

Archaeological Excavation  
Glenisla Golf Course  
Pitcrocknie  
ALYTH  
AG06



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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION  
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**AG06**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Alder Archaeology undertook an archaeological excavation on the site of phase 1 of a proposed housing development at Glenisla Golf Course at Pitcrocknie near Alyth. The proposed development area is part of an active golf course, centred on NGR NO 25490 48909. The work (site code AG06) was undertaken during the period 28<sup>th</sup> April – 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2014 in varying weather conditions. The requirement was to excavate a square measuring 20m x 20m (or 400m<sup>2</sup>) and positioned around Trench 03 of an evaluation phase (site code AG05, see separate report) which preceded this work and formed the basis for the excavation. The evaluation had resulted in the discovery of fragments of prehistoric pottery, presumed to be from a funerary urn used to inter a cremation, elements of which appeared to have survived. Three sherds of very coarse earthenware were recovered for safe storage. The remainder of the context was reburied following the evaluation to allow preservation in situ until a full excavation could be mounted. The main aim of the excavation was to recover the remains already encountered and to establish the presence/absence, date, character and quality of any other archaeological remains surviving within the square to be excavated.*

*The vessel deposit was successfully re-excavated, but could not be definitely identified as a cremation. Quantities of worked quartz and heat-cracked stone were recovered, along with additional small potsherds. From a neighbouring context, a larger sherd, possibly a rim, was recovered and presumed to be from the same vessel. A quantity of roundwood charcoal and 43 fragments of carbonised hazelnut shell were extracted by sieving the fill of the deposit. A calibrated radiocarbon date of 3628-3531calBC (95.4% probability) was obtained on a hazelnut sample submitted to the SUERC laboratory. A nearby hearth feature was also found to contain worked quartz, a small potsherd and a quantity of charcoal and carbonised hazelnut shell. A date of 3634calBC (95.4% probability) was obtained from a sample of the latter.*

*The excavated area was situated 80m northwest of the Pitcrocknie Stone, a standing stone of presumed Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age date.*

# **1 Background**

## **1.1 Introduction**

Deveron Glenisla LLP commissioned Alder Archaeology to undertake an archaeological excavation on the site of phase 1 of a proposed housing development at Glenisla Golf Course at Pitcrocknie near Alyth. The proposed development area is part of an active golf course, centred on NGR NO 25490 48909. The work (site code AG06) was undertaken during the period 28<sup>th</sup> April – 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2014 in varying weather conditions. The requirement was to excavate a square measuring 20m x 20m, or 400m<sup>2</sup>. The square was positioned around Trench 03 of the evaluation phase (site code AG05, see separate report) which preceded this work and formed the basis for the excavation.

The work was designed to satisfy the archaeological condition on development application reference 09/01345/IPM.

## **1.2 Aims and Objectives**

The previous evaluation, AG05, had resulted in the discovery of fragments of prehistoric pottery, presumed to be from a funerary urn used to inter a cremation, elements of which appeared to have survived. Three sherds of very coarse earthenware were recovered for safe storage. The remainder of the context was reburied following the evaluation to allow preservation in situ until a full excavation could be mounted. The main aim of the excavation was to recover the remains already encountered and to establish the presence/absence, date, character and quality of any other archaeological remains surviving within the square to be excavated.

## **1.3 Reporting**

The present document has been prepared as the final report on this excavation. Copies will be sent to the client, The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland and Perth & Kinross Historic Environment Record.

## **1.4 Planning and Curatorial Issues**

This excavation is the final part of a programme of archaeological work designed to satisfy the outstanding archaeological condition on the planning consent for this development.

## **1.5 Acknowledgements**

We wish to thank Glenisla Golfcourse and Alistair Kerr of KDM Architects Ltd for their assistance and guidance throughout this project. Deveron Glenisla LLP funded this excavation.

# **2 Details of Work**

## **2.1 The Site (Illus 1)**

The site occupied an area in the northwest of the golf course, bounded immediately to the north by the B952 (Meethill Road) just to the east of Alyth. Immediately to the west

of the site was a private garden which projected southeast into the golf course, while to the east and northeast ran the Back Burn which forms part of the northern boundary of Alyth as it curves around to the west on the other side of the B952. The southern edge of the site was bounded by the fairway for one of the course holes, north from which the ground sloped gently upwards towards the road. The site itself was marked out over thick grass tussocks of moderate length, flat for the most part but undulating on the north and west where the ground broke up into a series of low hummocks. Prior to landscaping for the golf course, this area had accommodated a rubbish dump. Between the site and the road lay a small copse of maturing deciduous trees. The Pitcrocknie Stone lay to the southeast, across the fairway.

## **2.2 Archaeological Potential**

The find of prehistoric pottery during the evaluation phase of investigation was in a context suggestive of a cremation. Proximity to a standing stone of presumed Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age origin suggested the possibility of further finds relating to prehistoric ritual activity in the vicinity, notwithstanding that the deposit uncovered was heavily truncated by later ploughing and landscaping. No other features of interest were encountered during the evaluation, but widening the area around the pottery deposit was intended to establish whether it was an isolated single cremation or part of a small cemetery grouping.

## **2.3 Archaeological Method**

The site was first marked out as a 20m x 20m square using triangulation. The square was then stripped by a tracked 360° excavator equipped with a toothless 2m bucket. The stripping was closely monitored by an archaeologist, who redirected the machine as necessary. Soil and turf were banded along the edges of the stripped area. The area was then hoed by hand to allow archaeological features to be noted for further attention. Features thus noted were photographed, drawn in plan at 1:20 scale and excavated by hand. Further drawings were made at 1:10 scale as appropriate and soil samples were taken where this was thought possibly informative of date and/or environmental conditions. Lithics recovered from the site were submitted for analysis by Dr. Torben Bjarke Ballin (see Appendix 1); samples of carbonised material were submitted to the Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre (SUERC) for radiocarbon dating; recovered ceramic fragments were stored for future analysis but not submitted to expert assessment.

## **2.4 Results of Investigations**

Stripping revealed the depth to the natural subsoil (103) to be between 0.5m and 0.8m; across the majority of the site this depth comprised bioturbated topsoil (101) containing evidence of ploughing or possibly landscaping disturbance- clay pipe stems, early modern glass and pottery fragments at varying depths. In the southwest corner of the stripped area, a layer of brown sand and pea gravel (109) was encountered at an average depth of 0.3m below the ground surface, measuring up to 0.2m in thickness and extending over an area 8m north-south x 4m east-west, with an irregular outline. Upon removal this was found to lie above a deposit (102) of highly compacted ash, charcoal, clay-sand and gravel, with approximately 30% being rounded and sub-angular pebbles and river cobbles. This appeared to be metalling for an area of hard-standing or a track and was found to contain modern glass sherds and plastic fragments. This metalled

surface extended for 2.5m northwards from the southern baulk of the site and measured up to 4m east-west.

The feature originally encountered in evaluation trench 03 was relocated and found to be contained within a small pit cut (105, evaluation context 307). The cut appeared truncated by subsequent activity, possibly including the ploughing and/or landscaping noted above. Only the base of the cut was noted, measuring 0.82m east-west x 0.76m north-south, with an irregular outline and somewhat uneven, scooped profile between 0.05m and 0.1m in depth at base. The fill (104, evaluation context 305) was found to contain visible flecks of charcoal and a small flake of translucent quartz (CAT 1, see Appendix 1, Lithics Report), together with seven fragments of sandstone and quartzite bearing signs of heat-cracking and discoloration. These were recovered and the entire fill (approximately 1 litre of soil) removed to be sieved for dating and environmental data. During post-excavation processing, 43 fragments of carbonised hazelnut shell were recovered from 104, along with a quantity of roundwood charcoal, two small (2cm and 3cm diameter) potsherds of the same coarse fabric as the vessel removed during the evaluation and eight fragments of quartz debitage or small flakes (CAT 2-8). No discoloration to the surrounding subsoil was detected, suggesting heating/burning activity was not *in situ*. A sample of carbonized shell was submitted to the SUERC laboratory for radiocarbon dating. The radiocarbon determination for this sample was 4839 ( $\pm 31$ ) BP. A calibrated date of 3628-3531BC was returned at 95.4% probability (see Appendix 2, Radiocarbon Dates), indicating that the deposit and potsherds were of Neolithic origin rather than Bronze Age as had originally been assumed.

