



Rebecca Shaw Archaeological Services

Land at Banks Hill, Dundrennan, Kirkcudbright, Dumfries & Galloway: Archaeological Monitoring Works



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1 Introduction

This Data Structure Report presents the findings of archaeological monitoring works undertaken on land at Banks Hill, Dundrennan, Kirkcudbright, Dumfries & Galloway (roughly centred on NGR: NX 707 483): The proposed works comprised excavation for the erection of two (33.1m high to blade tip) wind turbines and formation of a temporary service track (planning application no 12/P/2/0244). A proposed plan, subject to micro-siting, was submitted prior to works and Figure 1 indicates the actual areas that were excavated.

Archaeological works were necessary as the proposed development was within close proximity to High Banks Cup and Ring marks, which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM no. 1028). These rock carvings are exceptionally high quality in a regional and Scottish context. They date from around 3000 years ago and research suggests that such monuments were constructed at locations which commanded wide views over the landscape. There are also records of further cup and ring marked rocks in the vicinity of where the access track and turbine foundations will be located (MDG: 4044, 5175, 11653, 11654 / NMRS: NX74NW 56, 64, 111, 112).

Dumfries & Galloway planning authority therefore placed a condition on the proposed development works to ensure appropriate recording of any archaeological evidence uncovered by the ground disturbance. During the course of the works a small pit [105] was uncovered which comprised a compacted ashy fill [104] containing fragments of charcoal and burnt bone. Post excavation analysis indicated the pit dated to the late Bronze Age.

Rebecca Shaw Archaeological Services was appointed to act with regard to the condition by Charles Hope-Dunbar. The terms of the monitoring works were agreed with Dumfries & Galloway Archaeology Service who advise Dumfries & Galloway Council on such matters.

2 Project Works

The archaeological monitoring works were undertaken on land at Banks Hill, Dundrennan, Kirkcudbright, Dumfries & Galloway on the 27th March 2013. The works were undertaken as agreed with the Dumfries & Galloway Archaeology Service in a method statement (Shaw, 2013).

The post-excavation works were undertaken as outlined in the method statement and agreed through email with Jane Brann from Dumfries & Galloway Archaeology Service.

All works complied with the Institute of Field Archaeology's Standards and Policy Statements and Code of Conduct, and Historic Scotland Policy Statements.

3 Findings

In general the topsoil comprised a mid to light brown fairly fine silt [101] averaging 250mm in depth (with a depth of between 150mm and 400mm) – bedrock was visible close to the surface in places (Figures 3a & 3b). The subsoil varied between a pale yellow / orange clay containing small stones [102] (Figure 3c) and a grey / orange clay [103]. Large sub-angular stones and areas of shattered bedrock were visible within the subsoil (Figure 3d).

With the line of the temporary service track there was a water filled natural dip where drainage had been inserted comprising both a rubble drain and a red ceramic tile drain. Also located within this dip was a small oval pit [105] which was located roughly 340mm below the current ground level (Figure 4c). The pit measured 0.51m by 0.38m (at most) and between 50mm and 110mm in depth with the northwest half being shallower (Figures 5b & 5c). The fill comprised a blackish grey fairly compact silt [104] containing small fragments of charcoal and burnt bone (Figure 5a).

4 Post Excavation Analysis

The fill [104] of pit [105] was processed by Headland Archaeology who identified both oak and non-oak charcoal as well as what appeared to be compacted ash, which had been wet at some point and dried hard. Detailed analysis was not undertaken on the small fragments of burnt bone but they have been provisionally identified as sheep (or less probably roe deer) (Dave Henderson pers. comm.).

A cremated bone sample was submitted to Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre for 14C dating with the following results: the radiocarbon age BP 2830 ± 30 (SUERC 47688 (GU31063) (δ 13 relative VPDB -23.6%) is calibrated to 1056-906BC (95.4 probability). The burnt animal bone sample therefore dates from the late 2nd millennium to early 1st millennium cal BC.

5 Discussion

Early available cartographic sources indicate that in the mid eighteenth century the monitored area was open rough ground with escarpments (Figures 2a-2b). In general the archaeological monitoring works revealed a fairly fine silt [101] which was fairly shallow in section measuring only 150mm in depth as bedrock was very close to the surface (Figures 3a & 3b). The subsoil varied between a pale yellow / orange clay containing small stones [102] and a grey / orange clay [103] with large sub-angular stones and areas of shattered bedrock were visible.

