

Archaeological Watching Brief  
Glenisla Golf Course  
Alyth  
Phases 2 and 3  
AG14

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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF  
GLENISLA GOLF COURSE  
ALYTH**

**PHASES 2 AND 3**

**AG14**

1	<i>Background</i> .....	1
2	<i>Details of Work</i> .....	1
3	<i>Interpretation</i> .....	3
4	<i>Conclusions and Recommendations</i> .....	3
Appendix 1	<i>Context Register</i> .....	4
Appendix 2	<i>Photographic Register</i> .....	4
Appendix 3	<i>Discovery &amp; Excavation in Scotland Entry</i> .....	7

*Illustration 1: Location*

*Illustration 2: WB Area*

*Illustration 3: General Work Area*

*Illustration 4: Modern Test Pit 02*

*Illustration 5: Modern Test Pit Excavated*

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Archaeological monitoring was maintained on topsoil stripping of part of Phase 2 of a residential and commercial development at the disused Glenisla Golf Course, centred on NO 25867 48874. The work (site code AG14) was undertaken on 05 and 06 May and 09 June 2021. The majority of Phases 2 and 3 were stripped without supervision. The requirement was to monitor work on the stripping of the remainder of these phases, including a small area in the centre of the site, formerly overgrown with trees, just to the E of the previous phase, as a sample of this part of the overall site. No significant archaeological features were uncovered, although a previous (2017) test pit was re-located. A small evaluation, comprising three 20m trenches, was also conducted of the proposed re-routing of a watercourse. No archaeological features resulted.*

# **1 Background**

## **1.1 Introduction**

Glenisla Developments Ltd commissioned Alder Archaeology to undertake an archaeological watching brief on Phase 2 and 3 of a Residential and Commercial development at Glenisla Golf Course, Alyth. The development area is a 20<sup>th</sup>-century golf course, now disused, on the eastern edge of Alyth, covering about 0.5 km<sup>2</sup>, centred on NGR NO 25867 48874. The work (site code AG14) was undertaken on 05 and 06 May and 09 June 2021. The majority of Phases 2 and 3 were stripped without supervision; the requirement was to monitor remaining topsoil stripping, including a small area in the centre of the site, formerly overgrown with trees, just to the E of the previous phase, as a sample of this part of the overall site. Three trial trenches were also excavated along the proposed re-routing of an existing watercourse.

The work is part of a programme designed to satisfy the archaeological condition on development application reference 18/01214/AMM, for matters specified under Condition 1 of planning consent 16/01595/IPM.

## **1.2 Aims and Objectives**

The main aim of this investigation was to establish the presence/absence, date, character and quality of any archaeological remains surviving within the development area.

## **1.3 Reporting**

The present document has been prepared as the final report on this phase of the watching brief. Subsequent phases of the same development will be covered by separate reports as they arise. Copies will be sent to the client, The National Record of the Historic Environment at Historic Environment Scotland, and Perth & Kinross Historic Environment Record.

## **1.4 Planning and Curatorial Issues**

This watching brief is part of a programme of archaeological work designed to satisfy the outstanding archaeological condition on the planning consent for this development. Subsequent phases of the development may require their own watching briefs, as determined by Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust.

## **1.5 Acknowledgements**

We wish to thank Andrew Spence of Project Management Scotland for assistance and guidance throughout this project. Glenisla Developments funded this watching brief.

# **2 Details of Work**

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

The development area is a 20<sup>th</sup>-century golf course, partly disused, on the eastern edge of Alyth, covering about 0.5 km<sup>2</sup>, centred on NGR NO 25867 48874. It is roughly triangular in shape, bounded to the N by the B 952 (Meethill Road), to the E by the B

954, and to the SE by the Alyth Burn, which flows W – E to join the Isla some miles to the E of the site. The Back Burn flows N - S though the site, partly culverted, down to the Alyth Burn. In the middle of the site, towards the S, there is a large pond, apparently reflecting an earlier marsh or pond, but perhaps artificially adapted to the golf course landscape.

The site is generally rather flat, falling gently S toward the Alyth Burn. To the N, beyond Meethill Road, the ground rises steeply to Hill of Alyth, Hill of Loyal, and Barry Hill, surmounted by a prehistoric fortification.

To the SE, beyond the Alyth Burn, is Alyth Golf Course, not part of the present development.

