay to the north, with the Abbot's house to the east, and various buildings to the south and west.
- 5.3 In recent years a number of small-scale archaeological investigations have taken place around the Abbey and its drain. In 1991 five small trenches were excavated to the south of the Abbey, three round the well to the south of the south transept, and east of the 'Place' (remains of the east range), one long thin trench to the south of the 'Place', and one further to the south in the grassed area leading to the river (McBrien 1991). The trench in the grassed area, closest to the Drain was excavated to a depth of 1.9 m and uncovered mainly 19th and 20th century demolition and landscaping material. Recent work outside the 'Place' has uncovered remains and foundations of the demolished west range. An archaeological watching brief undertaken in 1994 some 25 m to the north-west of the modern entrance to the drain, during the construction of a large and deep sewer that went under the River Cart, uncovered the remains of a stone-built platform and revetment, possibly a jetty or wharf behind the present retaining walls along the river bank. These deposits were over 2.5 m below the present ground level (Neighbour 1994).
- 5.4 In 2009 a new phase of investigations were undertaken that were instigated and supported by Renfrewshire Council and timed to coincide with 'Doors Open Day'. In 2009 one trench was excavated at the access manhole at the west end of the drain which uncovered part of the roof and north facing wall of the drain, and a possible wall relating to the monastery and later nineteenth century foundations (Will 2009). During 2010 and 2011 two more trenches were excavated, one located on the line of the drain to the east of the modern access which uncovered a large wall foundation and a cobbled surface approximately 1.6 m below ground level. The second trench to the north of the drain uncovered a possible oven or well (Will 2010 and 2011). Trenching further to the west in 2015, uncovered sections of walls and foundations from the nineteenth century tenements that had occupied the site, along with a possible medieval wall and a large number of fragments from medieval ceramic roof tiles, some of which were partially glazed (Will 2015)

- 5.5 In 2012 Renfrewshire Local History Forum commissioned a ground penetrating radar survey (GPR) of the scheduled area and the area to the south of the 'Place' (Jones and Cuenca-Garc a 2012). The results of the survey suggest that the drain may have originally continued to the south in a straight line and that there may have been other smaller drains that joined the main drain or that the present drain may have originally been two drains that converged further to the south.
- 5.6 The major archaeological discoveries relate to the drain when it was re-discovered in 1990-92 (Malden 2000). At this time a large amount of silt was mechanically removed from it and carefully sieved for artefacts. During this operation a huge number and variety of artefacts were recovered including pottery, animal bone, lead seals, bone objects and other objects and materials. In addition, a small excavation was carried out inside the drain further to the east where it was much reduced in size and completely silted up. Here there were securely stratified deposits that contained artefacts and important botanical remains (Johnston and Driscoll 1991). Subsequent analysis of the botanical remains indicated a wide range of both food and medicinal plants (Dickson 2000). Following the archaeological work inside the drain in 1990-92, the Royal Commission of Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS), now Historic Environment Scotland, completed an internal survey of it, which noted changes in direction, differences in construction, and identified several features including feeder drains at roof level and a possible medieval manhole.



### Plan of Drain from RCAHMS Survey

- 5.7 In recognition of the national significance and importance of the drain, it and the immediate surrounding area has been brought under the protection of Historic Scotland as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM number 8078).

## Research on Abbeys and Monasteries on Scotland

- 6.1 During the 1980s and 1990s there were several large scale research programmes that were funded by Historic Scotland on monasteries that were mainly in their care. The excavations were often prompted by programmes of conservation and maintenance. Sites that were investigated included the Tironesian Abbey at Kelso (Tabraham 1984), the Augustinian Abbey at Jedburgh (Lewis and Ewart 1995), the Cistercian Abbey at Dundrennan (Ewart 2001) and the Benedictine Priory on the Isle of

May (James and Yeoman (2008). More recently the Heritage Lottery Fund supported a community project at the Tironesian Abbey at Kilwinning (Kilwinning Community Archaeology Project). All these investigations have added greatly to the state of knowledge concerning monasteries in Scotland but in all these cases the ground plan of the monastic precinct was already largely known. Unlike at Paisley Abbey, when the effects of the reformation and later development has removed most of the buildings except for the much altered 'Place' and the 'drain' which now appears isolated from the Abbey.