0.30m north of 104, an irregular linear feature comprising an ephemeral layer of charcoal admixed with brown sand was detected within the footprint of the evaluation trench and extending into the extension. This feature (106) measured 0.8m in length north-south x 0.2m east-west (maximum extents) and was no more than 0.02m thick. Although no cut could be detected, this may have represented the base of an animal burrow; it appeared to contain material displaced from 104, as a sherd of coarse pottery, apparently a rim fragment, was recovered from this deposit. Despite the presence of charcoal, no discoloration indicative of burning was detected in the surrounding subsoil. This feature was identified during the evaluation as part of a wider context possibly containing pit 307.

1m south-east of 104, a second irregular feature (114) measuring 0.8m north-south x 0.45m east-west, with an uneven base, was situated in the base of the evaluation trench. This contained a fill (113) of dark, sandy loam with abundant flecks of charcoal and was probably the base of an animal burrow. This was evaluation feature 306.

5m north of 104, outside the footprint of trench 03, a sub-rounded pit cut (108) was exposed, containing a fill (107) of compacted sandy silt 0.23m thick with occasional charcoal flecks. The base of the cut, measuring 0.74m x 0.7m, was concave, with gently sloping edges; this probably represented the truncated base of a tree bole. 1m west of 108, a small (0.12m diameter) sub-rounded pit (115) 0.15m in depth represented a second, smaller tree bole, filled with a compacted brown sandy silt (110). A third, similar cut (112) lay 1m northwest of 108, measuring 0.2m in diameter, 0.15m in depth and filled with a similar grey/brown sand (111) with occasional flecks of charcoal. A fourth, larger tree bole (125) lay 0.35m north-west of 112, with a similar sandy fill (124) 0.30m thick; this measured 1.05m in diameter, with a sub-rounded outline and concave base.

Only two features were exposed in the western half of the stripped area. In the northwest corner, 0.3m from the northern baulk, a sub-rectangular pit with a straight northern edge becoming more rounded at either end, was found to contain a dark grey silt loam with inclusions of modern pottery, glass and plastic. Measuring 1.06m east-west x 0.60m north-south and 0.28m deep, this appeared to have been machine-dug and was clearly a modern feature.

8m north and 5m east of the edges of the site, a sub-rounded deposit of grey sandy silt (116) was detected, containing visible flecks of charcoal and 0.13m in depth. Beneath this was a 0.06m thick deposit of compacted brown sand containing 5% charcoal (117) overlying an arrangement of stones (118) set in a small pit (122). The stones comprised a single flat sandstone slab measuring 0.44m x 0.3m, 0.07m thick and bearing clear indications of heat discoloration in the form of pinkish staining; surrounding this was a ring of seven rounded basalt cobbles, all cracked, possibly by heat.

A small (0.03m diameter) flake of heat-cracked, discoloured orange sandstone was recovered from stones 118, supporting the suggestion that the arrangement represented the remains of a hearth; however, lack of discoloration in the surrounding subsoil suggested that any fire had been short-lived, of low-intensity and probably not repeated. 5 litre samples were taken from deposits 116 and 117: from the former, a quartz flake and core were recovered (CAT 10 and 11), along with two small heat-damaged chips of indeterminate stone; from the latter, a quartz flake (CAT 12) was recovered, together with a small (0.02m diameter) sherd of coarse earthenware pottery resembling those from 104 and 106, as well as three large, angular quartz chips which may also have been cores (not submitted for analysis). Two fragments of carbonised hazelnut shell were also recovered from 117, along with roundwood charcoal (also present in 116). These fragments were submitted to SUERC, the radiocarbon determination being 4872 ( $\pm 31$ ) BP, with a calibrated date of 3634BC being returned at 95.4% probability. This again suggested Neolithic activity, from a very similar date to that relating to deposit 104.

Beneath stones 118, a deposit of yellow sand and gravel (123), probably re-deposited natural subsoil, was found to contain an irregularly-shaped, sharp-edged piece of worked milky quartz (CAT 13). The pit cut (122) containing this deposit, the hearth above it and the upper layer of sandy silt measured 0.8m x 0.9m and 0.25m in depth, with a scooped profile.



**Image 1: Vessel deposit 104, re-exposed in the base of TR03**



**Image 2: Hearth 118, within fire pit 122**

### **3 Interpretation**

Deposit 102 appears to derive from a modern intrusion below the ground surface; on the basis of its close compaction and high stone content, it seems not unreasonable to characterise it as made ground surface, possibly metalling for a track. Given the close proximity of a rubbish dump in the area until the advent of the golf course, it may be that 102 represents a remnant of a track connecting with or passing through the dump. The deposit of coarse, brown gravel 109 placed over this surface may derive from levelling of the ground during landscaping operations connected with the course. Cut feature 121 in the northwest corner of the site also resulted from modern activity and resembled a test pit of some form.

The four features- 108, 112, 115, 125- representing tree boles are evidence of the presence of trees on the site, both mature examples and saplings . This may have preceded the aforementioned rubbish dump, or alternatively the trees may have been removed during the landscaping. No datable material was recovered from these contexts.

The irregular feature 114 in evaluation Trench 03 probably represents the base of an animal burrow, with charcoal having been brought in through bioturbation of the overlying soil. This latter process does suggest a fairly high charcoal content in the environs during the burrow's life, indicative of nearby burning. Such burning need not be anthropogenic, as naturally occurring forest or scrubland fires are not uncommon events and will certainly feature given long enough spans of time. By the same token, human activity may be represented by such events as stubble or heather burning, both features of modern farming, as well as earlier land clearance. There is thus no necessary

reason to link the presence of charcoal to local episodes of funerary activity in prehistory.

This said, the discrete deposition of a ceramic vessel, containing worked flakes of milky quartz, does appear to represent Neolithic activity. The three basal fragments from deposit 104 appear to have been recovered from their in situ position following deposition; the rim sherd from 106 may have been redeposited following disturbance. The presence of clay pipe fragments and sherds of early modern pottery in the topsoil (itself of no great depth above the natural subsoil) is indicative of ploughing in relatively recent times, which may well account for such disturbance, as well as the general scarcity of surviving prehistoric features on the site. It is possible that the potsherd from 106 represents a second vessel, but it seems on balance more likely that this was once part of the same artefact as the basal fragments, shifted from its original position by ploughing and/or landscaping. Apparent charring to the inner surfaces and core of the sherds from 104 may be the result of incomplete firing during its manufacture, suggesting a fairly inefficient kiln or an open fire. However, the presence of heat-fractured stones might indicate a second possibility: the heated stones may have been placed inside the pot in order to cook the contents, resulting in charring to the inner surfaces. The outer surfaces of the pot bore no visible trace of decoration, such as incised or impressed marks or patterning, which could indicate a utilitarian function (although it should once again be remembered that the sherds are by no means sufficient to reconstruct a complete vessel). Expert analysis of the potsherds would assist in improving understanding of the vessel, its origin and possible functions.

First encountered during the evaluation phase (AG05), the pottery fragments had been assumed to be the remains of a cinerary urn, containing cremated human remains. Certainly, the similarity of the pot fabric with that of recovered cinerary urns from the Later Neolithic or Early Bronze Age, together with its presence in a small pit cut, did suggest this scenario. However, no trace of calcined bone fragments was found within the deposit upon sieving, meaning that the description of 104 as a cremation deposit could not be validated by the data recovered. The absence of bone may be explained by acidic soil conditions.

A small quantity of charred hazelnut shell within the deposit suggests the pot could have been used as a cooking vessel. However, the complete carbonisation of the nutshell fragments suggests they were directly exposed to fire, rather than having been inside a container: roasting unshelled nuts makes the shells easier to crack. Once cracked, the shell fragments may have been deposited along with other debris from the fire, either adhering to the pot or being scooped into it along with food including, presumably, nut kernels, which being uncarbonised have not survived. This does not exclude the possibility of the vessel also containing a cremation, or the nuts having been part of a food offering on a pyre. Detailed examination of the vessel fabric would be required to establish the exact nature of the contents through lipid analysis. The pot then seems to have been placed deliberately in a small pit and buried, an activity which, even without a cremation, may have had a ritual purpose, such as an offering of some kind, in which proximity to the Pitrocknie Stone may be significant. The Neolithic date of the deposit suggests that it preceded the erection of the stone, which although undated has been presumed to have occurred during the succeeding Bronze Age. This may indicate that the site already held some particular significance by the time the stone was erected.

The quartz flakes may have been deliberately included in the deposit, placed inside the pot with other remains- although this could also have been an accidental inclusion due to the flakes having fallen into or next to a cooking fire, around which knapping was taking place. Flake CAT 1 is unusually transparent, glasslike in appearance and texture; this could have rendered it, or the larger object from which it may have broken, precious to its owner. This may have been for reasons of aesthetics or prestige, or perhaps particular beliefs about quartz, which has often been found in association with prehistoric disposal of the dead. It does not appear that the flakes had been present upon a funeral pyre, as they bore no signs of exposure to intense heat (see Appendix 1).