There is a dense belt of woodland along the N boundary (Meethill Road), and other small woods on the site, including in the present work area. Generally, as a former golf course, the site was in grass, with scattered trees of various sizes and ages. These areas are being topsoil stripped in stages as the development progresses phase by phase. A small part of the course is still in play, as an annexe to Alyth Golf Course, and is maintained accordingly.

The planned development is divided into phases, to be completed over the next few years. Phases 2 and 3, the subject of this report, comprise work in the north and centre of the former course, to lay out a new road network and private house plots.

## **2.2 Archaeological Potential**

No archaeological work was carried out in advance of the formation of the present golf course, but a desk-based assessment and walkover survey (AG04) were carried out at an earlier stage of the proposals for the present development by Alder Archaeology Ltd in 2009. The Pitcrocknie Standing Stone (SM 1575) is located in the NW area of the site, within the Phase I area of the development.

An evaluation (AG05) of ten trial trenches was carried out by Alder Archaeology in July 2013 in an area to the NW of the standing stone. Following this, in April and May 2014, a small (20 m square) excavation (AG06) was conducted directly to the north-west of the standing stone. This recovered remains of a Neolithic hearth, pot and worked quartz, probably earlier than the standing stone, together with other smaller features. Subsequent to this, engineering test pits excavated across the former golf course in 2017 to determine soil conditions were monitored by Alder, with negative results (AG11).

In 2019, a watching brief (AG13) was conducted on topsoil stripping in the NW corner of the site, in advance of construction of a care home and Phase 1 housing. A pit, of presumed prehistoric origin and containing a concentration of boulders and lenses of charcoal including charred hazelnut shell, was exposed close to the location of a 2014 excavation which recorded a structured deposition of pottery and a hearth feature, both of Neolithic date. Radiocarbon dating of a hazelnut shell from the 2019 pit subsequently confirmed a Neolithic date (3707 – 3642 calBC).

The present phases (2 – 3) of development do not directly impact known significant features on the site, but could affect previously undocumented remains.

## **2.3 Archaeological Method**

The majority of Phase 2 was stripped without supervision in 2019, with the majority of Phase 3 stripped (again, without supervision) in April 2021. The remaining part of Phase 3, part of a road along the E edge of the Phase, was stripped under archaeological supervision, together with a track for an electric cable supplying the entire site. Following this, three trenches of 20m x 2m were excavated under archaeological supervision along the intended new route of a watercourse, which was to be diverted as part of the development. Finally, an area of about 60 x 30 m in the NE of Phase 2 had been cleared of mainly semi-mature self-seeded trees, leaving upstanding stumps. These stumps were extracted by machine under archaeological supervision, and then the remaining topsoil was stripped off under archaeological supervision and transported by dumper to be stored elsewhere on site.

## **2.4 Results of Investigations**

No archaeological finds or features resulted from either monitoring the remainder of Phase 3, the cable route or the evaluation. The cable route was found to be excavated through landscaped ground, including an earlier test pit, whereupon monitoring was terminated. The S end of the new watercourse route included very deep peat soil, the trench being excavated to c.1.50m depth to reach natural clay/gravel. Stripping of the topsoil below the stand of trees revealed a layer of coarse gravel and sand (01), similar to the natural glacial deposits found elsewhere on this site. In the SW corner of this area, a well-defined rectangular feature (02), 2.3 m x 1.1 m, aligned exactly N – S, was obviously one of the many engineering test pits excavated in 2017. Its location is a reasonable fit for Test Pit 2:02. It was filled with a grey sandy loam (04), with abundant charcoal, much root disturbance, and occasional fragments of china. A less well-defined roughly square feature (03) had an entirely uncompacted fill of grey topsoil. It was evidently a pit created by extraction of tree roots earlier in the day.

## **3 Interpretation**

No archaeological features were found in any of the work areas. The vicinity of the cable track was heavily landscaped. The site conditions below the stand of trees, overgrown with tree roots and heavily disturbed by the process of extraction, made ordinary observation difficult. Nevertheless, it was still possible to detect the 2017 test pit, and other substantial, well-defined features would also have been detectable if present.

The machine driver Dan recollects working in this area as a berry-picker when he was a boy, before the golf course was created, and recalls that the ground sloped down markedly from N to S. He has suggested that the ground in this area was substantially reduced to a level when the golf course was laid out.

## **4 Conclusions and Recommendations**

The present watching brief has provided a sample of deposits in the Phase 2 and 3 area, and suggests that significant archaeological remains are unlikely to come to light in this part of the Glenisla Golf Course development. Further investigations may be required as the development proceeds to later phases. This will be as required by Perth and Kinross Council in discussion with Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust.