The archaeological works were required as the works were being undertaken within close proximity to previously recorded cup & ring marked rocks (Figure 1). Cup & ring marks are viewed as a form of prehistoric rock art found throughout Scotland as well as in Ireland, France and Spain and thought to have a potential date range from 3500 to 1000BC.

There are many theories as to their meaning and one belief is that their location could be indicative of function with some being sited: near or part of cairns & burial mounds; on standing stones; at stone circles or on rock outcrops picked for the views of the surrounding landscape. The map in figure 1 indicates the location of known cup & ring marked rocks and although the works were excavated within close proximity to two potential sites, no rock art was noted on the day of the works.

A small oval pit [105] was uncovered in a natural water filled dip and the locating of both a rubble drain and red tile drain, suggest drainage in this area may have been a long term problem. However, the pit would not have been excavated within water – though it may have been fairly close to it. The pit comprised an ashy fill [104] which also contained small fragments of both charcoal and burnt animal bone. The relative small amount of burnt bone indicates the pit is unlikely to be a cremation burial but more likely denotes where meat was cooked (possibly for a meal) – the charcoal and ash within the pit is also indicative of where a fire may have been set. The excavation of a pit suggests a deliberate. The burnt animal bone has been dated to the late Bronze Age (1056-906BC) which although at the very periphery of the potential date range for rock art, it could be speculated that the two events are contemporary.

6 Conclusion

Archaeological monitoring works were undertaken on the 27th March 2013 on land at Banks Hill, Dundrennan, Kirkcudbrightshire as a condition of the issued planning consent. The works were required as the proposed works were located in close proximity to a number of cup & ring marked rocks. The monitoring works mainly revealed a mid to light brown fairly fine silty topsoil and either a pale yellow / orange clay containing small stones or a grey / orange clay subsoil. Large sub-angular stones and areas of shattered bedrock were visible within the subsoil and bedrock was visible close to the surface in places.

A small oval pit with a compacted ashy fill was uncovered within a natural dip during the excavations for the temporary service track. The pit contained small fragments of charcoal and burnt bone, which was identified as animal. Radiocarbon dating undertaken on the burnt animal bone dated the pit to the late Bronze Age.

