



Holmes, Nicholas (Research Associate) (2017) *The coins*. In: *Dalland, M, 'Discovering the King's Wall: Excavations at 144–166 Cowgate, Edinburgh'*. *Scottish Archaeology Internet Report 69*. Scottish Archaeological Internet Reports (69). pp. 40-41. ISSN e2056-7421

DOI: 10.9750/issn.2056-7421.2017.69

<http://repository.nms.ac.uk/2012>

Deposited on: 27 February 2018



Society of Antiquaries  
of **Scotland**

## SCOTTISH ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTERNET REPORTS

e-ISSN: 2056-7421

**Discovering the King's Wall: Excavations at 144–166 Cowgate, Edinburgh**

**How to cite:**

Dalland, M 2017 'Discovering the King's Wall: Excavations at 144–166 Cowgate, Edinburgh' *Scottish Archaeological Internet Reports* 69  
<http://doi.org/10.9750/issn.2056-7421.2017.69>

Visit <http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/sair> to see the journal homepage

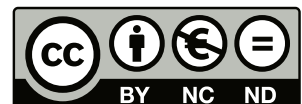
OPEN  ACCESS

**Please note:**

This document is the publisher's PDF of an article published in the Scottish Archaeological Internet Reports journal. This version has been peer-reviewed and contains all final editorial corrections and journal pagination.

Copyright © 2017 rests with the Society and the individual authors. Except where otherwise noted, this work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-No Derivatives licence.  
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

The permission to reproduce the Society's copyright-protected material does not extend to any material which is identified as being the copyright of a third party. Authorisation to reproduce such material must be obtained from the copyright holders concerned.



# Discovering the King's Wall: Excavations at 144–166 Cowgate, Edinburgh

Magnar Dalland

with contributions by

Stephen Carter, Morag Cross, Dianne Dixon, Julie Franklin, N M McQ Holmes,  
Stephen Lancaster, Catherine Smith & Scott Timpany

## Address

Headland Archaeology Ltd, 13 Jane Street, Edinburgh EH6 5HE

## Author contact

julie.franklin@headlandarchaeology.com

## Funding

Castle Rock Housing Association and Hart Builders (Edinburgh) Ltd

e-ISSN: 2056-7421

<http://dx.doi.org/10.9750/issn.2056-7421.2017.69>

Published by the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland with the  
Archaeology Data Service [archaeologydataservice.ac.uk](http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk).

Society of Antiquaries of Scotland  
National Museums Scotland  
Chambers Street  
Edinburgh EH1 1JF  
United Kingdom

Managing editor: Catherine Aitken  
Copy-editor: Susan Milligan  
Production: Raspberry Creative Type, Edinburgh

Copyright © 2017 rests with the Society and the individual  
authors. Except where otherwise noted, this work is licensed  
under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-  
NoDerivatives licence. [http://creativecommons.org/licenses/  
by-nc-nd/4.0/](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/)

Requests for permission to reproduce material from a  
SAIR report should be sent to the Director of the Society  
of Antiquaries of Scotland, as well as to the author,  
illustrator, photographer or other copyright holder.

[www.socantscot.org](http://www.socantscot.org)

Registered Scottish charity no SC010440

TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

List of illustrations	v
List of tables	vi
<b>1. Abstract</b> . . . . .	<b>1</b>
<b>2. Introduction</b> . . . . .	<b>1</b>
<b>3. Historical background</b> <i>by Morag Cross &amp; Magnar Dalland</i> . . . . .	<b>1</b>
3.1 Town walls	3
3.2 The site, the properties and the owners	4
<b>4. The excavations</b> . . . . .	<b>6</b>
4.1 Introduction	6
4.2 Evaluation	6
4.3 The excavation	7
4.4 Watching brief	7
4.5 Results	8
4.6 Entire site Phases 1 and 2	9
4.7 West end	12
4.8 East end	19
4.9 Entire site Phases 8 and 9	21
<b>5. Discussion</b> . . . . .	<b>22</b>
5.1 Original topography of the site	22
5.2 Midden deposits east of the building	23
5.3 Town walls	24
5.4 The building	27
5.5 Post-medieval buildings	27
<b>6. Conclusions</b> . . . . .	<b>28</b>
<b>Appendix 1 Land use and ownership history of 144–166 Cowgate and 33 Old Fishmarket Close</b> <i>by Morag Cross</i> . . . . .	<b>29</b>
A.1.1 Livingston’s tenement	29
A.1.2 Rhynd’s tenement	30
A.1.3 Notes to Appendix 1	30
<b>Appendix 2 Finds</b> <i>by Julie Franklin with contribution by N M McQ Holmes</i> . . . . .	<b>32</b>
A.2.1 Summary	32
A.2.2 Introduction	32
A.2.3 Pottery	32
A.2.4 Coins <i>by N M McQ Holmes</i>	40
A.2.5 Copper alloy	41
A.2.6 Lead alloy	43
A.2.7 Iron	44
A.2.8 Stone and lead spindle whorls ( <i>stone identifications by Stephen Carter and Dianne Dixon</i> )	46
A.2.9 Stone objects	47
A.2.10 Bone objects	47