The hearth feature (118) also contained data suggestive of quartz knapping. Although no evidence of heat damage was present on the quartz flakes and chips recovered, a small, low intensity blaze may not have affected pieces of knapping debitage landing near but not actually in the flames. A quartz core (CAT 11) from which flakes had been struck was appreciably heat-discoloured, which may have been accidental or deliberate (to assist in flaking). The presence of two pieces of worked quartz- the core and a flake (CAT 10)- within sand 116 and another quartz flake (CAT 12) within charcoal 117 suggests tool production or use during or immediately after the fire. The hearth had been constructed within a fire pit (122), which had been partially backfilled with sand and gravel (123) re-deposited from the natural subsoil to create a level surface upon which the hearth stones were laid. A single flat sandstone slab was placed near the centre of the fire pit and surrounded by smaller, rounded or sub-angular river cobbles in the manner of a campfire. No remains suggestive of a surrounding structure, such as postholes, were detected, indicating the hearth was probably used in the open air. Burnt stone chips from 116, as well as charcoal deposit 117 and a flake of heat-damaged stone from immediately over the hearth (118) indicate the latter was used at least once, but perhaps for only a short duration and at low intensity, given the lack of discoloration in the surrounding soil. The pit would have protected the fire from strong winds and could also have assisted in cooking, by containing items- such as a pot, the presence of which is indicated by the small sherd recovered from 117- placed within it and preventing them from rolling away from the heat. Detailed microanalysis of the ceramic fabrics recovered would be required to establish whether or not the fragment from 117 was in any way related to the vessel represented by the sherds in deposit 104.

Following the fire, the pit appears to have been backfilled with sand (116), which became admixed with charcoal and ash. One method known to have been used in prehistory for cooking hazelnuts involved using hot stones or embers to heat a layer of sand, within which the nuts were roasted (Holst 2010); however, no shells were recovered from the sand, suggesting this was deposited simply to extinguish the fire embers. The quartz tool recovered from the base of the pit may have been used to excavate it. The reasons for its being thus deposited are unknown and while a ritual purpose cannot be discounted, it may simply have been that the tool was an ad hoc item which had served its purpose and was then no longer required.

Dated at 3634calBC at 95.4% probability, the hearth activity occurred close in time to the deposition of the vessel, which was dated to between 3628calBC and 3531calBC at 95.4% probability (with the older date being more likely at 62.7% against 32.7% for the more recent date). At the lower probability of 68.2%, the vessel deposit may have occurred around 3632calBC. It is thus, given the remoteness in time from the present, quite possible that the activity around the hearth and the deposition of the vessel

occurred simultaneously or as part of a single, short chain of events on the site. Nevertheless, caution should be exercised, as the margins of error inherent in radiocarbon dating make absolute precision impossible to attain over such long spans of time. The most that can be said with any certainty is that both the hearth and the vessel were used between 3700 and 3500 BC, during the middle Neolithic period. Although this postdates the construction of the major cursus monument of the Cleaven Dyke, around 4000calBC (Barclay & Maxwell, 1998), activity at the mortuary enclosure at Littleour is suggested around this time, at 3650-3100calBC (*ibid*). Both monuments lie approximately seven miles to the southwest of the present site. Potsherds recovered from a pit at Littleour include several resembling those recovered from Glenisla Golf Course (*ibid*).

It should be noted that the report on the quartz lithics from the site (Appendix 1) was written prior to receipt of the calibrated radiocarbon dates and that the lithics assemblage was thought at this stage to have derived from activity during the Bronze Age. However, it should be further noted that this assessment was based in part upon the absence of ‘proper’ blades such as might be expected within a Neolithic or earlier assemblage; the flakes and chips recovered were not in themselves diagnostic of any particular period. The absence of such blades should not be taken to imply that none had been present upon the site, simply that none had been deposited in a manner allowing recovery. In contexts such as the truncated base of a small pit (104/5) or a small hearth (118), the full range of diagnostic lithics should not necessarily be present. There is no inherent discrepancy, therefore, between the lithics assemblage and the radiocarbon dates.

## **4 Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **4.1 Significance**

The discovery of two features associated with activity during the Neolithic period is significant. Although both features were small in size, they were of closely similar date and may represent a single phase on the site. Even if this were not the case, the possible ritual nature of the pottery vessel deposit suggests a history of such behaviour predating the erection of the Pitcrocknie stone. The stone, together with the Neolithic hearth and ceramic deposit, demonstrate a long human presence in the area during prehistory.

### **4.2 Recommendations for Further Work**

Alder Archaeology considers the terms of the excavation to have been met and does not recommend further excavation work at this juncture. However, a watching brief on further groundworks associated with the proposed development is recommended where these are in proximity to the Pitcrocknie Stone and the site of the excavation covered in the present report. This would include all 18 of the new build houses proposed for the part of the site to the northwest of the standing stone, together with access roads and service tracks (site master plan February 2013). It is further recommended that, in order to preserve *in situ* any subterranean remains existing within this area, any landscaping takes the form of building up rather than reducing ground levels, where this is possible. It should be noted that the Terms of Reference (TOR) issued 06/09/2013 by Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust with regard to the proposed main road framework associated with the development included the stipulation that “archaeological monitoring of the topsoil strip for the main road framework will be conducted in areas considered to have

archaeological potential” and that “monitoring will be reactive to results.” It is suggested that this monitoring should include groundbreaking for houses in the area covered by this report. The final decision on future archaeological work rests with Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust.

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## Appendix 1 Lithics Report

### Glen Isla Golf Course, Pitcrocknie, Perth & Kinross

#### The lithic assemblage

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#### INTRODUCTION

In 2014, Alder Archaeology carried out an archaeological investigation (site code AG06) in connection with a proposed housing development at Glen Isla Golf Course at Pitcrocknie near Alyth, Perth & Kinross (centred on NGR: NO 25490 48909). A square measuring 20m x 20m, or 400m<sup>2</sup>, was excavated. The square was positioned around Trench 03 of the

evaluation phase (site code AG05; Brown 2013) which preceded this work and formed the basis for the excavation.

During the evaluation and excavation, a number of prehistoric finds were made, such as ceramics and quartz artefacts. The finds were mainly associated with two features, namely Pit 105 (a possible cremation burial) and Hearth 118. The lithic assemblage includes 13 pieces, and the purpose of the present report is to characterize the lithic artefacts in detail, with special reference to raw-materials and typo-technological attributes. From this characterization, it is sought to date and discuss the finds. The evaluation of the lithic material is based upon a detailed catalogue (see below) of the lithic finds from Glen Isla Golf Course, and in the present report the artefacts are referred to by their number (CAT no.) in this catalogue.

## KEY DEFINITIONS

The definitions of the main lithic categories are as follows:

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*Chips*: All flakes and indeterminate pieces the greatest dimension (GD) of which is  $\leq 10\text{mm}$ .

*Flakes*: All lithic artefacts with one identifiable ventral (positive or convex) surface,  $\text{GD} > 10\text{mm}$  and  $L < 2W$  ( $L$  = length;  $W$  = width).

*Indeterminate pieces*: Lithic artefacts which cannot be unequivocally identified as either flakes or cores. Generally the problem of identification is due to irregular breaks, frost-shattering or fire-crazing. *Chunks* are larger indeterminate pieces, and in, for example, the case of quartz, the problem of identification usually originates from a piece flaking along natural planes of weakness rather than flaking in the usual conchoidal way.

*Blades and microblades*: Flakes where  $L \geq 2W$ . In the case of blades  $W > 8\text{mm}$ , in the case of microblades  $W \leq 8\text{mm}$ .

*Cores*: Artefacts with only dorsal (negative or concave) surfaces – if three or more flakes have been detached, the piece is a core, if fewer than three flakes have been detached, the piece is a split or flaked pebble.

*Tools*: Artefacts with secondary retouch (modification).

## CATALOGUE

### Context 104 (fill of Pit 105)

CAT 1 Proximal fragment of tertiary *indeterminate flake* (14 x 17 x 4mm); hybrid white milky quartz/rock crystal.

CAT 2 Tertiary *indeterminate (probably bipolar) microblade* (17 x 8 x 3mm); white milky quartz. From retents.

CAT 3 Distal fragment of tertiary *indeterminate (probably bipolar) microblade* (13 x 4 x 4mm); white milky quartz. From retents.

