

**Land to NW of Arbuthnott Parish Church
Arbuthnott, Laurencekirk, AB30 1NA
Report on archaeological evaluation**



**Cameron Archaeology
7 July 2013**

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CONTENTS

1	BACKGROUND	3
2	ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND	4
3	ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION	6
4	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	8
5	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	9
6	REFERENCES.....	9
	APPENDIX 1 PHOTOGRAPHS	11
	APPENDIX 2 CONTEXTS	13
	APPENDIX 3 SAMPLES	13
	APPENDIX 4 FINDS	13

ILLUSTRATIONS

top Ditch F102 and SF 1 with Arbuthnott Church in background
bottom stone with socket holes SF1

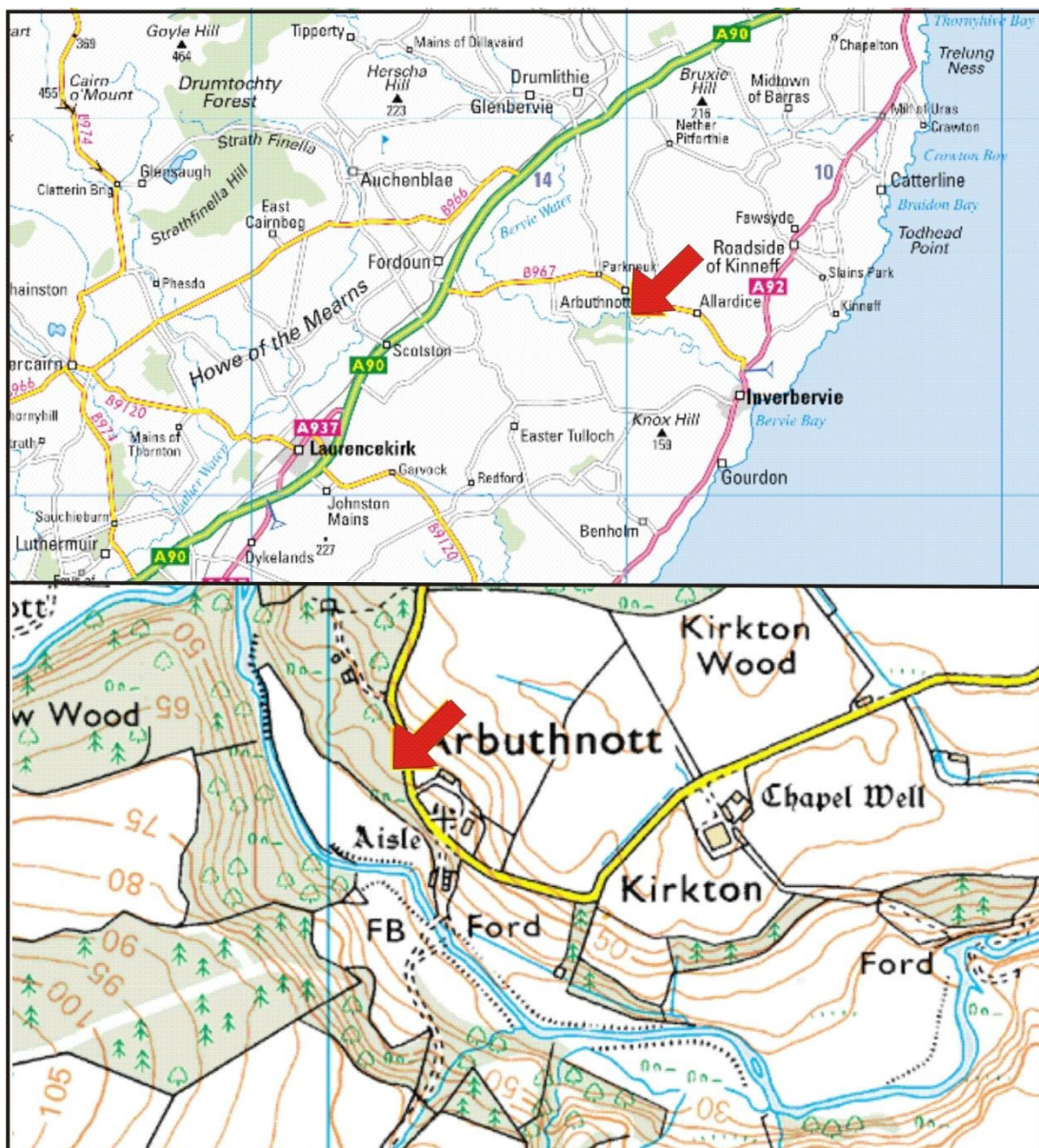
Illus 1	Location plan	3
Illus 2	Site plan with proposed cemetery extension in red	4
Illus 3	Plan showing trenches and features	6
Illus 4	Section 1 with SF1 <i>in situ</i>	7
Illus 5	Plan of ditch F102 with SF 1	7
Illus 6	Section 1 with relative location of SF1	8
Illus 7	SF1 upper surface showing digger bucket scratches	8
Illus 8	Area of watching brief required	9