## Management and Conservation

- 7.1 In addition to the archaeological research benefits of the project a key aim will be to provide information to add to and inform the current conservation plan for the drain. To date, there have been a number of surveys of the interior of the drain including two structural surveys and a photographic survey of the more inaccessible parts of it by a remote-controlled camera. These surveys have identified areas of concern that were partly addressed by Renfrewshire Council and HES when the timber props that were placed in the drain to support a broken arch in the early 1990s were replaced by ones in stainless steel. This and other proposed conservation measures could be implemented from the interior of the drain. What is presently not known is the condition of the exterior of the drain, and the impact of nineteenth and early twentieth century building/demolition and landscaping of the immediate area over and around it. The interior surveys have commented on a section of concrete roofing, although its date or extent is presently unknown, even though it must have been in place when the modern brick access manholes were built in the 1960s.



Photos of interior of Drain

## General Research Themes

- 8.1 When the drain and its contents were 're-discovered' in the early 1990s a large scale research project was discussed encompassing the whole Abbey and drain area (Driscoll and Leslie 1992), and the following research themes were proposed. This section has been summarised from the 1992 proposal as many of the themes are still relevant.
- Scottish Monasticism: to investigate the internal organisation and to uncover the layout of the monastery and to identify key buildings.
  - Paisley and the Cluny Connection: the Abbey at Cluny was one of the most influential of medieval monasteries in Europe, and Paisley and Crossraguel are the only cluniac foundations in Scotland.
  - Since these themes were first proposed research has been undertaken on artefacts recovered from Crossraguel which will provide good comparative material for Paisley.

- Paisley and the Stewarts: the Abbey was a Stewart foundation and it gained royal status following the accession Robert II in the 14th century. Historical records suggest that there is the possibility of there being the burial site and possible royal crypt, or mausoleum, of the Stewarts.
  - Pilgrims and the Cult of St Miren: the shrine to St Miren was one of the most popular sites for visiting pilgrims in Scotland. Offerings from pilgrims will have contributed significantly to the financial and spiritual well being of the Abbey. Special facilities will have been built to house these visitors. The theme of pilgrimage has since been identified by the national Scottish Archaeological Research Framework (ScARF) research initiative as a key theme for future research.
- 8.2 In response to the future research framework identified by ScARF, the 'Wee Dig' will address the following research areas:
- *Integrated landscape studies to address a range of settlement-related questions.* Excavation should be combined with geophysical survey to develop chronological frameworks and chart the changing nature of the abbey within the medieval burgh. This study could potentially aid to identify the layout of the monastery and the presence of any associated building.
  - *Future investigations of Scottish burghs.* Analysis of the nature of the origin and subsequent development of Paisley, and consideration of the role of the Abbey within the wider settlement system. Post-excavation analysis of the material recovered during excavation has a huge potential for understanding monastic life and could provide evidence of trade and other kinds of contact. Artefacts already recovered from the Drain have demonstrated strong trading links with England and mainland Europe particularly in textiles which later became hugely important industry in Paisley.

## Aims, Objectives and Scope of the 'Wee Dig'

- 9.1 The aim of the 'Wee Dig' archaeological work is to identify:
- as yet unknown archaeological artefacts, features and deposits that may relate to the monastic precinct that would have surrounded Paisley Abbey;
  - determine the character, extent and significance of any archaeological deposits encountered in relation to the Abbey, the drain and the later development of the town;
  - assess the impact of recent building/demolition/landscaping on the structure of the drain;
  - inform future management and conservation requirements.