CAT 4 Tertiary *bipolar flake* (12 x 7 x 3mm); white milky quartz. From retents.

CAT 5 Distal fragment of tertiary *indeterminate flake* (12 x 6 x 2mm); white milky quartz. From retents.

CAT 6 Tertiary *chip* (GD≤ 10mm); white milky quartz. From retents.

CAT 7 Tertiary *chip* (GD≤ 10mm); white milky quartz. From retents.

CAT 8 Tertiary *chip* (GD≤ 10mm); white milky quartz. From retents.

CAT 9 Tertiary *chip* (GD≤ 10mm); white milky quartz. From retents.

### **Context 116 (silty sand above Hearth 118)**

CAT 10 *Piece with edge-retouch*, based on a secondary *hard-hammer flake* (26 x 26 x 6mm); hybrid white milky quartz/rock crystal. The piece has an oblique retouch along its distal edge (*c.* 27mm), but as the adjoining long lateral edge is cortical, the piece is unlikely to have functioned as a knife. The function of the piece is presently uncertain.

CAT 11 Tertiary *irregular core* (62 x 38 x 33mm); white milky quartz. Superficial pitting and discolouration suggest that the piece has been exposed to fire. The core was reduced by the application of hard percussion.

### **Context 117 (charcoal immediately above Hearth 118)**

CAT 12 Tertiary *hard-hammer flake* (13 x 17 x 2mm); white milky quartz. From retents.

### **Context 123 (sandy fill immediately below stone-setting of Hearth 118)**

CAT 13 *Piece with edge-retouch*, based on a tertiary indeterminate flake (71 x 37 x 16mm); white milky quartz. The very end of the proximal end has broken off. Sporadic blunting of the proximal end of the right lateral side, probably by simple rubbing rather than proper retouch. Fine chipping of the distal end of the same lateral side suggests use as a cutting implement.

## **SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION**

As shown in Table 1, the assemblage includes 13 pieces of quartz. Four of the lithics are chips, four are flakes, two are microblades, one is an irregular core, and two are pieces with edge-retouch.

*Table 1. General artefact list.*

Chips	4
Flakes	4
Microblades	2
Irregular cores	1
Pieces with edge-retouch	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13</b>

---

The quartz is generally white milky quartz, although two pieces are characterized by being translucent in places (rock crystal). Although some forms of quartz are characterized by flaking in an irregular manner, the quartz recovered from the Glen Isla Golf Course is relatively homogeneous and with almost no impurities, and it has good flaking properties. It may have been possible to find some flint along the shores of the Firth of Tay, having washed in from deposits in the North Sea (Harker 2002), but Perth & Kinross is generally an inland county, and quartz is one of the county's few natural lithic resources. The quartz was most likely procured from local sources, and the abraded cortex of CAT 10 indicates that derived sources may have been exploited, such as for example river pebbles. Irregular core CAT 11 seems to have been exposed to fire.

Tool blanks were produced by a combination of hard percussion and bipolar technique, and although the assemblage includes some microblades (CAT 2, 3), these pieces are irregular, and they were probably manufactured in bipolar technique, that is, they are metric microblades (ie,  $L \geq 2W$ ), not qualitative ('proper') microblades (with parallel lateral sides and dorsal arrises). The assemblage from the present site therefore most likely represents a flake industry.

One irregular core was recovered during the excavation, namely CAT 11. It is relatively large (62 x 38 x 33mm), and it was produced by striking the piece by hard percussion from multiple directions. Some edges appear to have been prepared by simple rubbing. Superficial pitting and discolouration (yellow-brown) suggest that the piece was exposed to fire. Only flakes were detached from this piece.

The collection also includes two informal tools, namely two flakes with edge-retouch. CAT 10 is relatively small (26 x 26 x 6mm), and it has an oblique retouch along its distal edge (c. 27mm). but as the adjoining long lateral edge is cortical the piece is unlikely to have functioned as a knife. It is uncertain which function the piece served. CAT 13 is a considerably larger flake (71 x 37 x 16mm), and it has a short stretch of simple blunting along its right lateral side, proximal end, the purpose of which may have been to protect the user's hand. The right lateral edge, distal end, is characterized by very fine chipping which may indicate use as a knife.

The lithic assemblage includes no diagnostic elements *sensu stricto*, but the absence of any 'proper' blades or microblades indicates a relatively late date, such as the Bronze Age or Early Iron Age (Ballin 2002 [LBA]). Flake CAT 1 was found in direct association with Bronze Age ceramic sherds, and it is possible that Pit 105, from which they were recovered, may be the disturbed remains of a cremation burial. In the Bronze Age, quartz artefacts – finer pieces as well as simple flakes – occasionally followed the deceased into the grave as burial goods. In some cases, the quartz artefacts were inserted into the cremation vessel or the burial pit after the cremation of the dead person, but the lithic artefacts also frequently followed the deceased onto the pyre. In the latter case, the lithic artefacts would usually show clear signs of having been exposed to fire, and these burnt pieces would commonly show signs of vitrification (superficial melting) due to the high temperatures of the pyre (Ballin 2012, 24). None of the pieces from Pit 105 (CAT 1-9) shows clear signs of burning or vitrification.

The remaining quartz artefacts were recovered from Hearth 118, either above (most) or beneath (CAT 13) the slabs of this stone-set fireplace. Irregular core CAT 11, which was found immediately above the slabs, was notably burnt, and it is therefore likely that most of the pieces from this feature are contemporary with the hearth. The chronological status of knife CAT 13 is less certain – as it was found beneath the hearth slabs it could potentially pre-date the feature, unless it was deliberately deposited in this place prior to the construction of the fireplace.

As it is uncertain whether Pit 105 and Hearth 118 are contemporary it is also uncertain whether the two lithic sub-assemblages are contemporary in the stricter sense.

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## Appendix 2 Radiocarbon dates



### Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre

Director: Professor R M Ellam  
Rankine Avenue, Scottish Enterprise Technology Park,  
East Kilbride, Glasgow G75 0QF, Scotland, UK  
Tel: +44 (0)1355 223332 Fax: +44 (0)1355 229698 www.glasgow.ac.uk/suerc

### RADIOCARBON DATING CERTIFICATE

02 July 2014

**Laboratory Code** SUERC-53303 (GU34514)  
**Submitter** Chris Fyles  
Alder Archaeology Ltd  
55 South Methven Street  
Perth

**Site Reference** Glenisla Golfcourse AG06  
**Context Reference** 104  
**Sample Reference** 1

**Material** Retents (nutshell) : Hazel

**$\delta^{13}\text{C}$  relative to VPDB** -29.0 ‰

**Radiocarbon Age BP** 4839  $\pm$  31

**N.B.** The above  $^{14}\text{C}$  age is quoted in conventional years BP (before 1950 AD). The error, which is expressed at the one sigma level of confidence, includes components from the counting statistics on the sample, modern reference standard and blank and the random machine error.

The calibrated age ranges are determined from the University of Oxford Radiocarbon Accelerator Unit calibration program (OxCal4).

Samples with a SUERC coding are measured at the Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre AMS Facility and should be quoted as such in any reports within the scientific literature. Any questions directed to the Radiocarbon Laboratory should also quote the GU coding given in parentheses after the SUERC code. The contact details for the laboratory are email [g.cook@suerc.gla.ac.uk](mailto:g.cook@suerc.gla.ac.uk) or telephone 01355 270136 direct line.

