

## ***Coastal Erosion and the start of the project***

In December 2012 a severe storm caused significant erosion to the coastline at the eastern end of Cromarty, exposing a sequence of archaeological deposits along the shore footpath to the South Sutor. The storm revealed four major exposures along the shoreline, which back on to a greenfield site known as Reeds Park, in an area close to the original core of the Royal Burgh.



**A stone wall in one of the shoreline erosions**

Initial archaeological investigation of the shoreline sites revealed extensive and well-stratified occupation (midden) material dating to the medieval period and later. The medieval deposits in particular appear to relate to settlement activity associated with the original site of Cromarty, once a flourishing medieval burgh with a Royal Charter.

With a grant from the Hunter Archaeological Trust, a geophysical survey of Reeds Park was conducted in March 2013. The results proved that the greenfield site had great archaeological potential, identifying a number of areas of interest, including structures and the Post Medieval road alignment.

The aim of the Cromarty Medieval Burgh Community Archaeology Project is to investigate the shoreline sites and to target geophysical contacts in an open area excavation in Reeds Park. The goal of the project is to uncover evidence for trade and economy relating to the early settlement of burgh - a period for which we have

limited historical records. Why was the early burgh of Cromarty so successful during these early years, especially between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries AD?

Investigations in the Reeds Park field will not concentrate solely on these early periods of the burgh. We also know little about the later settlement focused on a road known as Thief's Row. From historical sources and old maps, we know the road and settlement along it survived up to the closing stages of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This summer's excavations will allow us to look in detail at the past settlement in this part of Cromarty to see how it changed through time.



**A post-hole (above) and a pit / gully (below) revealed in the shoreline erosions - note the layers of ash and midden material overlying these features**