## Appendix 1 Context Register

<i>No:</i>	<i>Description</i>
01	Coarse yellow gravel natural. Abundant large rounded boulders in yellow sand. Natural deposit
02	Rectangular feature at S end of work area. Length 2.3 m. Width 1.1 m. Modern (2017) engineering test pit. Probably Test Pit 2:02
03	Small square feature with grey fill. Aligned at 6° Mag. Soft uncompacted fill. Soil 0.4 m deep. Modern tree pit created this morning during root removal.
04	Grey fill of 07. Abundant charcoal, and roots. Some china sherds.

## Appendix 2 Photographic Register

<i>No</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>View</i>
1-19	General views of area already stripped, Phases 2 and 3	NW, W, SW, N, NE
20-21	Location shots, remaining unstripped part of Phase 3	N
22-30	Working shots, topsoil strip, Phase 3	SE, S, W
31-32	Topsoil profile, E edge of Phase 3	E
33-38	Working shots, topsoil strip, Phase 3	S
39-40	View back along stripped area towards stand of trees	N
41	Working shot, topsoil strip, Phase 3	S
42-47	General views of S part of Phase 3	S, N, NE
48-49	Working shots, topsoil strip, Phase 3	SE
50-54	Location shots, cable track area, pre-strip	E, S
55-61	Working shots, stripping cable track	N, E

62-66	General views over already stripped areas	W, NW, N
67-88	Working shots, stripping cable track	E, N, NE
89-93	Landscaped area (former green) at E end of cable track (including 2017 test pit)	E, W, SW
94-104	Working shots, stripping cable track	E, N
105-106	Pea gravel in landscaped area along cable track	E
107-108	View back along stripped cable track	W
109-113	Working shots, stripping cable track	E, N
114-115	Pea gravel in landscaped area along cable track	N
116-132	Working shots, stripping cable track	E, S
133-137	Location shots, N end of new route for burn	E, SE, W
138-143	Working shots, excavating T1	S
144-147	T1, post-ex	S, N
148-151	Working shot, removal of rubber pipe from across T2 location	N
152	Location shot, T2	E
153-156	Working shots, excavating T2	N
157-161	T2, post-ex	N, S
162-164	Location shots, T3	SE
165-173	Working shots, excavating T3	N
174-178	T3, post-ex	N, S