Conventional age and calibration age ranges calculated by :- *N. Russell*

Date :- 02/07/2014

Checked and signed off by :- *P. Napier*

Date :- 02/07/2014

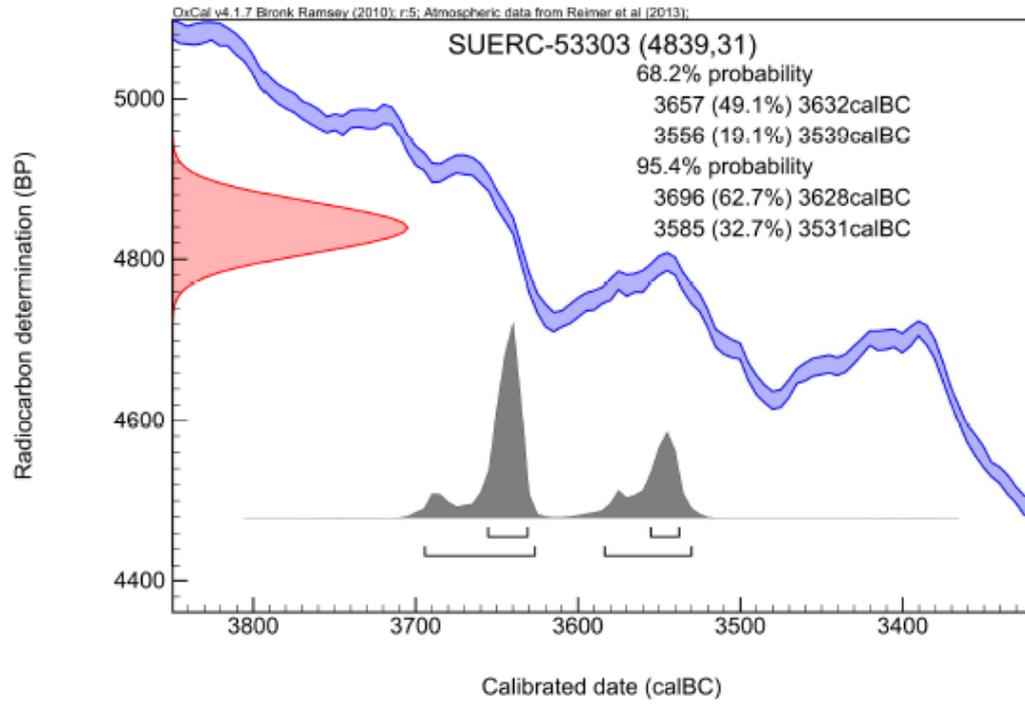


The University of Glasgow, charity number SC004401



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Calibration Plot





Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre

Director: Professor R M Ellam  
Rankine Avenue, Scottish Enterprise Technology Park,  
East Kilbride, Glasgow G75 0QF, Scotland, UK  
Tel: +44 (0)1355 223332 Fax: +44 (0)1355 229898 www.glasgow.ac.uk/suerc

RADIOCARBON DATING CERTIFICATE

02 July 2014

Laboratory Code SUERC-53304 (GU34515)

Submitter Chris Fyles  
Alder Archaeology Ltd  
55 South Methven Street  
Perth

Site Reference Glenisla Golfcourse AG06  
Context Reference 117  
Sample Reference 2

Material Retents (nutshell) : Hazel

$\delta^{13}\text{C}$  relative to VPDB -27.6 ‰

Radiocarbon Age BP 4872 ± 31

N.B. The above  $^{14}\text{C}$  age is quoted in conventional years BP (before 1950 AD). The error, which is expressed at the one sigma level of confidence, includes components from the counting statistics on the sample, modern reference standard and blank and the random machine error.

The calibrated age ranges are determined from the University of Oxford Radiocarbon Accelerator Unit calibration program (OxCal4).

Samples with a SUERC coding are measured at the Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre AMS Facility and should be quoted as such in any reports within the scientific literature. Any questions directed to the Radiocarbon Laboratory should also quote the GU coding given in parentheses after the SUERC code. The contact details for the laboratory are email [g.cook@suerc.gla.ac.uk](mailto:g.cook@suerc.gla.ac.uk) or telephone 01355 270136 direct line.

Conventional age and calibration age ranges calculated by :- *N. Russell*

Date :- 02/07/2014

Checked and signed off by :- *P. Napier*

Date :- 02/07/2014

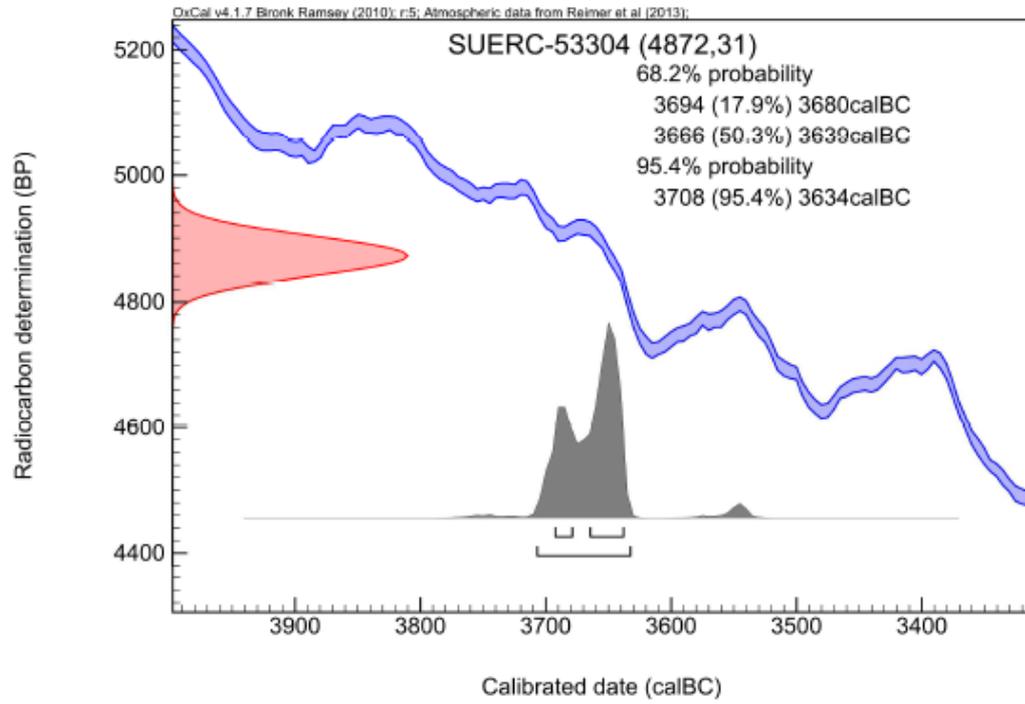


The University of Glasgow, charity number: SC233407



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**Calibration Plot**



## Appendix 3 Context Register

<i>No:</i>	<i>Description</i>
100	Unstratified
101	Topsoil
102	Metalling-like deposit beneath gravel 109
103	Glacial till, undisturbed yellow sand/gravel subsoil
104	Fill of small pit containing potsherds, hazelnut shells, charcoal and quartz flakes (AG05 context 305)
105	Cut of pit containing 104
106	Linear spread of charcoal
107	Deposit of grey/brown sandy silt Fill of sub-rounded pit (tree bole)
108	Tree bole (cut for 107)
109	Mid-brown gravel deposit beneath topsoil, over “metalling” 102, levelling deposit
110	Deposit of grey/brown sandy silt (fill of 115)
111	Deposit of grey/brown sandy silt (fill of 112)
112	Tree bole (cut for 111)
113	Fill of animal burrow 114
114	Animal burrow in Trench 03 (AG05 306)
115	Tree bole (cut for 110)
116	Deposit of silty sand above hearth 118
117	Deposit of charcoal immediately above 118
118	Large flat stone and smaller sub-rounded stones- hearth feature
119	Unused
120	Fill of modern pit cut
121	Pit- test pit or similar
122	Cut for hearth 118
123	Sandy fill of base of 122, beneath hearth stones 118
124	Deposit of sandy grey silt, fill of 125
125	Tree bole (cut for 124)

## Appendix 4 Photographic Register

<i>April 28-30</i>		
<i>Image No</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>View</i>
0024	Location shot, machining	NNW
0025	Location shot, machining	W
0026	Location shot, machining	N
0027	Location shot, machining	N
0028	Location shot, machining	W
0029	Location shot, machining	NW
0030	Location shot, machining	NE
0031	Location shot, machining (distance)	NE
0032-33	Deposit 104 (potsherds, fill of cut 105), pre-excavation	SSE
0034-38	Location shots, deposit 104	SE
0039	Working shot	NW
0040-41	Working shot	NE
0042	Working shot	E
0043-44	Location/distance shot	S
0045-46	Deposit 102	WSW
0047-48	Deposit 102	N
0049-50	Tree bole 107 (fill)	NW
0051-52	Tree bole 108 (cut), post-excavation (section)	NW
0053	Charcoal spread/tree bole 110	NW
0054	Charcoal spread/tree bole 111	NW
0055	Charcoal deposit 113 (animal burrow)	NW
0056	Animal burrow 114 (cut for 113) post-excavation (section)	NW
0057-59	Working shot	SW
0060	Working shot	SE
0061	Working shot	NE

0062	Working shot	NNW
May 1 <sup>st</sup>		
0001-2	Deposit 116 post-excavation (section) over hearth 118	SE
0003	Working shot	SE
0004	Working shot	S
0005	Deposit 116 post-excavation (section) over hearth 118	S
0006-7	Hearth 118	E
0008	Pit 120 (fill)	NNW
0009	Location shot, pit 120	NNW
0010-12	Hearth 118	ESE
0013	Pit 120, post-excavation (half)	NNE
0014	Pit 120, post-excavation (section)	SE
0015	Pitcrocknie Stone	NW
0016	Location shot	SSW
0017	Location shot	SE
0018	Location shot	NNW
0019	Location shot	N