## Geophysical Survey

- 10.1 A geophysics survey using magnetometry will be carried outside of the Scheduled Area as the Scheduled area has previously been subject to a Ground Penetrating Radar survey (Jones and Cuenca-García 2012 Jones). Although the exact survey area has still to be defined it is likely to cover the area immediately to the west where tenements and other buildings were built in the nineteenth century and foundations may remain beneath the recent landscaping. If time allows additional survey may include a transect across the cemetery to the north of the Abbey where a number of horizontal gravestones are visible and more may survive under the grass. The survey will aim to provide information on the potential survival of medieval and later structures in the area. The geophysical survey will be undertaken by Christine Rennie, a senior Project Officer with GUARD Archaeology and volunteers.



## Trial Trenching

- 11.1 The location of the two proposed trial trenches has been selected with specific questions in mind. The results of the ground penetrating radar (GPR) survey that was undertaken in 2012 suggest that the Drain may have originally continued in a straight line rather than change direction and that there may have been other drains that joined the main drain. The interior of the Drain in this section has been built on a higher outcrop of bedrock with low walls and is narrower than the adjacent sections. In addition, the roof is largely concrete so there has been substantial disturbance in this area the extent of which is presently unknown. Therefore, the trial trenches will aim to investigate the deposits covering the Drain including the recent disturbance.

## Indicative Programme and Resources

- 12.1 GUARD Archaeology Ltd will provide three experienced staff who will be on site throughout the project to supervise and train volunteers. In addition we will be working with members of the Renfrewshire Local History Group which includes a number of very experienced people who have worked on the Abbey and other projects. Given the size of the trenches there will be one member of staff to five or six volunteers and that there may be approximately 10-15 volunteers each day plus schools and other community groups. Four primary schools are scheduled to visit on Wednesday and Thursday. In addition we will be working with Kibble Education and Care Centre to enable young people on their programmes to get involved.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Excavation	De-turf & machine excavate volunteers	Hand excavation with volunteers	School groups & volunteers	School groups & volunteers	School groups & volunteers	volunteers	Site closed	Backfill re-turf
Geophysics	Survey with volunteers & process results	Survey with volunteers & process results	Survey with volunteers & process results	workshop	workshop	workshop		
Abbey	Set up	Set up	workshops	workshops	workshops	workshop		Pack up
Site tours	daily							

## Fieldwork Methodology

- 13.1 The archaeological fieldwork will be undertaken in line with the relevant policies and guidelines of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA), of which GUARD Archaeology Ltd is a Registered Organisation, including:
- Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavation (2014);
  - Standard and Guidance for the Collection, Documentation, Conservation and Research of Archaeological Materials (2014), and
  - Code of Conduct (2014).
- 13.2 A maximum of two trial trenches will be excavated. These will be 3 m by 3 m in size, but may be extended depending on the extent of archaeological deposits uncovered. If the trench edges are unstable or deeper than 1.2 m they will be stepped.
- 13.3 Turf will be removed by hand, and then the initial overburden will be removed by JCB. All excavation will be by hand and undertaken by local volunteers under close archaeological supervision. The turf will be stacked to one side for reinstatement at the end of the excavation. A health and safety risk assessment and method statement will be agreed, before commencement of work, with Renfrewshire Council safety department, and the trenches will be enclosed within a Heris-type fenced compound. All soil will be stored within the compound.

- 13.4 All significant archaeological features encountered will be cleaned by hand to determine their character and extent but not necessarily excavated. Should negative-cut features be encountered, these will be 25-50% excavated by hand under archaeological supervision, in order to determine their character, significance, nature, date and function. All on-site recording, written, drawn and photographic, will be to the standards normally pertaining in archaeological fieldwork and to ClfA standards. A full record of features will be made using a single context recording system using pro forma sheets, drawings and photographs. All archaeological features will be photographed and recorded at an appropriate scale. Sections will be drawn at 1:10, and plans at 1:20 or 1:50. All archaeological features will be accurately surveyed and located within the National Grid.
- 13.5 All archaeological finds will be dealt with by the on-site archaeologists. Finds, shell and animal bone will be collected as bulk samples by context. Significant small finds will be three dimensionally located prior to retrieval. All finds will be processed to MAP2 type standards and subject to appropriate specialist assessment. If necessary, conservation of finds will be appraised to allow for specialist study. All hand-excavated feature-fills and horizons will be sampled as appropriate, using bulk soil samples for palaeo-environmental evidence.
- 13.6 A representative section will be recorded denoting depth of topsoil, any stratigraphy present and the nature of the soil. This information will be logged in the day book, together with a sketch drawn to scale, and a photographic record of deposits.
- 13.7 Should human remains be revealed, the local police, the client and WoSAS will be informed immediately. Any human remains will be accurately recorded, but left *in situ*.

