

New discoveries at Cambuskenneth



Children for St Ninian's School help with the dig/ Warren Baillie/Guard Archaeology

Another piece in the jigsaw of Stirling's fascinating mediaeval history has been unearthed near Cambuskenneth Abbey. A two-week long dig, part of the Festival this September, brought together local volunteers, students, schoolchildren and experts and revealed parts of the mediaeval harbour of Cambuskenneth Abbey - a site which had a huge influence on the development of Stirling.

The groups used a variety of techniques, including digging and metal detectors, to explore this extremely rare example of a surviving mediaeval harbour. Finds included a coin dating from the reign of King Robert II (1371-1390) and mediaeval pottery, as well as the remnants of the structure of the harbour, its buildings and crossing points.

The Abbey, founded in 1140, played a big part in the development of mediaeval Stirling. During the excavations, which were led by professional archaeologist Warren Baillie, of Guard Archaeology, a large portion of the mediaeval harbour, which consisted of stone steps to allow boats to be unloaded whatever the water level, was uncovered. The dig revealed the extent of the harbour and uncovered evidence of the structures that once stood along the shores of the Forth. A metal-detector survey by the Scottish Artefact Recovery Group on the nearby Abbot's Ford also discovered the 14th century coin, along with a horseshoe fragment and possible evidence of mediaeval fishing.

GUARD Archaeology was commissioned by the Inner Forth Landscape Initiative (IFLI), and Dr Murray Cook on behalf of Stirling Council, to investigate the mediaeval harbours, piers and fording points around [Cambuskenneth Abbey](#). Local volunteers and school children made a big contribution to the success of the project, with children from St Modan's, St Ninian's and Riverside Primary Schools taking part as well as students from the Scottish Agricultural College. In total 196 volunteers, 280 school children and 24 college students joined in, alongside experts from GUARD Archaeology, Archaeology Scotland, Scottish Artefact Recovery Group, Stirling Council and Stirling University.