SUMMARY

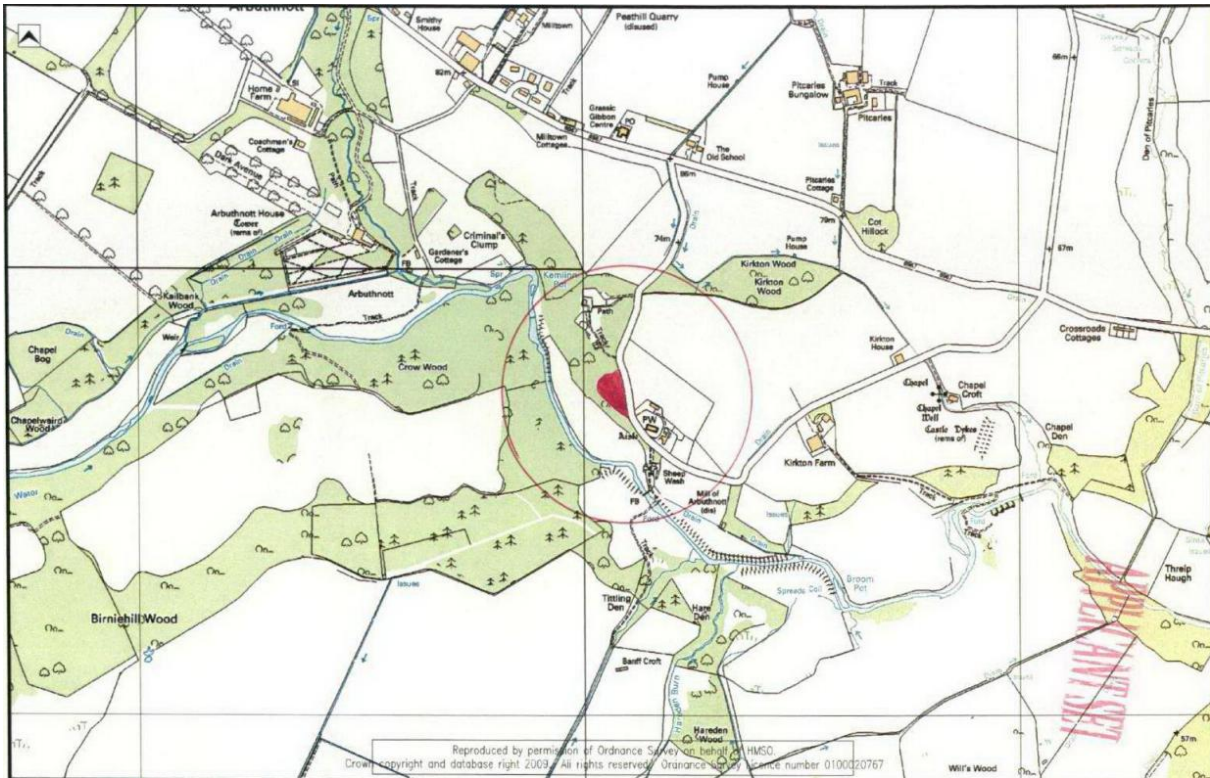
A 7% archaeological evaluation was carried out at the site of the proposed extension to Arbuthnott Parish Church graveyard. Two palaeochannels one containing a socketed stone were uncovered and it is recommended by Aberdeenshire Archaeology Service that a watching brief be maintained on deep earthmoving works at the south end of the site.

