

NOLAS

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Professor M A Aston
Centre for the Historic Environment
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Dear Professor Aston

**PROJECT PROPOSAL FOR "TIME TEAM"
" A LOST ROYAL CASTLE"**

Please find enclosed an outline proposal for a possible "Time Team" investigation.

I am one of a group of "mature" students who recently completed a three-year part-time Certificate in Practical Field Archaeology with The University of Aberdeen.

As a part of that course, I began to research a local "castle" site at Dingwall in Ross-shire. Naturally, I got hooked and continued my researches beyond the parameters required for the course. What I have found is, I believe, quite staggering.

A lost "Royal" Castle, with documentary connection to Earl Thorfinn the Mighty, MacBeth, Robert ~~and~~ ^{the} Bruce, James IV, James V, Mary, Queen of Scots, the Lords of the Isles, the Earls of Ross, and finally a local privateer!

Not only that but some remains are extant above ground, the dungeons may still exist, a mediaeval lion has turned up in the gardens, and NONE of the site is scheduled.

Although the owners of the present house (built 1823) are a little cautious, they have agreed that I may approach Time Team and would consent to an excavation.

I also have considerable support from the local Council, with the possibility of accommodating the "Team" in another mediaeval castle, now an hotel, in Dingwall, and the loan of a local farmer's helicopter.

There are also the other members of the group who completed the Aberdeen course, now the "North of Scotland Archaeological Society", on hand as experienced "diggers".

I do hope you will consider this as worthy of a possible excavation to prove "Dingwall's" importance in **VIKING** and **MEDIAEVAL** times of which no artefactual evidence currently exists.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Hilary Hanson", with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Hilary E Hanson

Encl:

BRIEF CHRONOLOGY – DINGWALL CASTLE

- c.870-900** Earl Sigurd I of Orkney, Thorstein the Red of the Hebrides conquer the whole of Caithness and a large part of Argyll, Moray and Ross (Orkneyinga Saga 1978)
- 1005** MacBeth born in Dingwall, spent some of his childhood in Dingwall (Collins Encyclopaedia of Scotland 1994)
- c.1014** Earl Sigurd II of Orkney married daughter of Malcolm II of Scotland (died 1005) territories included Ross, Moray, Sutherland and Argyll (Njal's Saga)
- 1034** Earl Thorfinn the Mighty raised troops in Ross and Sutherland won Battle of Tarbatness, ruled from Dingwall Castle for next 37 years (Macrae 1923)
- 1050** Thorfinn and MacBeth go to Jerusalem?
- 1065** Malcolm III of Scotland marries Thorfinns widow Ingebjorg
- 1125** Bishopric of Ross created
- 1157** Earldom of Ross created by Malcolm IV (Roberts 1997)
- 1226** Royal Burgh Charter granted to Dingwall by Alexander II (Crawford 1995)
- 1246 – 1249** Dingwall Castle shown on map of Scotland by Matthew Paris as one of only two "Royal" Castles (Macrae 1923) (original in Bodleian Library, Oxford).
- 1306** Robert the Bruce's wife seized by Earl of Ross, imprisoned in Dingwall Castle (Roberts 1997)
- between 1314 & 1329** Robert the Bruce guest of the IV Earl of Ross at Dingwall Castle (Macrae 1923)
- 1382** Alexander Stewart m. Euphemia, Countess of Ross. Gained Lordship of Skye, the Thanage and Castle of Dingwall, Barony and Sheriffdom of Nairn (Roberts 1997)
- 1411** Donald MacDonald, 2nd Lord of the Isles seizes Dingwall Castle enroute to Battle of Harlaw, takes 12,000 men to the battle (Roberts 1997)
- 1411** Donald defeated. Robert Stewart, Duke of Albany recaptures Dingwall Castle and installs a garrison.

- 1449 Alexander MacDonald III, Lord of the Isles, dies in Dingwall Castle, to where the "Lords" have moved their seat of power (Macrae 1923)
- 1476 John, last Lord of the Isles, deprived of title "Earl of Ross", forfeited estates and lands to Crown.
- 1478 Sir John Munro of Foulis created first Governor of Dingwall Castle (Exchequer Rolls) (Macrae 1923)
- 1481 Angus Og MacDonald of the Isles, seizes Finlaggan, Castle Sween, Inverness and then Dingwall Castle, installs a garrison at Dingwall (Roberts 1997)
- 1488-1513 One Act of the King, James IV, written and signed in Dingwall (Atlas of Scottish History 1996)
- 1507 James IV appoints Bishop Andro of Caithness, custodian of the Royal Castles of Dingwall and Redcastle (Macrae 1923)
- 1516 Bishop Andro purchases land, extends Dingwall Castle, builds Doo-cot (see photograph and extract from Macrae 1923)
- 1564 Mary Queen of Scots visits Dingwall on Northern Tour (Atlas of Scottish History 1996)
- 1584 Sir Andrew Keith created Lord Dingwall and granted the Castle of Dingwall and seat in Parliament (Macrae 1923)
- 1608 Exchequer Rolls declare "**the most important castle in the reign of James IV was Dingwall**"
- 1750 Castle passed to Rev. Colin MacKenzie in a ruinous condition (Macrae 1923)
- 1818 Castle demolished (Inverness Courier July 30th 1818)
- 1823 Present house built by Commander Donald MacLennan, in memory of his pirate brother Roderick, slain off Peru 1805

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24.4.00

Dear Miss Hanson,

Many thanks for your letter which has been forwarded to me from the Time Team office regarding my forthcoming trip to Scotland. News travels fast in Scotland!

It seems to me ~~that~~ you have a potentially very interesting site on your doorstep, however I am not in a position to examine the file which Jenni has built up about the site as we only see one another during the filming of Time Team. I am not really in a position to advise you about any work which you may wish to undertake on the site. The archaeological remains within each county are administered by a county archaeologist and I think that it would be most appropriate if you were to coordinate your research through your local county official. Work which I undertake as a professional archaeologist, both with my full time employer and with Time Team, is monitored routinely by the County Archaeologist. This ensures that the work is undertaken to a satisfactory standard and that the research aims are agreed upon.

I hope that this will not come as too big a disappointment but I hope that you understand that I am not really in a position to advise on research work on a site with which I have no direct association. I urge you to continue your investigations on the history of the site and who knows we may be up there with you in the future after all.

Best wishes,

PLH *Hudj.*