## Appendix 5 Drawing Register

<i>Sheet No.</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Scale</i>
1	Plans and sections of vessel deposit 104, metalling 102	1:10, 1:20
2	General site plan	1:100
3	Plans and section of 113, 120/1	1:10, 1:20
4	Plans and sections of tree boles, hearth feature 118	1:10, 1:20

## Appendix 6 Finds Register

<i>Context</i>	<i>Material Type</i>	<i>Details</i>
104	Quartzite	8 heat-cracked stone fragments from fill of vessel deposit
104	Ceramic	2 potsherds of earthenware vessel from sieving retents
104	Ceramic	3 potsherds (base/side) of earthenware vessel recovered during evaluation (original context 305)
104	Quartz/rock crystal	Single fragment of worked flake
104	Quartz	2 worked microblades from sieving retents
104	Quartz	2 worked flakes from sieving retents
104	Quartz	4 waste chips from sieving retents
106	Ceramic	Single potsherd (rim?) of earthenware vessel from ephemeral deposit
116	Quartz	Single worked flake
116	Quartz	Single worked core
116	Burnt stone	Two small chips of burnt stone, indeterminate material
117	Ceramic	Single potsherd of earthenware vessel from sieving retents
117	Quartz	3 irregular, angular chips, possible cores
117	Quartz	Single waste flake from sieving retents
118	Sandstone	Single burnt flake from hearth
123	Quartz	Single worked tool with edge wear, indeterminate function

## Appendix 7 Discovery & Excavation in Scotland Entry

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Perth & Kinross
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Glenisla Golf Course
PROJECT CODE:	AG06
PARISH:	Alyth
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR(S):	C. Fyles
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Alder Archaeology Ltd
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Excavation
RCAHMS NO(S):	NO24NE 20
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	Standing stone
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	Open hearth, ceramic vessel deposit- Neolithic
NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)	Site centred on NO 25490 48909
START DATE	28/04/14
END DATE	02/05/14
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. <i>DES</i> ref.)	Evaluation
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	<p>Alder Archaeology undertook an archaeological excavation on the site of phase 1 of a proposed housing development at Glenisla Golf Course at Pitcrocknie near Alyth. The proposed development area is part of an active golf course. The work was completed in varying weather conditions. The requirement was to excavate a square measuring 20m x 20m, or 400m<sup>2</sup> and positioned around Trench 03 of an evaluation phase (site code AG05, see separate report) which preceded this work and formed the basis for the excavation. The evaluation had resulted in the discovery of fragments of prehistoric pottery, presumed to be from a funerary urn used to inter a cremation, elements of which appeared to have survived. Three sherds of very coarse earthenware were recovered for safe storage. The remainder of the context was reburied following the evaluation to allow preservation in situ until a full excavation could be mounted. The main aim of the excavation was to recover the remains already encountered and to establish the presence/absence, date, character and quality of any other archaeological remains surviving within the square to be excavated.</p> <p>The vessel deposit was successfully re-excavated, but could not be definitely identified as a cremation. Quantities of worked quartz and heat-cracked stone were recovered, along with additional smaller sherds. From a neighbouring context, a larger sherd, possibly a rim, was recovered and presumed to be from the same vessel. A quantity of roundwood charcoal and 43 fragments of carbonised hazelnut shell were extracted by sieving the fill of the deposit. A calibrated radiocarbon date of 3628-3531calBC (95.4% probability) was obtained on a hazelnut sample submitted to the SUERC laboratory. A nearby hearth feature was also found to contain worked quartz, a small potsherd and a quantity of charcoal and carbonised hazelnut shell. A date of 3634calBC (95.4% probability) was obtained from a sample of the latter.</p>

	The excavated area was situated 80m northwest of the Pitcocknie Stone, a standing stone of presumed Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age date.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	Watching brief
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Deveron Glenisla LLP
CAPTIONS FOR ILLUSTRS	
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	Alder Archaeology Ltd, 55 South Methven Street, Perth PH1 5NX
ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended)	RCAHMS (intended)
EMAIL ADDRESS:	<a href="mailto:director@alderarchaeology.co.uk">director@alderarchaeology.co.uk</a>

## Appendix 8 Standard Terms of Reference for all Fieldwork

### 8.1 Recording Methodology

Alder Archaeology employs a Single Context Recording System that allows full cross-referencing of stratigraphy, finds and environmental samples, as well as site-wide phasing. All features will be planned at scale 1:20, and sections drawn at scale 1:10. Sections and profiles will be drawn and all features will be photographed with metric scale included. Environmental samples will be taken from archaeologically significant contexts, if the analysis of these samples would aid significantly in the interpretation of any features identified.

### 8.2 Human Remains

If human remains are encountered they will be left in situ and the local police will be informed. If removal is required this will take place in compliance with Historic Scotland's Policy Paper *The Treatment of Human Remains in Archaeology*.

### 8.3 Products and Reporting

A Data Structure Report will normally be prepared within a period agreed within the Written Scheme of Investigation/ Project Design, after the completion of the fieldwork. This forms the basic level of reporting. Further reporting may be required on the basis of discoveries made during excavations.

A copy of the report and the project archive will be deposited in the NMRS. Further copies will be sent to the client, LAAO and others, as appropriate.

### 8.4 Artefacts

Finds of objects will be subject to the Scots Laws of Treasure Trove and *Bona Vacantia*. We will report such finds, if recovered, with supporting documentation to the Secretariat of the Treasure Trove Panel for disposal to the appropriate museum.

### 8.5 Discovery and Excavation in Scotland

A brief summary of the results will be submitted to *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland*.

### 8.6 General Conditions and Health and Safety

We adhere to the Code of Conduct of the Institute for Archaeologists.

Alder Archaeology Ltd has public liability insurance of £2,000,000. Details of this can be provided on request.

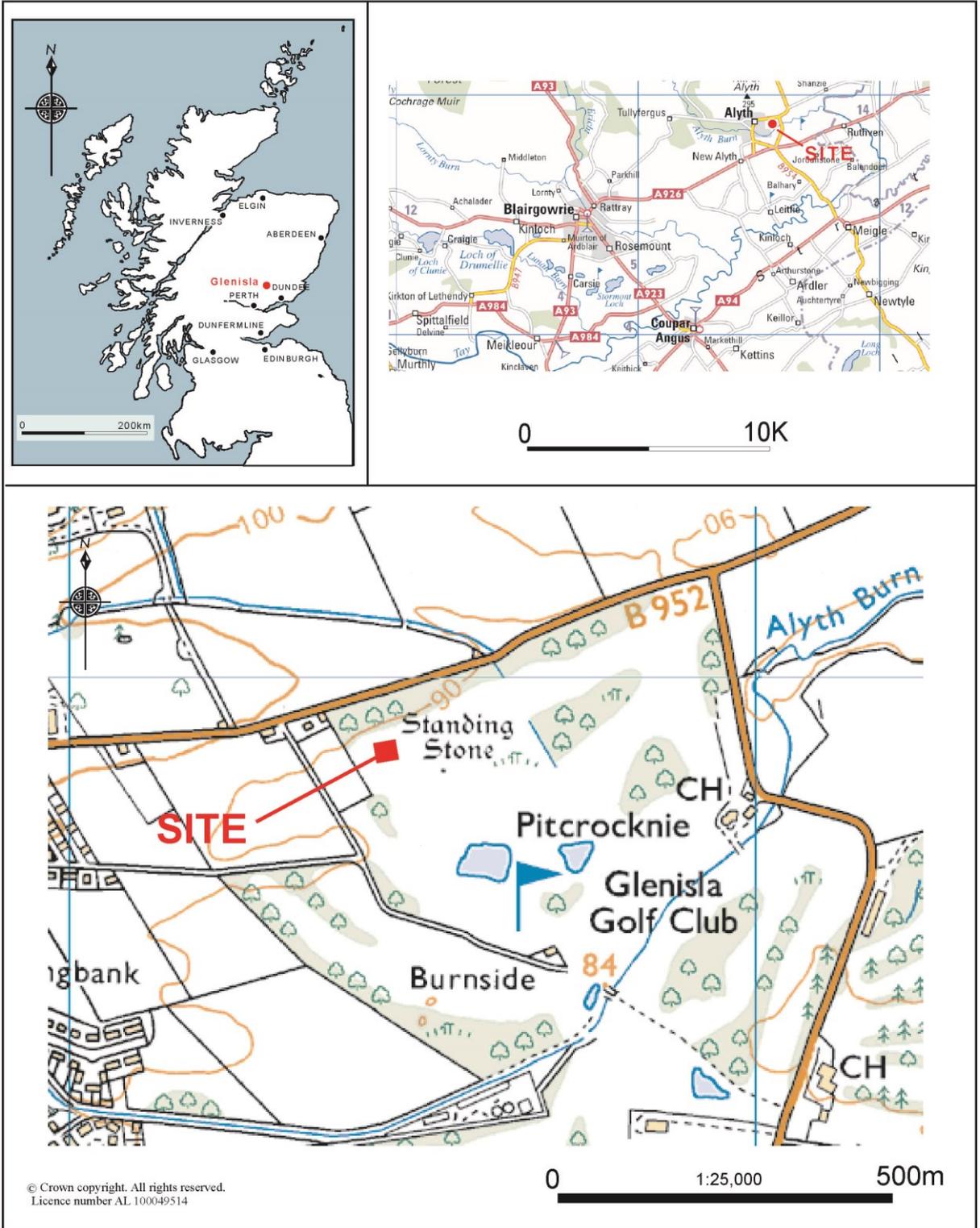
We operate a strict health and safety policy and conforms to the Health and Safety at Work Act. We undertakes Risk Assessments on all fieldwork carried out.