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The proposed site for the new cemetery is located on gently sloping ground immediately NW of Arbuthnott Parish Church and on the west side of an unclassified road. The land is presently undeveloped, in agricultural use. The site is centred at NO 80070 74724, at a height of 45-50m OD in the parish of Arbuthnott.
- 1.2 The work was commissioned by Lisa Gray, Aberdeenshire Council and an application for Full Planning Permission for Formation of Cemetery and Erection of Shed and Gates to Aberdeenshire Council (APP/2012/3556) was granted on 18.2.13 with standard archaeology condition (condition no 2) for an archaeological evaluation prior to the cemetery extension.
- 1.3 All the archaeological work was carried out in the context of Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) Planning Advice Note (PAN 2/2011) and Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP), which state that archaeological remains should be regarded as part of the environment to be protected and managed.



Illus 1 Location plan (Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2013)



Illus 2 Site plan with proposed cemetery extension in red (*copyright Aberdeenshire Council*)

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The proposed development site lies less than 50m from St Ternan's Chapel (NO87SW0010), now known as Arbutnott Parish Church, which has its origins in the medieval period (at least the 13th century AD) and has been identified as a site of regional significance. Due to the proximity of the proposed development to this medieval chapel, it is felt that there is a high potential for buried archaeological remains to survive in the area, including the potential for human remains (Herbert 2013). There are no known sites within the proposed development area and no Scheduled Ancient Monuments within 1km of the current site.
- 2.2 Arbutnott Parish Church (also known as St Tiernan's Church; St Mary's Chapel; Arbutnott Aisle; Arbutnott Parish Kirk; NO87SW 11; NO 80155 74645) is described by MacGibbon and Ross as collegiate (1887, 235-43) but by Easson (1957, 187) as a simple parish church. It was dedicated to St Ternan in 1242, and belonged to the Collegiate Church of St Mary at St Andrews. Part of the original 13th century church survives in the chancel and possibly the nave, although its doorway may be 16th century. The Arbutnott Aisle was built at the end of the 15th century. It is named "St Mary's Chapel" on the OS 6" because, according to the New Statistical Account (NSA), the lower of its two storeys was a chapel dedicated to the Virgin Mary. Tussocks outside a small doorway in the N wall of the chancel suggest that a small sacristy or similar building was contemplated. The Arbutnott Missal, completed in 1491, was written in this church (Scott 1925, 462; Name Book 1864, 50; NSA 1845, 159-60). The parish church of Arbutnott, incorporating part of the 13th century church dedicated to St Ternan, is as described. There is no evidence that it was collegiate. An inscription on the lintel of the door in the N wall of the chancel confirms