## Report Preparation and Contents

- 14.1 A report detailing the results of the archaeological fieldwork will be submitted to the client and HES within 4 weeks of completion of the fieldwork. The report will take the form of a Data Structure Report and will contain an analysis of the results of the archaeological work. The report will include a full descriptive text that will characterise the date and extent of any archaeological deposits. It will also include plans at an appropriate scale showing the area subjected to ground-breaking works, archaeological features, as well as archiving lists of all finds, samples, field drawings and photographs.
- 14.2 The report will include the following:
- executive summary;
  - a site location plan to at least 1:10,000 scale with at least an 8 figure central grid reference;
  - OASIS reference number; unique site code;
  - planning application number;
  - contractor's details including date work carried out;
  - nature and extent of the proposed development, including developer/client details;
  - description of the site history, location and geology;
  - a site plan to a suitable scale and tied into the national grid so that features can be correctly orientated;
  - discussion of the results of fieldwork;
  - context and feature descriptions;
  - features, number and class of artefacts, spot dating and scientific dating of significant finds presented in tabular format;
  - plans and section drawings of the features drawn at a suitable scale;
  - initial assessment of relevant finds/samples if appropriate;
  - recommendations regarding the need for, and scope of, any further Stage 2 or Stage 3 works;

- a bibliography.
- 14.3 An appropriate number of hard copies and digital pdf copies of the report will be prepared for the client and WoSAS for their records.
- 14.4 The report will be presented in an ordered state and bound within a protective cover/sleeve. It will be page numbered and supplemented with section numbering for ease of reference.

## Copyright

- 15.1 Unless otherwise agreed, copyright for any report resulting from the archaeological work undertaken as part of the project, will be deemed the intellectual property of GUARD Archaeology Ltd.

## Publication

- 16.1 A summary of the project results will be submitted to *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland*. In the event of minor archaeological remains being encountered during the archaeological fieldwork, it is proposed that a comprehensive report, submitted to *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland*, will form the final publication of the site. A copy of this summary report will be included in the Data Structure Report.

## Archive

- 17.1 The archive for the project, including a copy of the report, will be submitted to the National Record of the Historic Environment (<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/archives-and-research/archives-and-collections/national-record-of-the-historic-environment>) within three months of completion of all relevant work.
- 17.2 The online OASIS form at <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/> will be completed within 3 months of completion of the work. Once the Data Structure Report has become a public document by submission to or incorporation into the SMR, WoSAS will validate the OASIS form, thus placing the information into the public domain on the OASIS website.

## Finds Disposal

- 18.1 The arrangement for the final disposal of any finds made in connection with the archaeological work will be in keeping with Scottish legal requirements as set out in the *Treasure Trove Code of Practice* published by the Scottish Government in December 2008. The laws relating to Treasure Trove and *Bona Vacantia* in Scotland apply to all finds where the original owner cannot be identified. This includes all material recovered during archaeological fieldwork. Accordingly, all assemblages recovered from archaeological fieldwork are claimed automatically by the Crown and must be reported to the Scottish Archaeological Finds Allocation Panel through its secretariat, the Treasure Trove Unit. In the event of the discovery of small finds, a filled-out copy of the form "Declaration of an Archaeological Assemblage from Fieldwork", and two copies of the pertinent Data Structure Report, will be submitted to the Panel at the conclusion of the fieldwork. The Panel will then be responsible for recommending to the Queen's and Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer which museum should be allocated the finds. All artefacts will be temporarily stored by GUARD Archaeology Ltd until a decision has been made by the panel.