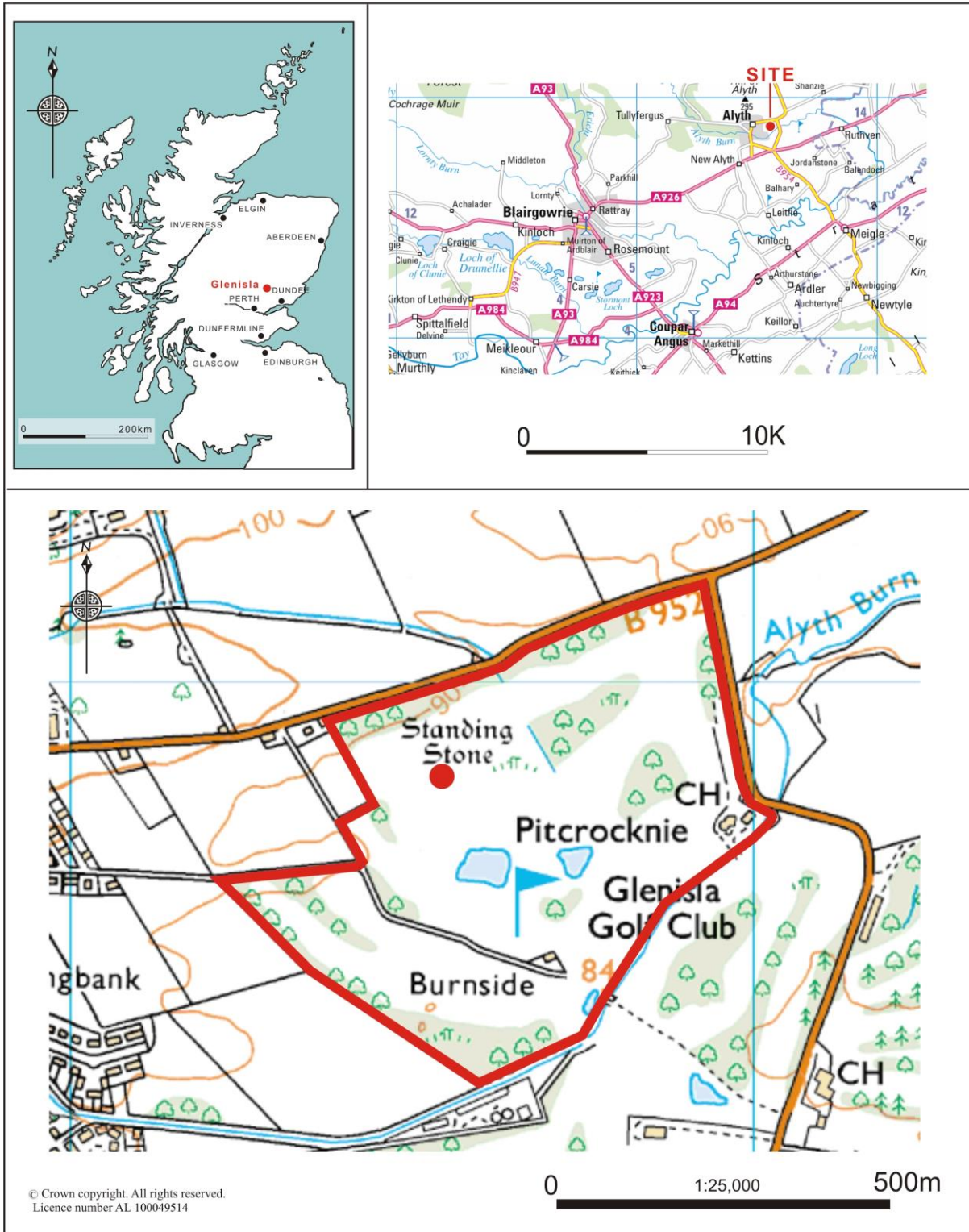
179-180	General work area. Public Road B 952 beyond trees. New road in formation to W, marked by upstanding concrete drain chambers. New houses built to NW.	N
181-182	Detail, new road to W, marked by upstanding concrete drain chambers.	N
183-184	Work area after tree root removal.	N
185	Rectangular feature. Modern (2017) test pit 02. Probably Test Pit 2:02	NE
186-188	Small square-ish feature 03 with grey fill. Aligned at 6° Mag. Soft uncompacted fill. Soil 0.4 m deep. In fact modern tree pit. Excavated this mornng.	NE
189-191	General, work area as finished. Feature 07 in right foreground	N
192-193	Modern test pit 02, machine excavated. Scales 1 m.	N
194-196	Modern test pit 02, machine excavated. Scales 1 m.	S

