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Coastal Assessment Survey

For Historic Scotland

*Fife -
Kincardine to Fifeness*



APRIL 1996

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By
Philip Robertson
with illustrations by Christopher Burgess,
Alex Hale, Rudiger Bahr, and Neil Dobson



April 1996

A field survey was carried out over a period of 12 days in January 1996 of the north coast of the Forth Estuary and Firth of Forth from Kincardine in the west to Fife Ness in the east, a survey section of approximately 107 km in length. The survey was carried out to the specification *A Procedure For Coastal Assessment Surveys Funded By Historic Scotland* (version 1.5), hereafter referred to as "the Procedures". Notifications of any variations from the Procedures are made clear in the relevant section of this report.

A period of research into documentary sources and aerial photographs was followed by a 12 day field survey carried out by two teams of two fieldwalkers. The principal objectives of a rapid assessment of the coast edge, intertidal zone, and 100 metre wide landward strip were covered. However, the constraints imposed by a winter survey schedule meant that only sporadic coverage was achieved along built up areas, the coastal edge behind high cliffs, or a wide intertidal zone and this report has relied on information from the National Monuments Record for Scotland (hereafter NMRS) and other documentary sources to fill in gaps.

For the purposes of description, the survey area can be split into three distinct geographical sections.

- **From Kincardine to Dalgety Bay**, mud flats dominate the foreshore. This mud is deposited in bays and on rocky foreshores and lies in places over 2 metres in depth, due probably to agricultural activity such as de-forestation along the higher reaches of the River Forth to the west of Stirling. Coastal defence walls are common and these clearly help to protect the coastal edge from erosion and obscure any monuments which might be found in an eroding face. In contrast to the sections further east, the intertidal zone is fairly rich in monuments. The presence of these features may be due to changes in sea-level: their survival may be explained by the favourable burial environment and the more sheltered location of this coastal stretch. Previously un-recorded monuments include a cairn field (NT02428569), a boat 'graveyard' at Kincardine (NS92508760 to NS93248665: site description 1), as well as a possible crannog (NT03248446: site description 2) and industrial monuments related to mining and salt panning works. Most of this coastal section appears stable.
- **From Dalgety Bay to Elie**, the coast is characterised by sandy bays interspersed by rocky headlands. In the east these bays extend up to 5 km in length but this distance shortens further west until the bays measure less than 1 km across. Sea-wall protection is widespread, particularly along built up areas and along protected sections the effects of coastal erosion will be limited. Where the coastal edge is unprotected, the coastline varied from stable to suffering serious erosion (West Wemyss, East Wemyss, and Lundin Links). Where erosion appeared to be a major factor, this will have a detrimental effect on archaeology and the built heritage. Examples of monuments where some damage was evident during the survey include the

Protected Ancient Monument Scafield Tower (NT28NE5), the Pictish Cist at Lundin Links (NO40SW13: site description 4), and the Gas Works at East Wemyss (NT39NW20: Site description 3). While the Protected Ancient Monuments of the Wemyss Caves appear to be stable at present, they may be threatened in the future if the erosion of existing coastal defences which was apparent during the survey is to continue.

Two major types of site may be identified along the foreshore. Firstly, fishing traps are common. In many cases these probably pre-date the 20th Century although the salmon stake nets situated along Largo Bay remained in use until recently. Secondly, the remains of coastal defence measures such as tank and glider traps, as well as anti aircraft defence positions and pill-boxes, are located throughout this coastal strip and feature elsewhere along the survey area.

- **From Fifeness to Elie** the coast is dominated by igneous intrusions and bare sedimentary rock backed by low cliffs and agricultural land. Although few sections of this coastline are defended by a sea-wall the area appears to be mostly stable. However, the effects of erosion were clearly visible on three shell and bone middens located in the eroding faces at the back of a rocky foreshore or sandy beach (Crail: NO61720789, NO61580780 and Elie: NT49809940, NT49289955). Recent breaches and damage to the fabric of Cellardyke harbour wall (NO50SE47: site description 6) suggest that the same may be true for some of the important harbours of the North Forth coastline. Erosion may also be a factor on the Protected Ancient Monuments of Newark Castle (NO50SW17), and Newark Castle Dovecot (NO50SW21).