## Personnel and Liaison

- 19.1 The GUARD team will include the following qualified and experienced GUARD archaeologists:
- Project Director : Bob Will
  - Project Supervisor: Iraia Arabaolaza
  - Geophysics supervisor: Christine Rennie

- Finds and Environmental Support and Conservation: Aileen Maule
- Illustrator: Gillian McSwan

19.2 The GUARD Project Manager, Bob Will, will be the point of contact for the archaeological works. A full CV for individuals concerned can be made available on request.

## Monitoring

20.1 The proposed start date for the archaeological investigation is Monday 18 September and will run through to Saturday 23 September, although the trenches will be backfilled and the turf re-laid on Monday 25 September. The Renfrewshire Council will be informed of the site mobile phone number prior to the start date so that visits can be arranged.

## Health & Safety and Insurance

21.1 GUARD Archaeology Ltd adheres to the guidelines and standards prescribed for archaeological fieldwork set down by the ClfA. It is standard GUARD Archaeology Ltd policy, prior to any fieldwork project commencing, to conduct a risk assessment and to prepare a project safety plan, the prescriptions of which will be strictly followed for the duration of all archaeological fieldwork. Copies of the resultant project safety plan and of GUARD Archaeology Ltd's *Fieldwork Safety Policy Statement* may be viewed upon request.

21.2 The fieldwork will commence with a safety talk and all staff and volunteers will be expected to read and sign the safety plan. Continuous risk assessment in the form of a daily toolbox talk will take place throughout the fieldwork so that mitigation measures can be put in place as and when necessary. At least one qualified First Aider will be on site throughout the project and an emergency first aid plan will be in place. All staff and volunteers will have appropriate PPE for working on an archaeological excavation. The Abbey will provide shelter and welfare facilities for staff and volunteers as well as space for workshops and events relating to the project.

22.3 GUARD Archaeology Ltd also possesses all necessary insurance cover, proofs of which have been supplied to Renfrewshire Council.

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**Appendix H: Posters and Leaflets**

# The Wee Dig 2017

From **Monday 18th to Saturday 23rd September**, Renfrewshire Council and Guard Archaeology Ltd, with support from Heritage Lottery Fund, will be investigating a fascinating structure that lies under your feet.

**And we want you to come along and get involved.**

## Archaeological Background

A substantial and well built stone drain presumably linked to buildings associated with the monastic precinct attached to Paisley Abbey is known to run through Abbey Close, to the south of the abbey and near the River Cart.

Previous investigations uncovered the remains of cobbled surfaces, stone built walls and a possible stone built oven along with artefacts including medieval pottery.

The Wee Dig is now looking at a previously unexplored part of this fascinating structure in attempt to unlock some of the mysteries of its past.



The Wee Dig is part of the Year of History, Heritage and Archaeology and is supported by Heritage Lottery Fund's "Stories, Stones and Bones" programme.



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## Paisley Abbey – early days

Paisley Abbey has its origins in the Cluniac priory founded in 1163 by Walter FitzAlan. The priory became an Abbey in 1219, and in 1244 a daughter monastery was founded by monks from Paisley at Crossraguel in Ayrshire.

Close ties with the High Stewards of Scotland made the Abbey a target during the Wars of Independence. In 1307 the original buildings were burned by an English raiding party.



Paisley 1583-1596



Blue Atlas of Scotland 1654



Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 1:500



Oblique image taken in October 1927



Oblique image taken in April 1938

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## Paisley Abbey – middle years

Paisley Abbey was rebuilt over the course of the fourteenth century but again fell victim to fire in 1498. Restoration work continued until 1553 when the Tower collapsed, severely damaging the eastern portion of the building.

Following the Reformation of 1560, the west end of the nave was turned into a Protestant parish church and domestic buildings were converted for new, secular owners. The Abbey lands were split up and fued off and many of the monastic buildings were robbed for stone (see Plates 1 and 2)

By the mid 1700s the Abbey buildings were in a poor state.