Alder Archaeology representatives will at all times wear protective footwear, high visibility clothing and other appropriate clothing. Hard hats will be worn if there is active plant on site or at all times if the site is deemed a hard hat area.

If lightly contaminated deposits are uncovered disposable boiler suits and gloves will be worn. A source of clean water will be made available for staff to clean hands with. If the health risk posed by site contamination is felt to be too high all further archaeological work will stop in that area.

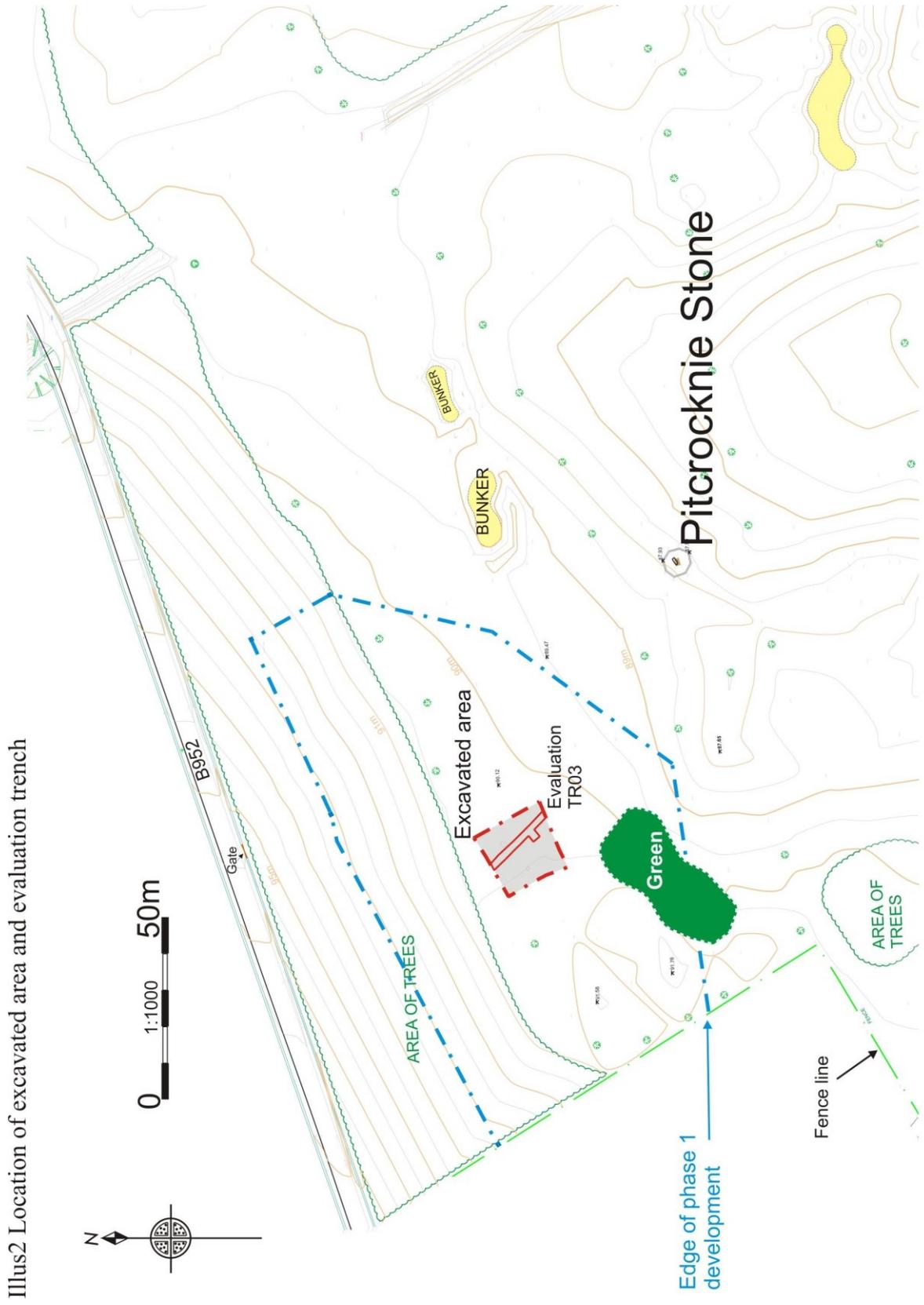
Illus 1

Glenisla Golf Course, Alyth, Site Location Plan



AG06

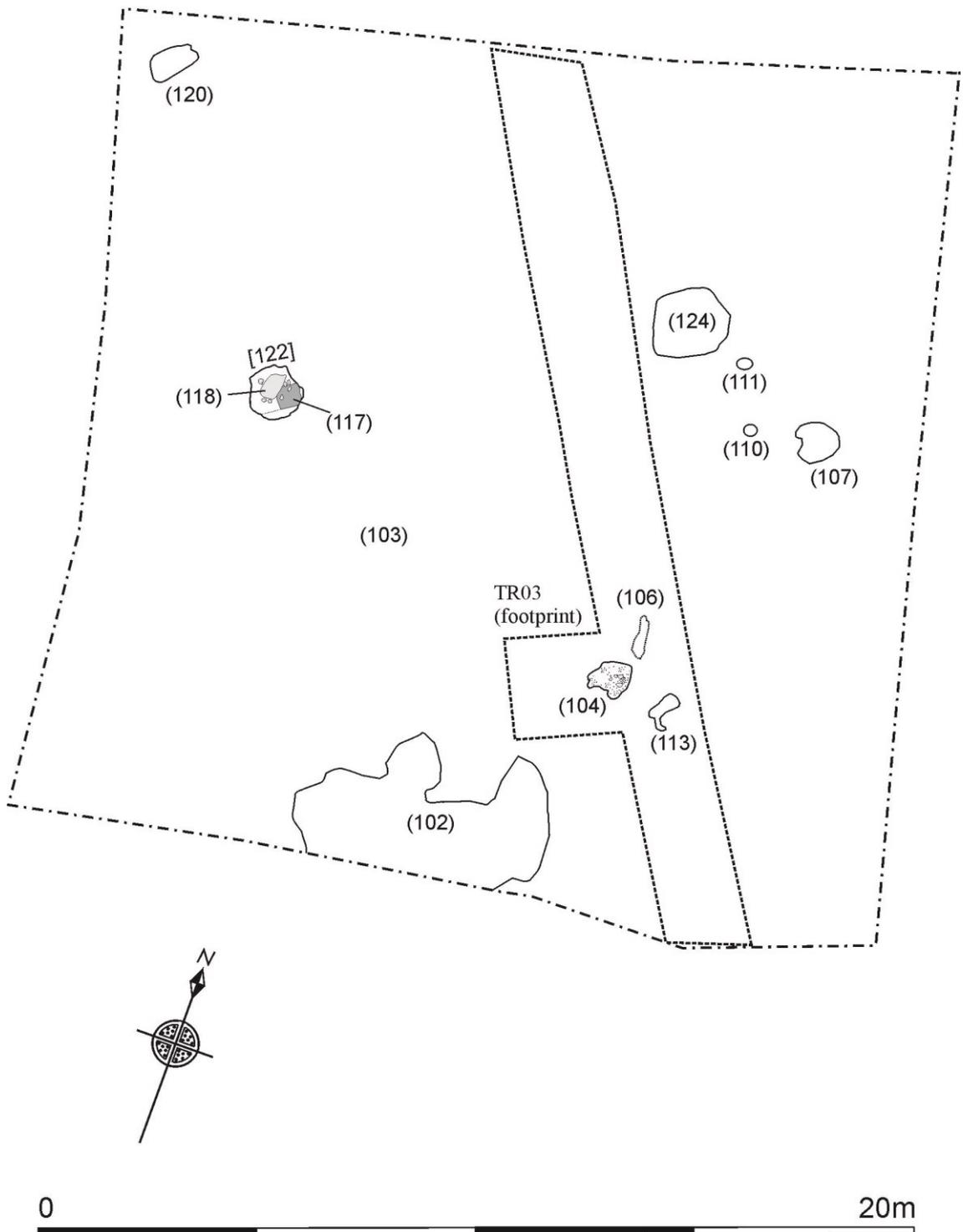
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Illus2 Location of excavated area and evaluation trench