While there was good survival of material along the eroding face, there appeared to be infrequent survival of sites on the beach itself. Those sites which were located included stone slip-ways, and track-ways cut into the foreshore bedrock that were probably used for harvesting marine produce.

The survey identified 724 sites within the target area. Of the total, 179 are not listed NMRS and the majority of these were located on the foreshore. A further 545 sites have already been recorded on the NMRS

Maritime Fife recommends that no action is needed on 595 sites but suggests that a survey programme be set up or continued on 86 sites, with monitoring to take place of 21 sites, and a combined programme of survey and monitoring on 22 sites. Details of each site and the recommended action on each are contained in the map gazetteers and, in the case of the 'priority' sites, in the summary and recommendations at the end of this report.

The following maps and gazetteers are arranged as indicated in the Procedures. However, the survey was carried out using the Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 Pathfinder series as base maps because they offered more topographical detail than the suggested Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 Landranger system. This option has

been retained in the following map and gazetteer section. Each gazetteer is located where possible opposite the relevant map. The terms used in the gazetteers conform with the Procedures but the information has been produced as a list because this proved to be more practical than the suggested tabular format.

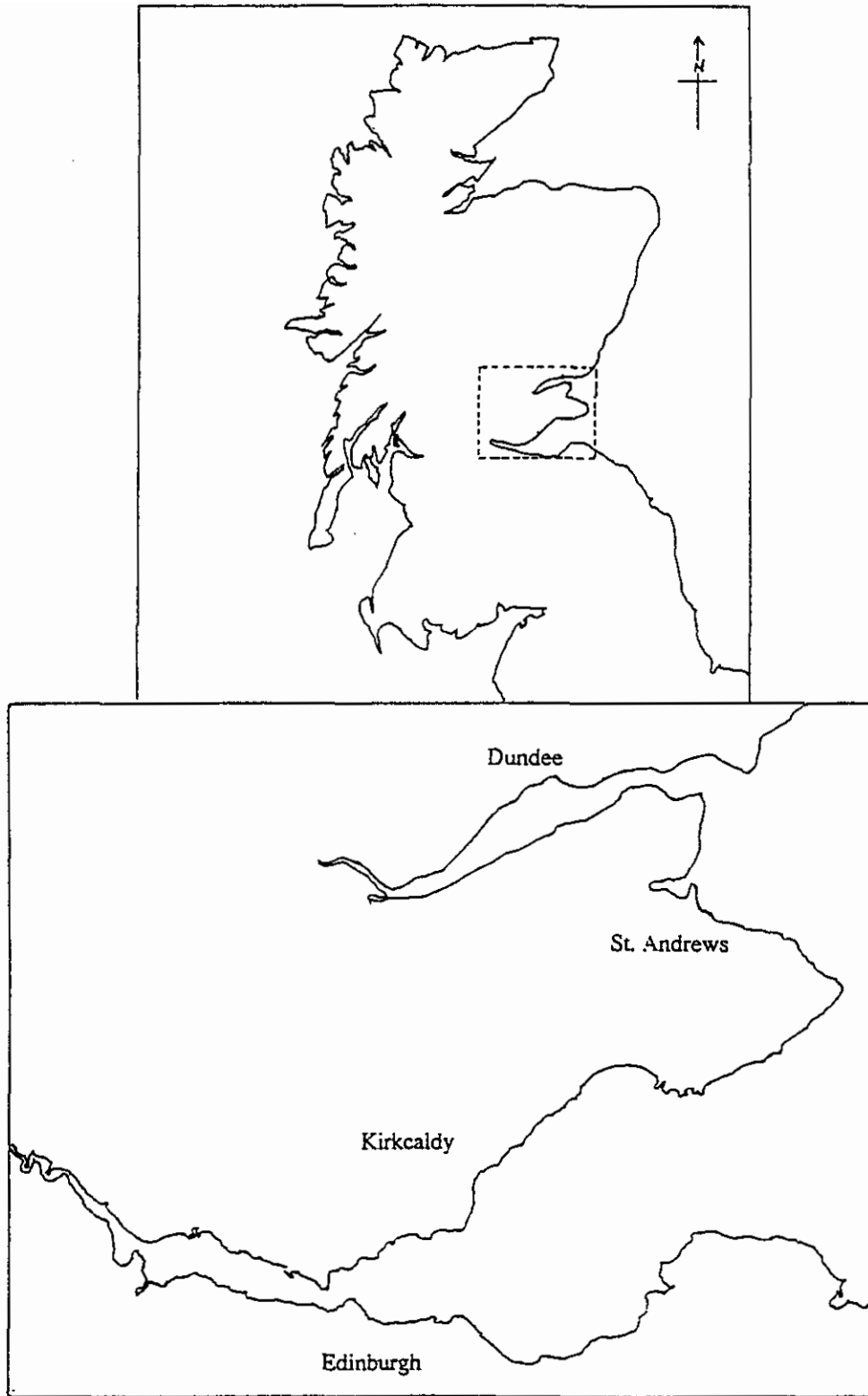


Fig 1: Location map of survey area - Fife- Kincardine to Fifeness

Fig 2: SAMPLE SURVEY FORM

General

Project FCS

Date 21 / 1 / 96

Site Location

Grid Ref. 4921 / 9950

Parcel No. 21

Site Number 2 of

Elevation 0-5 Metres ASL

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Plot

Photograph

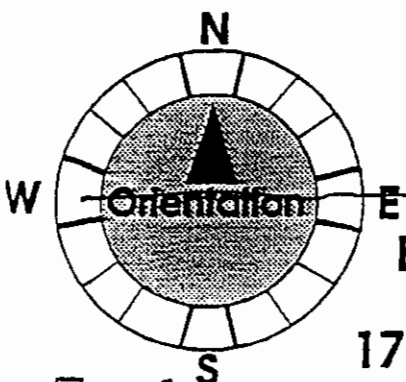
Plan

Reject

Other

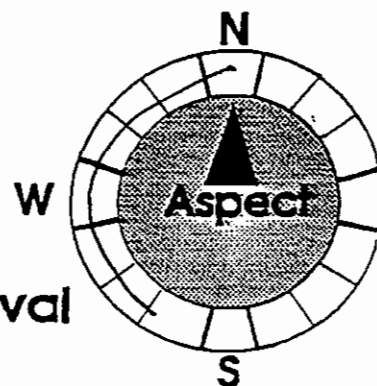
Site Description

Structural Elements				Artefact Elements			
Bank		Enclosure		Tank/Spring		Flint	
Ditch		Farmstead		Track/Road		Glass	
Cairn		Cist		Water Mill		Metal	
CARHs.		Menhir		Camb. Cairn		Pottery/CBM	
Cell.		Kiln		Chapel		Stone	
Clearance		Quarry		other	✓	NONE	
Dam		Settlement				other	✓
CONCRETE WALKWAY AND BUILDING (REMS)				CONCRETE			



Possible Period

UNSURE		Iron Age
Mesolithic		Roman
Neolithic		Dark Age
Bronze Age		Medieval
Early Chr.		Post Medieval
17-19th Cent.	✓	Modern



Environs

Situation	Vegetation	Cover	Er./Dep.
It. Mud	Dunes	Conifer	Eroding
It. Sand	Good Grazing	Deciduous	Partial Er.
It. Rock	Heather Moor	Bedrock	Stable
Eroding fc.	Ploughed	Beach	Partial Dep.
Dunes	Blanket Peat	Garden	Deposition
Other	Arable Crop	Other	notes
		NONE	