A.2.11 Glass and clay pipes	47
A.2.12 Ceramic building material	48
A.2.13 Dating discussion	48
<b>Appendix 3 Animal bone</b> <i>by Catherine Smith</i> . . . . .	<b>51</b>
A.3.1 Methods and measurement	51
A.3.2 The Cowgate bone assemblage	51
A.3.3 Species present	52
A.3.4 Age of animals at death	53
A.3.5 Distribution of bones over the site: evidence of past activities	56
A.3.6 Worked bone and antler	57
A.3.7 Abnormal bone	58
A.3.8 Size and type of animals	58
A.3.9 Discussion	58
<b>Appendix 4 Analysis of soil thin sections</b> <i>by Stephen Lancaster</i> . . . . .	<b>61</b>
A.4.1 Summary	61
A.4.2 Introduction	62
A.4.3 Methods	62
A.4.4 Results	62
A.4.5 Discussion	66
<b>Appendix 5 Analysis of waterlogged plant remains</b> <i>by Scott Timpany</i> . . . . .	<b>69</b>
A.5.1 Introduction	69
A.5.2 Methods	69
A.5.3 Results	70
A.5.4 Discussion	75
A.5.5 Conclusions	78
<b>7. References</b> . . . . .	<b>79</b>
7.1 Documentary sources	79
7.2 Printed primary sources	79
7.3 Secondary sources	79

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Location plan	2
2. Extract from Gordon of Rothiemay's plan of Edinburgh from 1647 showing ruinous wall segments within St Giles' kirkyard to the south of Parliament House	3
3. Medieval streets and burgage plots in the area of the site	4
4. Excavation areas	6
5. Crane pit (HP01)	7
6. Site phasing	8
7. Walls [066/210] and [281]	9
8. Top of Wall [210]	10
9. East end of Wall [210]	10
10. Section across Wall [210]	11
11. West-facing section across Wall [210] with ditch(?) fills to the south	11
12. Wall [281]	12
13. West end of Wall [281]	12
14. Building at west end of site	13
15. Twin doorways in north wall of building	14
16. Apparent scar in east wall at south-east corner	14
17. Section across revetting clay deposit along Wall [103]	15
18. Drain at north-east corner of building	16
19. Line of vertical slabs along south wall of building	16
20. Remains of wooden door frame	17
21. Blocked doorway	18
22. Wall [047] dividing the building into two rooms	18
23. South-facing section in crane pit	19
24. Extent of early 16th-century midden deposits containing smithy waste seen in relation to medieval burgage boundaries	21
25. Barrel set into the ground	22
26. Wooden piles underpinning post-medieval walls	23
27. West-facing section of crane pit (HP01), showing full cross-section of Wall [210] with ditch fills to the south	25
28. Proposed revised line of the King's wall	26
29. Wooden piled foundation exposed after removal of Wall [023]	28
30. Medieval and early post-medieval pottery	33
31. Jug sherd with applied stamp decoration (Illus 30.6)	35
32. Jug sherd with applied and incised face mask decoration (Illus 30.5)	35
33. Jug sherd with applied and incised face mask decoration (Illus 30.11)	36
34. Jug handle with scratched cruciform cross (Illus 30.9)	37
35. Jug sherd with applied and thumbled decoration (Illus 30.12)	37
36. Jug sherd with incised wheatear decoration (Illus 30.13)	37
37. Copper alloy, lead, iron, stone, bone and glass finds	42
38. Lead seal matrix (Illus 37.46, SF611)	44
39. Stone spindle whorl (Illus 37.64, SF648)	45
40. Lead spindle whorl (Illus 37.61, SF338)	46
41. Stone spindle whorl (Illus 37.62, SF350)	46
42. Stone spindle whorl (Illus 37.63, SF359)	47
43. Variation with depth in the percentage of culturally derived coarse material in soil thin sections	66