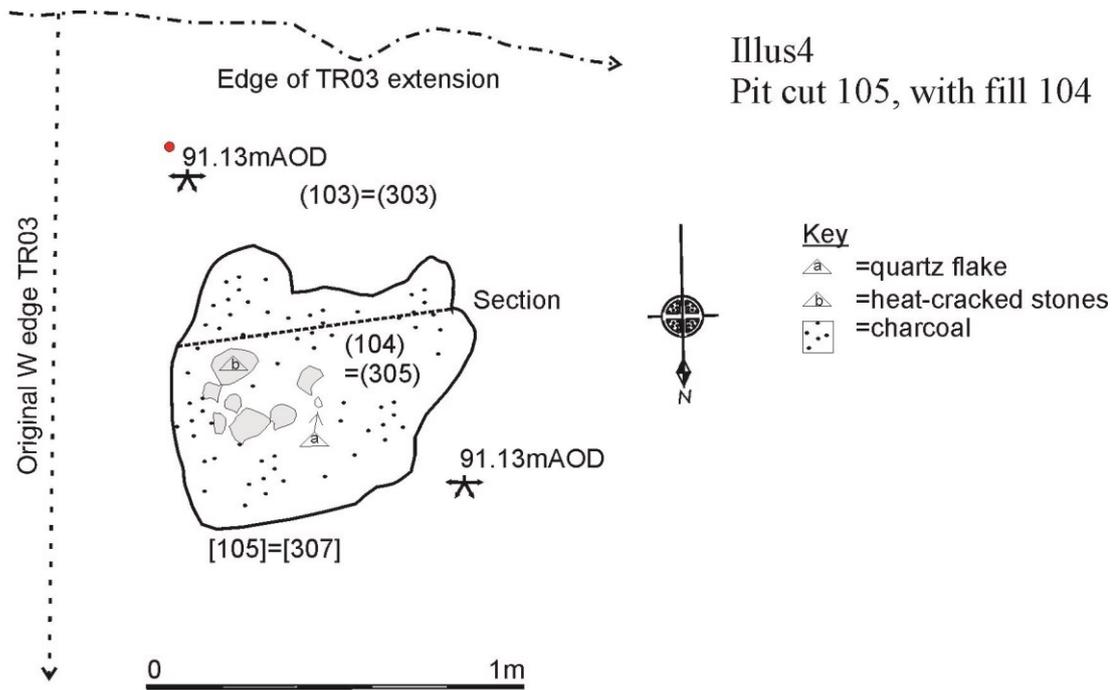
Illus3

Location of archaeological features

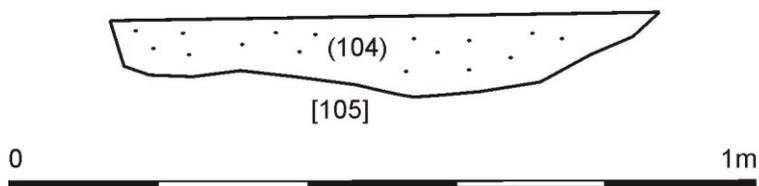


AG06

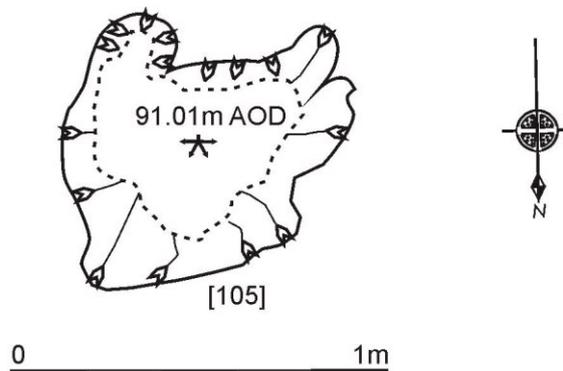
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Illus5 North-East-facing profile of pit 105



Illus6  
Pit 105, fully excavated

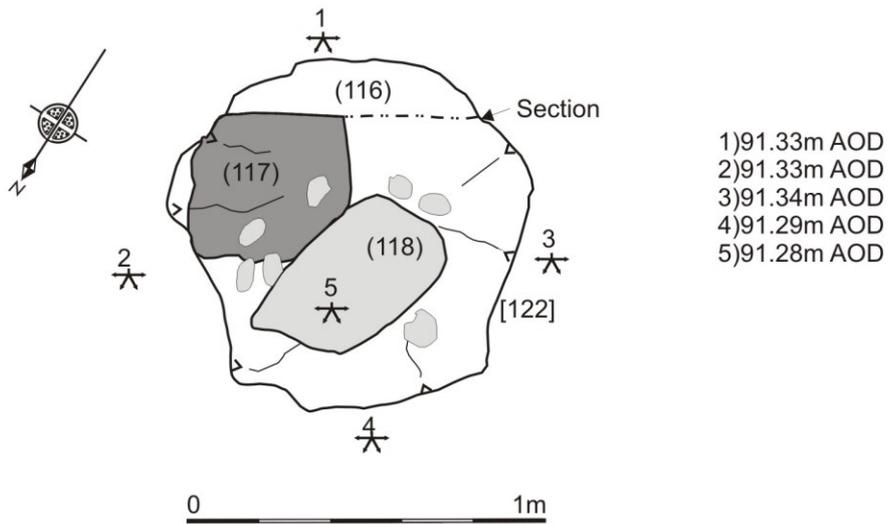


AG06

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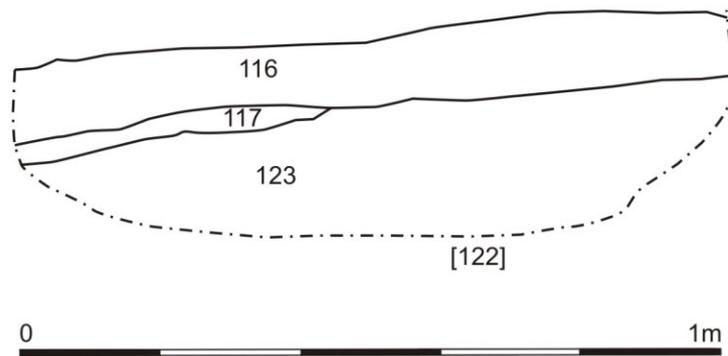
Illus7

Pit cut 122, with hearth 118



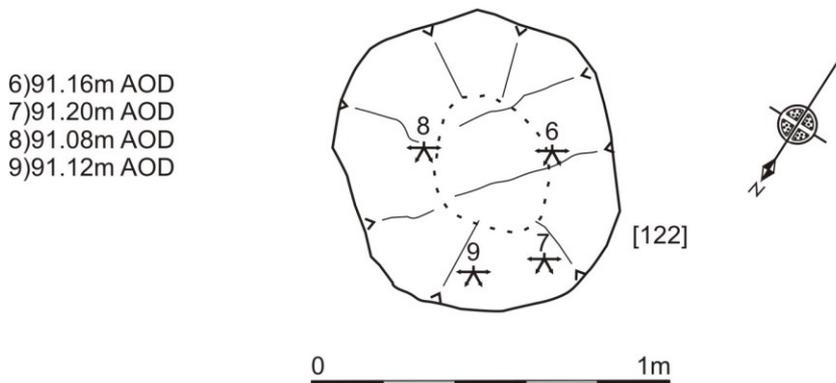
Illus8

SW-facing profile of pit cut [122]



Illus9

Pit cut 122, fully excavated



AG06