

## INTRODUCTION

This report describes the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken during the replacement of a wooden pole at Kilmaluag, Kintyre as part of the upgrading of overhead power lines between Campbeltown and Glen Barr. The refurbishment was carried out by Scottish & Southern Energy plc (SSE). The watching brief was commissioned by Gavin Carswell of SSE and undertaken by John Lewis of Scotia Archaeology on 23rd June 2009. It was intended to mitigate any action that might damage the surviving archaeological record during the pole replacement.

## SITES AND MONUMENTS

Prior to the start of fieldwork, a desk study was carried out of archaeological sites and monuments along the entire course of these power lines. Several were identified in the area around Kilmaluag although only two were relatively close to the pole whose replacement was to be monitored.

These sites and monuments are given the catalogue numbers assigned by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) (eg NR3NW 10) and by the West of Scotland Archaeology Service's Sites and Monuments Record (eg WoSAS 3027). Neither was a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

### **NR63NE 10 (WoSAS 3027) Kilmaluag: cross slab**

A small, cross-marked, sculptured stone is located at NR 6937 3765 although it is known to have been moved on at least two occasions and its original location is unclear.

### **NR63NE 9 (WoSAS 3057) Kilmaluag: cup-marked stone**

A cup-marked stone, measuring approximately 1m by 1m and with 15 faint cups, is set by a barn door at NR 6938 3767.

In addition, many other cup-marked rocks and stones have been identified within a relatively short distance of the site.

## THE WATCHING BRIEF

The watching brief was undertaken because of the proximity of cup-marked stone NR63NE 10 and by the presence of many others throughout this part of Glen Barr. It was carried out during the excavation of a trench to accommodate a replacement for Pole 34 on the Kilmaluag spur, at NR 69383 37803. The existing pole, which was badly decayed, was located in pastureland on the gently sloping north side of the glen. It was situated to the immediate east of a drystone field dyke, of which a maximum of two courses survived, and just south of a gateway that had once linked the fields either side of the wall.

The trench, which was excavated by machine, was located to the immediate east of the existing pole and measured 1.2m east/west by 0.4m wide and 1.6m deep. It cut through turf and 0.25-0.3m of mid-brown, slightly humic loam which sat directly on glacial till of yellow-brown clay with stones. For operational reasons, the new pole could not be inserted at that time. As a consequence, the trench was backfilled, to be re-excavated at a later date. The old

pole was left in situ but will be cut off at ground level at a later date without disturbing the ground immediately around it.

In addition, a trench for a new stay was dug some 5m north of the pole. This trench, which measured 2m east/west by 0.7m wide and 1.6m deep, cut through 0.25m of metalling associated with the entrance through the adjacent field wall. The metalling sat directly on glacial materials. This trench was also backfilled and will be re-excavated at a later date.

No features or deposits of archaeological significance were uncovered in either trench and no rocks bearing cup-marks or any artefacts retrieved from either.

## **CONCLUSION**

Although nothing of archaeological significance was uncovered during this investigation, it is clear from the numerous cup-marked stones and rocks found near Kilmaluag and from other sites nearby that quite a rich prehistoric landscape survives in this part of Glen Barr.

## **PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVE**

- 1-2 The trench for the new Pole 34, viewed from the east.
- 3 View to the east of Pole 34
- 4 View to the west of Pole 34
- 5 Stay trench, viewed from the east
- 6 The site, viewed from the north-west