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Plate 1: Pont 1583-1596



Plate 2: Blaeu 'Atlas of Scotland' 1654



Plate 3: Ordnance Survey 2nd edition



Plate 4: Oblique image taken in October 1927



Plate 5: Oblique image taken in April 1938



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## Paisley Abbey – recent history

By the middle of the 1700s the remaining Abbey buildings faced demolition. Fortunately the trustees of the Abbey decided on a programme of restoration and so began several phases of repair, reconstruction and rebuilding over many generations.

Most of the reconstruction work took place between 1912 and 1928 by the end of which the entire church was in use (see Plate 4).

The area around the Abbey has also been transformed over time. Some tenement buildings were shown on the Ordnance Survey maps surrounding the abbey (see Plate 3). By 1938 a number of these building had been demolished (see Plate 5).



Pont 1583-1596



Blue Atlas of Scotland 1654



Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 1:500



Oblique image taken in October 1927

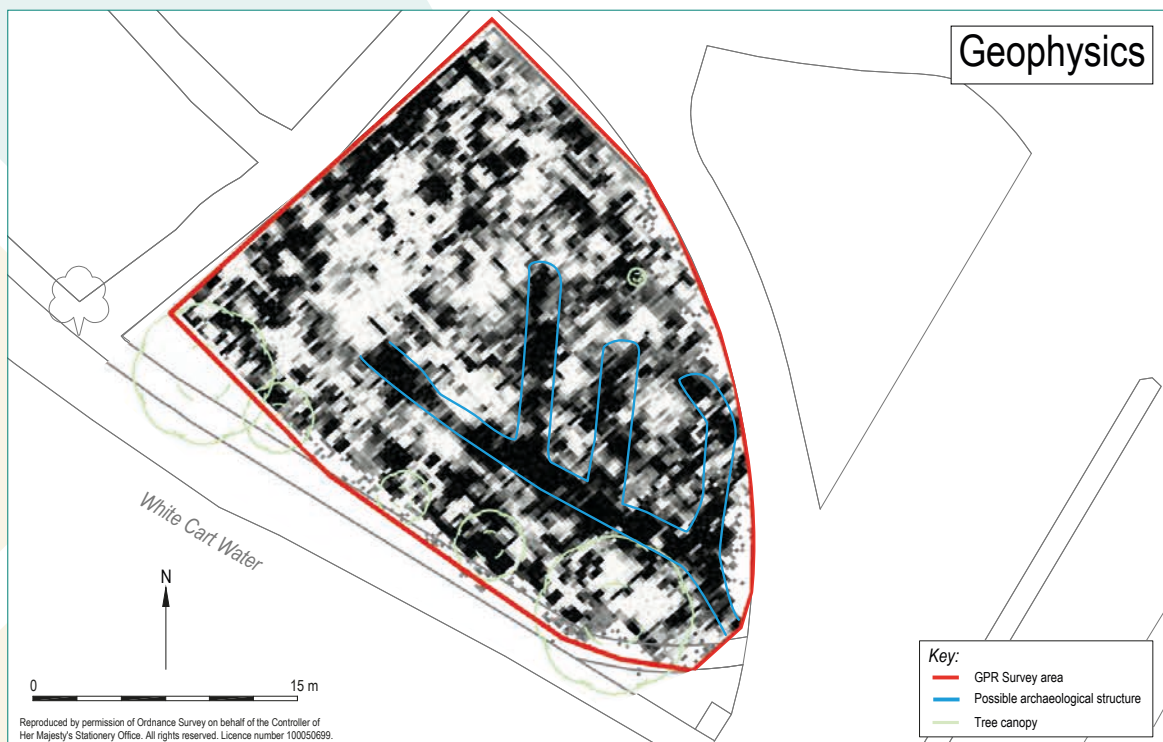
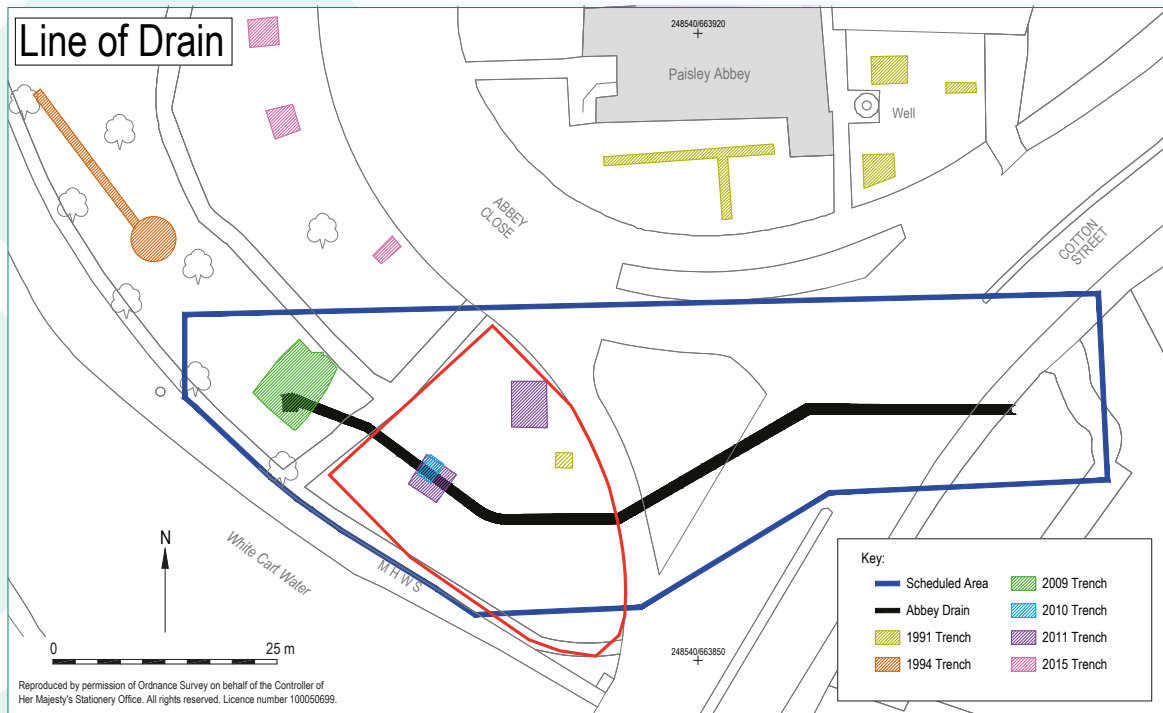