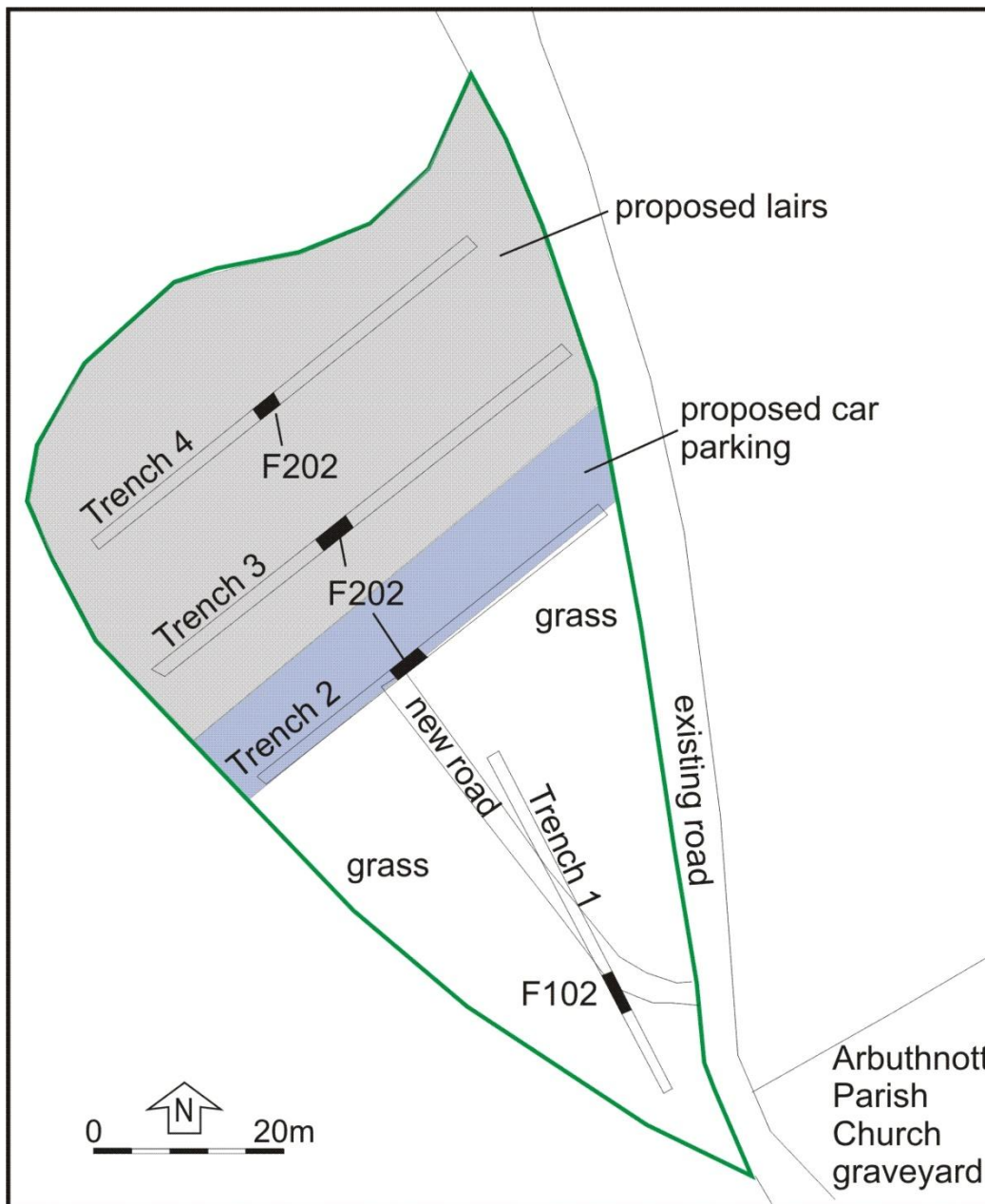
the original date and dedication. The Arbuthnott Aisle, built against the S wall, is no longer known as St Mary's Chapel.

Arbuthnot Parish Kirk Manse (NO87SW 37, NO 80193 74632) is located immediately SE of the church.