Data Structure Report - Land at Banks Hill, Dundrennan

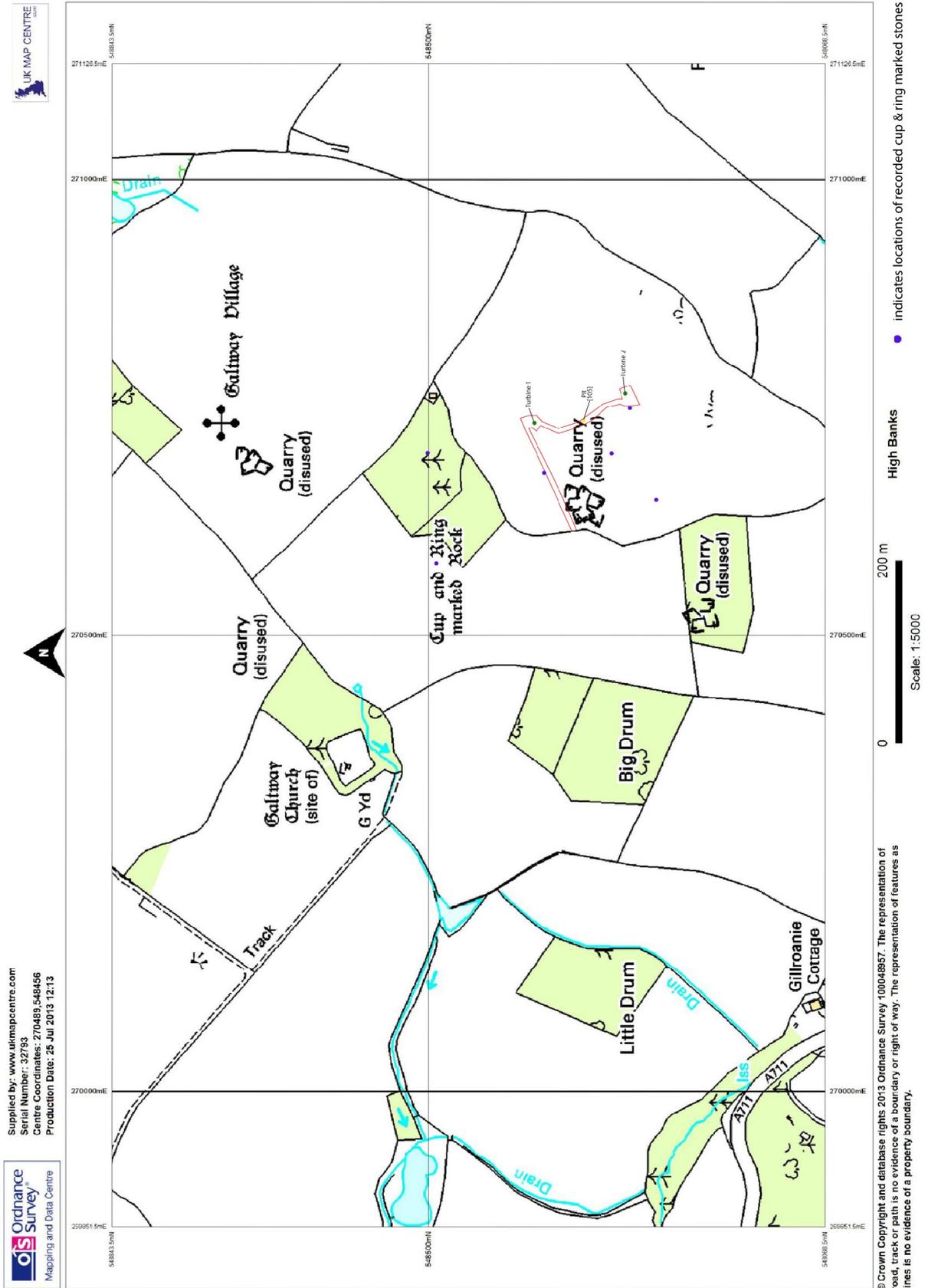


Figure 1 – site map depicting where excavations were undertaken



Figure 2a – Military Survey of Scotland (Roy) (1747-55)



Figure 2b – 1st edition Ordnance Survey map (1854) 1:10,560 © Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group – not to be reproduced without permission – 958495395



Figure 3a – western end of service track



Figure 3b – service track showing bedrock



Figure 3c – service track (looking from turbine area 1 towards turbine area 2)



Figure 3d – service track (looking from turbine area 2 towards turbine area 1)



Figure 4a – open area strip for turbine (1)



Figure 4b – open area strip for turbine (2)



Figure 4c – pre-ex of pit [105]



Figure 5a – pit [105] during excavation

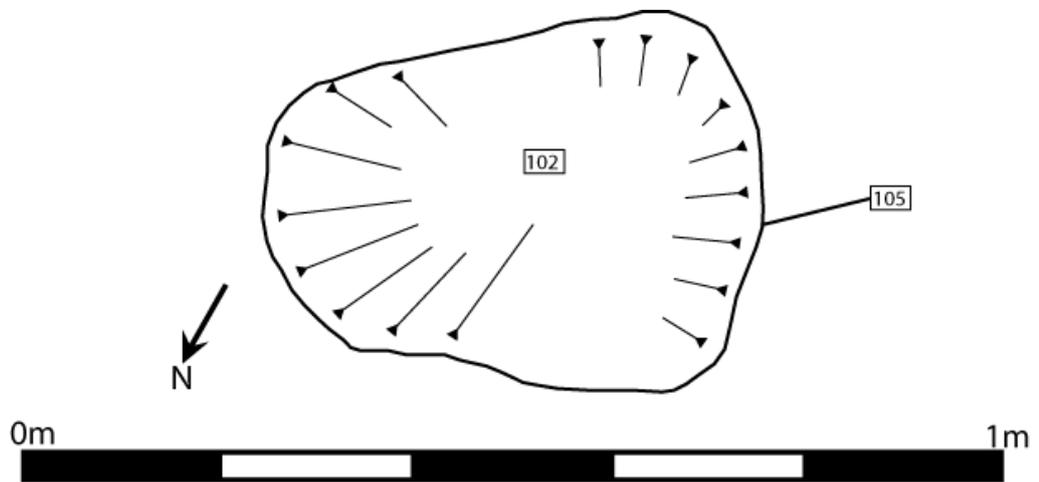


Figure 5b – post-ex plan of pit [105]



