



**We care for
a part of Scotland's history
which belongs to
our community**

NEWSLETTER No.20 - Summer 2020

Based on the text of a press release sent to the Argyllshire Advertiser w/c 20.7.20:-

In the spring of 2019, as reported in the Advertiser, Tarbert Castle volunteers, supported by our professional archaeologist Roddy Regan and Kilmartin Museum education department, carried out an extensive archaeological dig on the Scheduled Monument, with some 52 volunteers, and 250 young people from schools and youth groups in Argyll, taking part.

An exhibition, of a selection of what we found, learned, and achieved, is currently on display in the central window of the TSCT* Tarbert Life project in the centre of Tarbert village, to provide an interest for the returning visitors, whom we are pleased to see are making the village very busy after our quiet period in lockdown. Monitored this week, it is clear that "staycation" visitors have been enjoying the Castle Heritage Park in unprecedented numbers.

The 2019 dig made the major discovery of a previously unknown western entrance:-

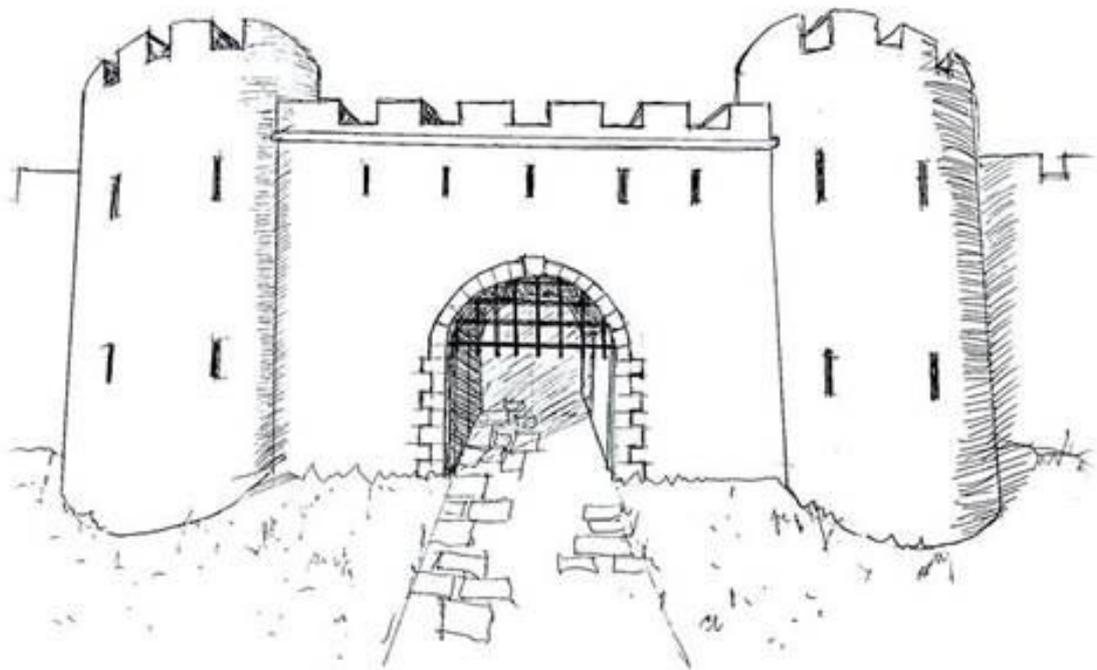
"The remains of a portcullis slot were uncovered, shedding new light on how the castle was constructed, approached, and defended. It represents a previously unknown, and highly significant, part of the site, and we commend the (Tarbert Castle) Trust for its discovery and careful excavation".

Barbara Cummins, Director of Heritage, Historic Environment Scotland

Volunteers have just completed a further small dig, funded by donations, to prove the assumed existence of an entrance of some kind at the **eastern** side of the castle, facing Loch Fyne and between the two round towers at that location.

We can now confirm that such an eastern entrance did exist, identical in size to the discovered western entrance with portcullis slot and door check. This is another remarkable result, as very few, if any, castles will have been built in Scotland with two fully defended major entrances.

The eastern entrance would have provided access for arrivals by sea, and the birlinns (galleys) of Robert the Bruce would have been beached in the bay below. The northern curtain wall of the castle, rising direct from the rocky seashore, and with no access around what we now know as Pier Road, would have necessitated this western entrance to give access from Kintyre.



Eastern entrance from Loch Fyne

Sheila Campbell, chair of Tarbert Castle Trust (TCT), confirms that volunteers will now proceed with updated and additional interpretation, below a grass turf-roofed canopy funded by the National Lottery Community Fund and Cour Windfarm Community Benefit.

The Trust is working also on a project to install a contactless donations facility, as part of the new visitor interpretation area, in a further effort to raise funds and thereby become sustainable in our efforts to (i) look after our conservation grazing sheep and (ii) keep volunteers equipped to carry out their site management and improvement plans.

We send heartfelt thanks to our supporters - from as far and wide as Canada, the Cotswolds, and the Lake District - who have helped to fund the dig, and equally to our tireless, enthusiastic, dedicated, and reliable volunteers in the Tarbert area.

WEBSITE

Our website - www.tarbertcastle.info - now has a dedicated [donations page](#).

SATURDAY 1 AUGUST 2020

Our volunteers have been making great efforts to catch up with maintenance - difficult during COVID-19 lockdown - and our next morning session will take place at 10am (1000 hrs) on Saturday 1 August, as usual.

Please bring your own tea break, to avoid cup washing during this difficult time.

Plenty for everyone to do.

Keep safe,

Robert

*TSCT = Tarbert & Skipness Community Trust.

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