- 2.3 A copper alloy flanged axe (NO87SW 23; NO 801 746) of Coles' Class III (Coles 1966, 135) was found near Arbuthnott and is in Montrose Museum (Accession no 66). It is a long-flanged axe: Savoch variant of Cragg Wood type). Single find. Flanged axe, smooth but sandy surface, blow-holes in hafting area, inside shield irregular rain-pattern (incised): length 120mm, butt 21mm, cutting edge 46mm, weight 250 gms (Schmidt and Burgess 1981, 478).
- 2.4 Four leaf-shaped, and six barbed-and-tanged flint arrow-heads from Arbuthnott (NO87SW 29; NO 801 746) are in the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland (Proc Soc Antiq Scot 1884, 364; 1890, 12; NMAS 1892, 13, 15).
- 2.5 A flint 'arrowhead', large enough to be classed as a spearhead, with a very thick stem and short barbs, from Arbuthnott (NO87SW 5; NO 801 746) is in Elgin Museum (Anderson and Black 1888, 341). Another flint arrowhead, also from Arbuthnott, was donated to Angus District Museum, Montrose in 1896 by G Smith, gamekeeper (ibid).
- 2.6 Arbuthnot Well (also known as Crow Well; NO77SE 52; NO 7963 7466) was recorded during a pre-afforestation survey 600m west of current site (Holden 1998, 5).
- 2.7 The remains of the Mill of Arbuthnot (or Bervie Water grain mill and lade; NO87SW 84; NO 8031 7442) situated on the N edge of the haughland of the Bervie Water, were recorded during a pre-afforestation survey by Headland Archaeology (NMRS MS 899/90, no.8). It is 400m SE of the current site. The two-storey mill building measures 11m by 12m externally and in most places the walls are still standing to their full height although they are in danger of collapse. Subsidence, particularly in the S wall, has been a problem since iron ties and extra bracing can be seen in several places. The building stands on the edge of a stone-lined lade and was evidently powered by an undershot wheel. There is a large drying kiln in the NW corner of the building, The drying floor measures 5m by 5m and is fired from a large and ornate hearth in the main body of the building. A single partition appears to divide the building into two work areas although it is evident that many alterations and a substantial extension to the W have been undertaken during the lifetime of the building. Many iron fittings and supports still survive in the S wall. The lade runs draws water from the Bervie Water and runs along the N edge of the haughland from NO 8016 7447 to NO 8049 7434 (Holden 1998, 5).
- 2.8 Two finds from Kirkton Farm include a cup and ring marked sandstone block; upper face has three small cups linked to a central cup and ring by 3 radial grooves. The lower face has a cup and ring with 3 plain cups; from these 3 cups, 3 parallel grooves, crossed by a 4th groove, run on to the narrower end of the block where 2 end in cups. (A 3rd cup was probably removed by abrasion). Also kept at this farm is a sandstone slab (220mm x 195mm x 80mm) found at Alpity NO78 77, which has a single cup-mark 434mm in diameter and 20mm deep (NO87SW27).
- 2.9 Map evidence suggests that the land has been vacant and in agricultural use since at least the First Edition OS (see Appendix 3). Blaeu's map of 1654 records a church at 'Arbuthnot'.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