### Appendix 3 Discovery & Excavation in Scotland Entry

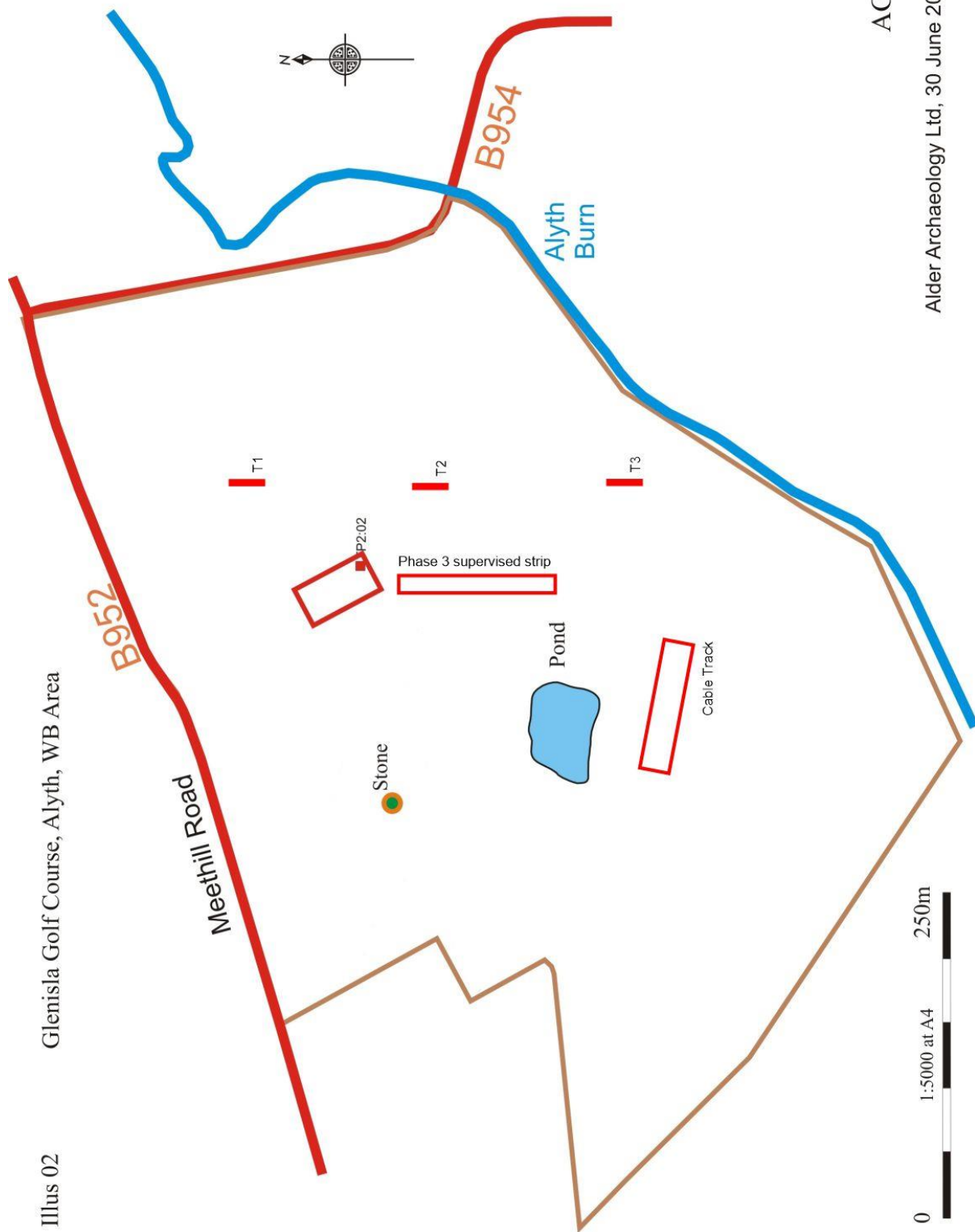
<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY:</b>	Perth & Kinross
<b>PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:</b>	Glenisla Golf Course
<b>PROJECT CODE:</b>	AG14
<b>PARISH:</b>	Alyth
<b>NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	David Bowler
<b>NAME OF ORGANISATION:</b>	Alder Archaeology Ltd
<b>TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:</b>	WB
<b>NMRS NO(S):</b>	NO24NE 20, 134
<b>SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):</b>	Standing stone (Prehistoric), settlement (Neolithic), lithic implements (quartz) (Neolithic), unidentified pottery (Neolithic)
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS:</b>	None
<b>NGR</b> (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)	NO 25867 48874
<b>START DATE</b> (this season)	09 June 2021
<b>END DATE</b> (this season)	09 June 2021
<b>PREVIOUS WORK</b> (incl. <i>DES</i> ref.)	Evaluation ( <i>DES</i> vol 14, 2013, p.147), Excavation ( <i>DES</i> vol 15, 2014, p.155), WB (2017), (2019)
<b>MAIN DESCRIPTION:</b> (NARRATIVE) (May include information from other fields)	Archaeological monitoring was maintained on topsoil stripping of part of Phase 2 of a residential and commercial development at the disused Glenisla Golf Course, centred on NO 25867 48874. The work (site code AG14) was undertaken on 09 June 2021. The requirement was to monitor work the stripping of a small area in the centre of the site, formerly overgrown with trees, just to the E of the previous phase, as a sample of this part of the overall site. No significant archaeological features were uncovered, although a previous (2017) test pit was re-located.
<b>PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:</b>	WB on subsequent development phases
<b>CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:</b>	-
<b>SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:</b>	Glenisla Developments Ltd
<b>ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	Alder Archaeology Ltd, 55 South Methven Street, Perth PH1 5NX
<b>EMAIL ADDRESS:</b>	<a href="mailto:director@alderarchaeology.co.uk">director@alderarchaeology.co.uk</a>
<b>ARCHIVE LOCATION</b> (intended/deposited)	HES (intended)

Illus 1

Glenisla Golf Course, Alyth, Location



Ag14  
2021 Alder Archaeology Ltd



AG14

Alder Archaeology Ltd, 30 June 2021

Illus 02 Glenisla Golf Course, Alyth, WB Area



Illus 03 General work area. View N



Illus 04 Modern (2017) test pit 02.  
Probably Test Pit 2:02



Illus 05 Modern test pit 02, machine  
excavated. Scales 1 m.