Figure 5c – pit [105] post-ex

References

<i>Documentary</i> SOEn	2010	Scottish Planning Policy (SPP). <i>Archaeology</i> , Scottish Office Environmental Department.
SOEn	2011	<i>PAN 2/2011</i> , Planning & Archaeology Scottish Office Environmental Department.
SHEP	2011	Scottish Historic Environment Policy
<i>Cartographic</i> Roy	1747-55	Military Survey of Scotland
Ordnance Survey	1854	1 st Edition Ordnance Survey, Kirkcudbrightshire 1: 10,560

Appendix 1: Record Summaries

Context Summaries

No.	Interpretation	Description
101	Topsoil	Mid to light brown fairly fine silt with a doeth of between 150mm to 400mm
102	Subsoil	Pale yellow / orange clay containing small stones
103	Subsoil	Grey / orange clay
104	Fill of Pit [105]	Blackish grey fairly compact silt containing small fragments of charcoal and burnt bone
105	Pit	Oval shaped pit measuring 0.51m by 0.38m and between 50mm and 110mm in depth. Filled with deposit [104]

Photographic Record

No	Disc No.	B&W Digital No.	Disc No.	Colour Digital No.	Description	From	Date
1	1	1	1	1	Western end of service track (start)	ENE	27/03/13
2	1	2	1	2	Service track (between start and turbine 1 – central area)	ENE	27/03/13
3	1	3	1	3	Service track (between start and turbine 1 – ENE end)	ENE	27/03/13
4	1	4	1	4	Open area strip for turbine 1	WSW	27/03/13
5	1	5	1	5	Open area strip for turbine 1	NNE	27/03/13
6	1	6	1	6	Service track from turbine area 1 to turbine area 2	SSW	27/03/13
7	1	7	1	7	Open area strip for turbine 2	NE	27/03/13
8	1	8	1	8	Service track from turbine area 2 to turbine area 1	N	27/03/13
9	1	9	1	9	Pre-ex of Pit [105]	NNW	27/03/13
10	1	10	1	10	Pit [105] during excavation	NNW	27/03/13
11	1	11	1	11	Pit [105] during excavation	SSE	27/03/13
12	1	12	1	12	Post-ex of Pit [105]	NNW	27/03/13

Appendix 2: Discovery & Excavation in Scotland

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Dumfries & Galloway Council
PROJECT TITLE/SITE	Land at Banks Hill, Dundrennan

Data Structure Report - Land at Banks Hill, Dundrennan

NAME:	
PARISH:	Kirkcudbright
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Rebecca Shaw
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Rebecca Shaw Archaeological Services
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Watching Brief
NMRS NO(S):	None
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	None
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	Small late Bronze Age pit
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	NX 707 483
START DATE (this season)	27 th March 2013
END DATE (this season)	27 th March 2013
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	None
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
DESCRIPTION:	<p>Archaeological monitoring works were undertaken on land at Banks Hill, Dundrennan, Kirkcudbrightshire as a condition of the issued planning consent. The works were required as the proposed works were located in close proximity to a number of cup & ring marked rocks. The monitoring works mainly revealed a mid to light brown fairly fine silty topsoil and either a pale yellow / orange clay containing small stones or a grey / orange clay subsoil. Large sub-angular stones and areas of shattered bedrock were visible within the subsoil and bedrock was visible close to the surface in places.</p> <p>A small oval pit with a compacted ashy fill was uncovered during the excavations for the service track. The pit contained small fragments of charcoal and burnt bone, which was identified as animal. Radiocarbon dating undertaken on the burnt bone dated the pit to the late Bronze Age. It is therefore be prudently suggested that the pit is contemporary with the cup & ring marks located within close proximity.</p>
PROJECT CODE:	013011
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Charles Hope Dunbar
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ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended)	Report to Dumfries & Galloway Sites and Monuments Record and archive to National Monuments Record of Scotland.

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