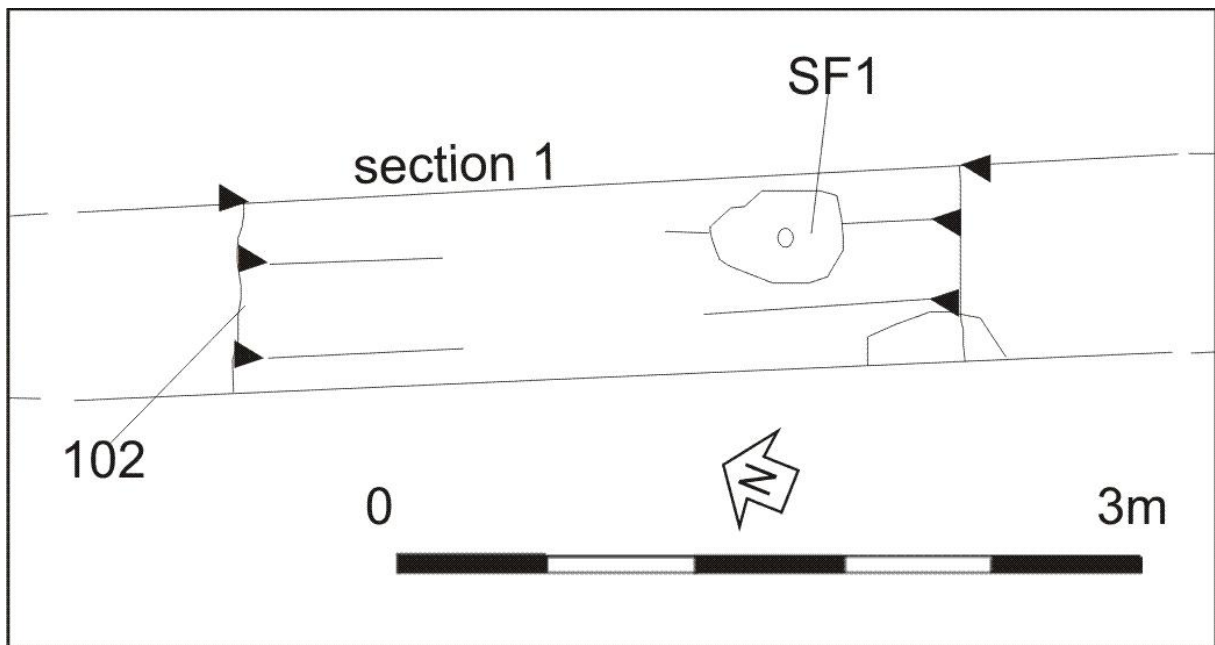
Four trenches representing 7% of the area to be disturbed for the proposed extension to the Arbuthnott Parish Church graveyard were excavated on 27 June 2013. The topsoil was up to 1m deep and the subsoil in the south half of the site was gravel and at the north was a heavy clay. A shallow palaeochannel running NW-SE (F102) was up to 0.2m deep and filled with topsoil. At the south end of Trench 1 another shallow palaeochannel (F102; Illus 3-6) was a maximum of 0.22m deep and filled with a heavy grey clay loam (103) with flecks of charcoal on the base of the ditch (104). It was covered with 0.8m of ploughsoil. In the fill was a sandstone block 0.46 x 0.32m in size and 0.12m thick with rough peck marks on one face where the stone has been roughly shaped (Illus 7). It has a 0.07m wide socket in both faces formed using a chisel-type tool creating a sub-square hole. No other features or finds were recovered during this evaluation.



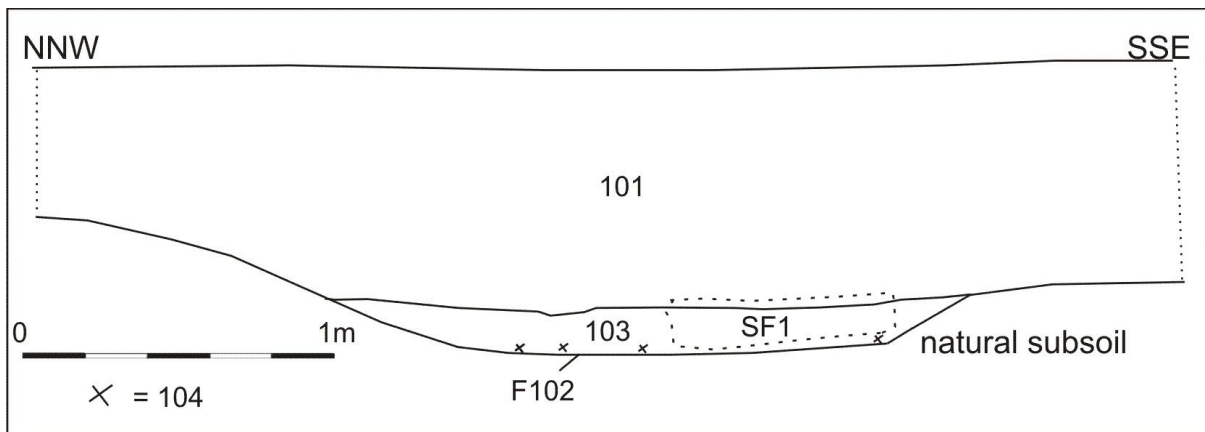
Illus 3 Plan showing trenches and features