Oblique image taken in April 1938

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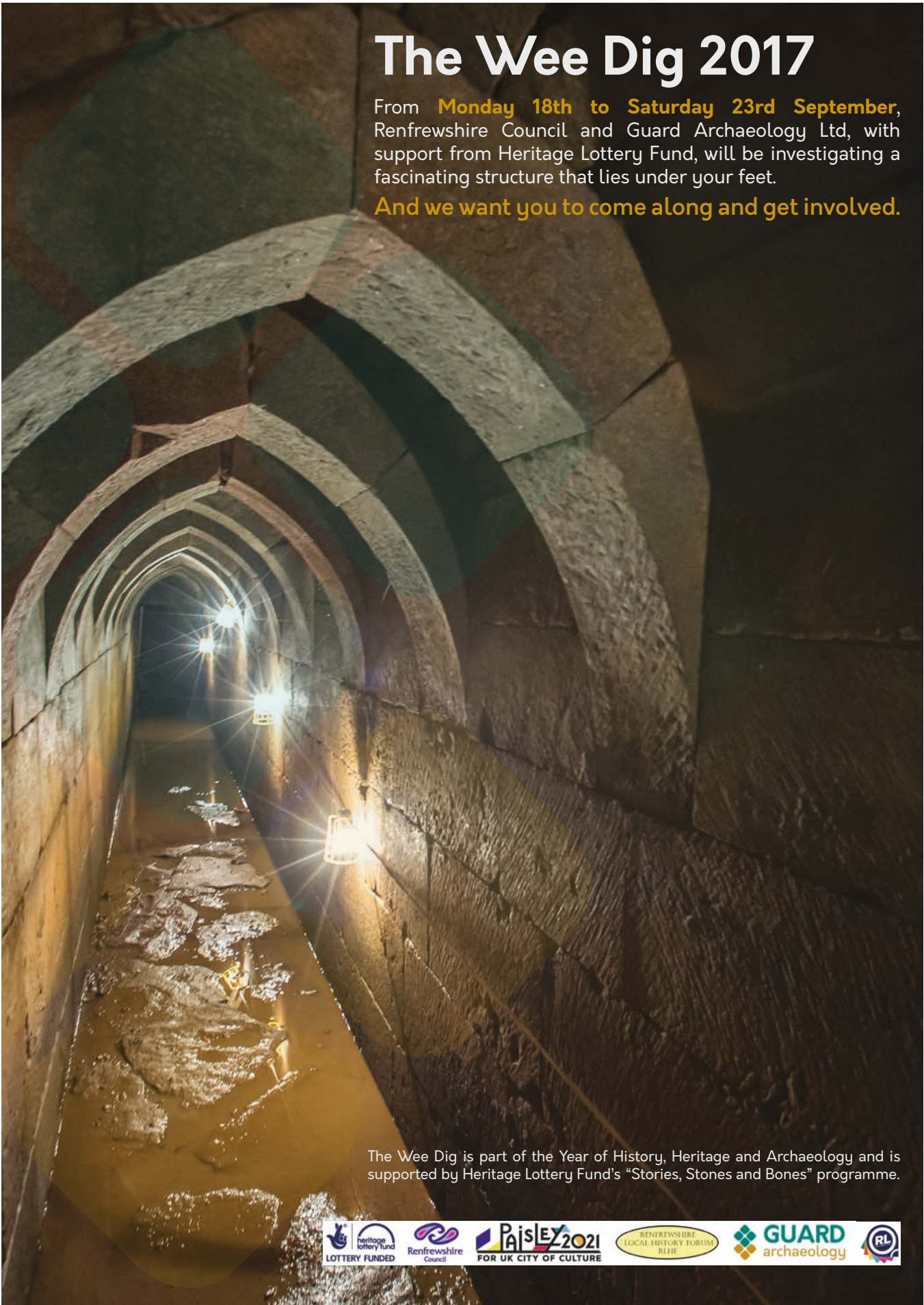
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**And we want you to come along and get involved.**

## #WEEDIG2017

On **Friday and Saturday** there will be free activities and talks in the Abbey

- take part in The Wee Dig
- have a go at sandpit excavation
  - explore artefacts
  - tour the Abbey
- discover archaeology

**No need to book, just come to the Abbey**

**Friday 22 September**

10.30 to 12 noon AND 1.30 to 3 pm

Lunchtime talk 12.30 to 1 pm

**Saturday 23 September**

10.30 to 12 noon AND 2 to 3.30pm

Lunchtime talk 12.30 to 1pm



The Wee Dig is part of the Year of History, Heritage and Archaeology and is supported by Heritage Lottery Fund's "Stories, Stones and Bones" programme.





# The Wee Dig 2017

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**And we want you to come along and get involved.**

## Free and family-friendly event

Please come and chat to us, hear about what we're up to and give us your thoughts on this amazing underground structure.

**Have your say**

**#WEEDIG2017**

Between 10 am and 4 pm our friendly experts will be on hand to answer your questions about The Wee Dig, archaeology and the history of the Abbey. They'll also guide you through a range of interesting hands-on tasks suitable and fun for all ages and abilities.



The Wee Dig is part of the Year of History, Heritage and Archaeology and is supported by Heritage Lottery Fund's "Stories, Stones and Bones" programme.



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