44. Change with depth in the mean diameter of the ten largest clasts in soil thin sections	67
45. Plant macrofossil occurrence, HP01 south face	71
46. Plant macrofossil occurrence, HP01 west face	72

## LIST OF TABLES

---

1. Pottery sherd count by fabric and phase	34
2. Total number of bones from contexts within building	51
3. Cattle bone elements found in contexts within building	52
4. Sheep/goat elements found in contexts within building	53
5. Total number of bones from contexts to the east of building	54
6. Total number of bones contained within Barrel [163]	54
7. Cattle bone elements found in Barrel [163]	55
8. Sheep/goat bone elements found in Barrel [163]	55
9. Cattle long bones arranged by age category	56
10. Sheep/goat long bones arranged by age category	57
11. Age stages of sheep/goat mandibles	57
12. Bone size range summaries	59
13. Thin-section samples and corresponding contexts	62
14. Thin-section descriptions	63
15. Plant macrofossils	73
16. Nut and fruit stone identifications	75

#### **A.2.4 Coins**

*N M McQ Holmes*

(The coins are not illustrated.)

The earliest items were three copper coins of the 'Crux Pellit' issue, formerly known as 'Bishop Kennedy pennies', and another possible specimen. Although the exact dates of the production of these coins remain uncertain, it is clear that they belong to the period *c* 1450–82. It appears that they may have been devalued from threepence to a farthing by the Lords of Council at Lauder in 1482, after which their role in the circulating currency may be assumed to have declined rapidly. The other two coins comprised a plack of James V, worth four pence and dating from 1513–26, and an unidentifiable copper piece, probably of 17th-century origin. The Nuremberg jeton is of a type which has been dated to the end of the 15th or first half of the 16th century.

The concentration of numismatic evidence in the late 15th and early 16th centuries reflects the quantity of deposited material during this period, though in three cases (nos 29–31) these appear to be residual. Meanwhile a farthing trade token is clearly intrusive (possibly fallen out of a neighbouring section). It may be regarded as an unusual find for Edinburgh in belonging to one of the scarce issues of a Haddington retailer rather than to one of the numerous Edinburgh types.



**Catalogue****► 27.**

James II/III copper 'Crux Pellit' issue, type II (?)  
(*c* 1450–82); 19.0 × 20.0mm, 1.70g, die axis 15°;  
much corroded, but probably only slight wear.  
SF206, Context [054], Area A, Ph E6.

**► 28.**

James II/III copper 'Crux Pellit' issue, uncertain  
type (*c* 1450–82); 19.0 × 20.0mm, 0.78g, die axis  
uncertain; highly corroded and badly chipped;  
probably slight to moderate wear. SF207, Context  
[054], Area A, Ph E6.

**► 29.**

James II/III copper 'Crux Pellit' issue, uncertain  
type (*c* 1450–82); 18.5 × 19.0mm, 0.73g, die  
axis uncertain; highly corroded; degree of wear  
uncertain. SF122, Context [021], Area A, Ph W7.

**► 30.**

Uncertain, but possibly a 'Crux Pellit' issue; 20.0 ×  
19.0mm, 0.73g, die axis uncertain; highly corroded;  
degree of wear uncertain. SF124, Context [021],  
Area A, Ph W7.

**► 31.**

James V billon plack, Stewart type IIc (1513–26);  
26.0 × 25.5mm, 1.44g, die axis 150°; chipped and  
corroded, but only slight wear. SF76b, Context  
[015], Area A, Ph 9.

**► 32.**

Brass jeton of Nuremberg, Germany: anonymous  
'ship penny' type, cf Mitchiner 1988: 1128–34  
(*c* 1490–1550); 25.0mm, 1.49g, die axis 105°;  
moderate wear. SF409, Context [135], Area B, Ph  
E6.

**► 33.**

Uncertain copper, probably a turner or bodle of 17th-  
century date; 19.5mm, 1.36g, die axis uncertain;  
highly corroded; degree of wear uncertain. SF76a,  
Context [015], Area A, Ph 9.

**► 34.**

Copper farthing trade token of George Amos,  
Haddington, East Lothian (Dalton & Hamer  
1990), Haddingtonshire 1 (*c* 1790–1820); 21.0mm,  
1.74g, die axis 165°; corroded, especially obverse;

slight wear. SF610, Context [203], Area C, Ph E6  
(intrusive).