Illus 4 Section 1 with SF1 *in situ*



Illus 5 Plan of ditch F102 with SF 1



Illus 6 Section 1 with relative location of SF1

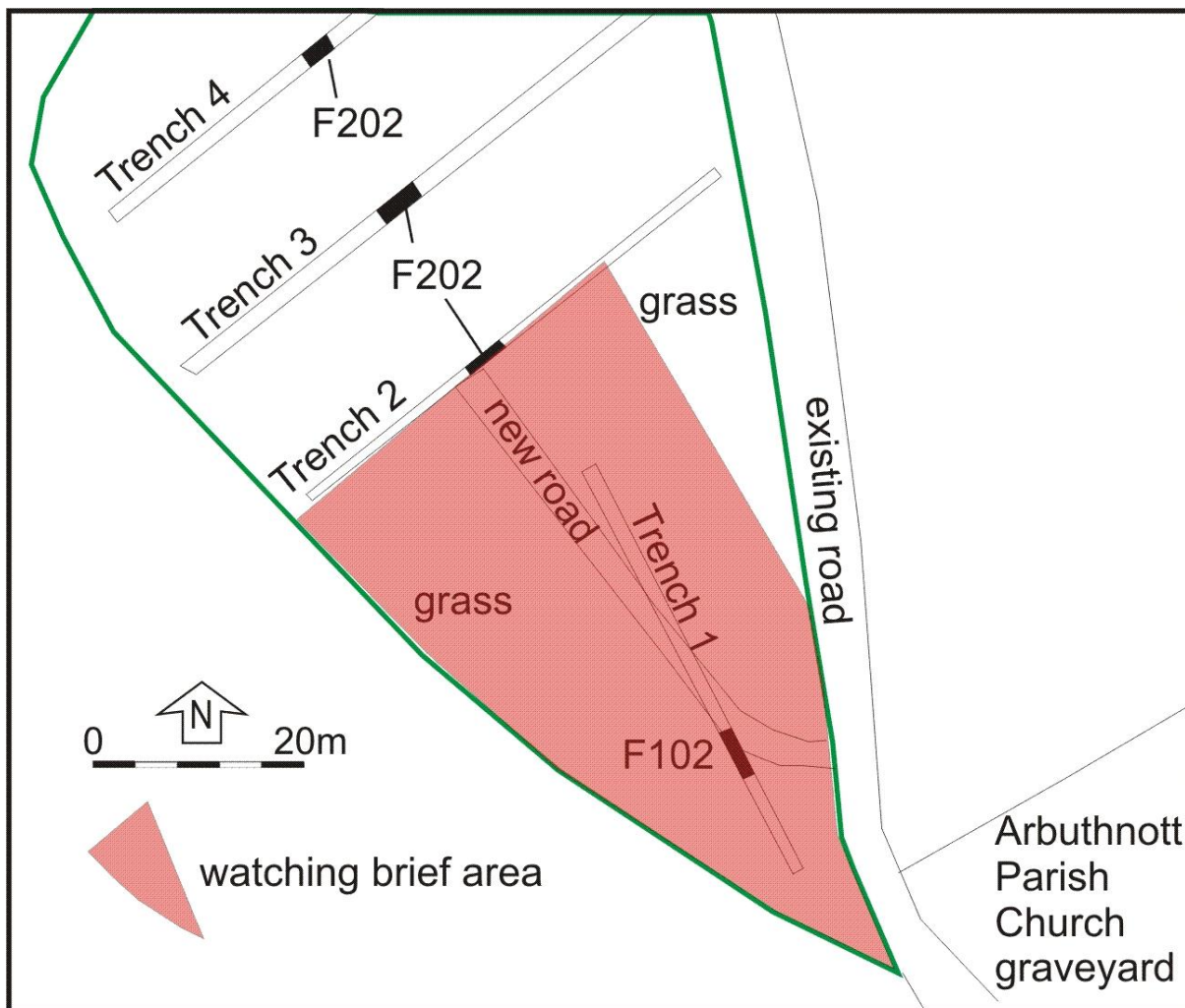


Illus 7 SF1 upper surface showing digger bucket scratches and peck marks

4 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Shallow palaeochannels are common on sloping sites like this one where water flowed down slopes. The reuse of palaeochannels as ditches around early medieval churches is known from Tullich (JC and HK Murray's recent work; Bruce Mann pers comm). The socketed stone (SF1) is unusual and may be an unfinished millstone.

Although it is unlikely that the channel and the stone SF1 are associated with an early medieval church, a watching brief should be maintained on the area around F102 (see Illus 9) if the ground is to be reduced in level by 0.5m or more as this may help with the interpretation of these enigmatic features.



Illus 8 Area of watching brief required

5 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to Claire Herbert and Bruce Mann, Aberdeenshire Archaeology Service; Lisa Gray, Aberdeenshire Council and Stephen Brown, A&S Brown.

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APPENDIX 1 PHOTOGRAPHS



DSC_0001



DSC_6491



DSC_6497



DSC_6510



DSC_6521



DSC_6530



DSC_6531



DSC_6543



DSC_6544



DSC_6559



DSC_6560



DSC_6571



DSC_6572



DSC_6595



DSC_6596



DSC_6607



DSC_6609



DSC_6621



DSC_6622



DSC_6632



DSC_6633



DSC_6644



DSC_6645



DSC_6648



DSC_6650



DSC_6651



DSC_6652



DSC_6785



DSC_6796



DSC_6805



DSC_6806



DSC_6815



DSCF6331



DSCF6332



DSCF6333



Photo number	Description	Facing
DSC_0001-0005	Stone with sockets SF 1	
DSC6489-6507	Arbuthnott church NO87SW0010	
DSC6509-6513	Trench 1 SF1 in ditch prior to excavation	SW
DSC6514-6519	Trench 1 SF1 in ditch 102	SE
DSC6520-6524	Trench 1 SF1 in ditch 102	NE
DSC6525-6536	Trench 1 SF1 in ditch 101 with Arbuthnott church in background	SE
DSC6537-6550	Trench 1 SF1 in ditch 102	NW
DSC6551-6565	Trench 1 SF1 in ditch 102	N
DSC6556-6571	Trench 1 SF1 in ditch 102	NE
DSC6572-6595	Trench 1 SF1 in ditch 102	ESE
DSC6596-6601	Trench 1 SF1 in ditch 102	SW
DSC6602-6607	Trench 1 SF1 in ditch 102	NE
DSC6608-6632	Trench 1 SF1 in ditch 102	SE

DSC6633-6634	Site from graveyard	W
DSC6635-6644	TR 1 ditch 102 after removal of SF1	SW
DSC6645-6652	backfilling	
DSC6785-6816	SF1	
DSCF6331-333	Tr 1	NW
DSCF6334	Tr 1	ESE
DSCF6335-6	Tr 1	SE
DSCF6337-9	TR 2 NE end showing deep topsoil and clay subsoil	SW
DSCF6340-46	Recording SF1 and F102	NW
DSCF6347-8	Tr 2	SW
DSCF6349	Tr 3	SW
DSCF6351	TR 3 palaeochannel F202	SW
DSCF6352	TR 3 palaeochannel F202 1m depth of topsoil	SW
DSCF6353	Tr 3 F202 location with church in background	SE
DSCF6354	TR 4 F202 palaeochannel	NE
DSCF6355	TR 4 F202 palaeochannel	SW
DSCF6356-67	infilling trenches	

APPENDIX 2 CONTEXTS

Context no	Trench	Description
101	1	topsoil in Trench 1 heavy clay loam and compacted stones; max 0.8m deep possibly increased with addition of topsoil from another location; area of church manse stables on opposite side of road was levelled for construction and soil may have been dumped on this site
102	1	palaeochannel max 3m wide and 0.22m deep with SF1 in fill
103	1	dark grey clay loam fill of F102
104	1	Charcoal flecks in 103 in base of F102
201	2-4	Heavy clay topsoil in Trenches 2-4
202	2-4	Shallow palaeochannel in Trenches 2-4 max 0.2m deep and filled with 203
203	2-4	Heavy clay topsoil in channel 202

APPENDIX 3 SAMPLES

Sample no	Context	Description
1	104	Charcoal from base of ditch 102

APPENDIX 4 FINDS

SF no	Context	Description
1	103	sandstone block 0.46 x 0.32 x 0.12m max. Central hole 7mm diameter