

**Land at Little Mains, Crichtie Wood, Stuartfield, Peterhead,
AB42 5DZ
Report on archaeological watching brief**



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CONTENTS

1	BACKGROUND	3
2	ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND	4
3	THE WATCHING BRIEF	6
4	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	8
5	REFERENCES.....	8
6	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	8
	APPENDIX 1 PHOTOGRAPHS	9
	APPENDIX 2 MAPS.....	14

ILLUSTRATIONS

Cover: top - soil strip for menage at south end of development site; middle - pit F3; bottom – large earthfast boulder *in situ*

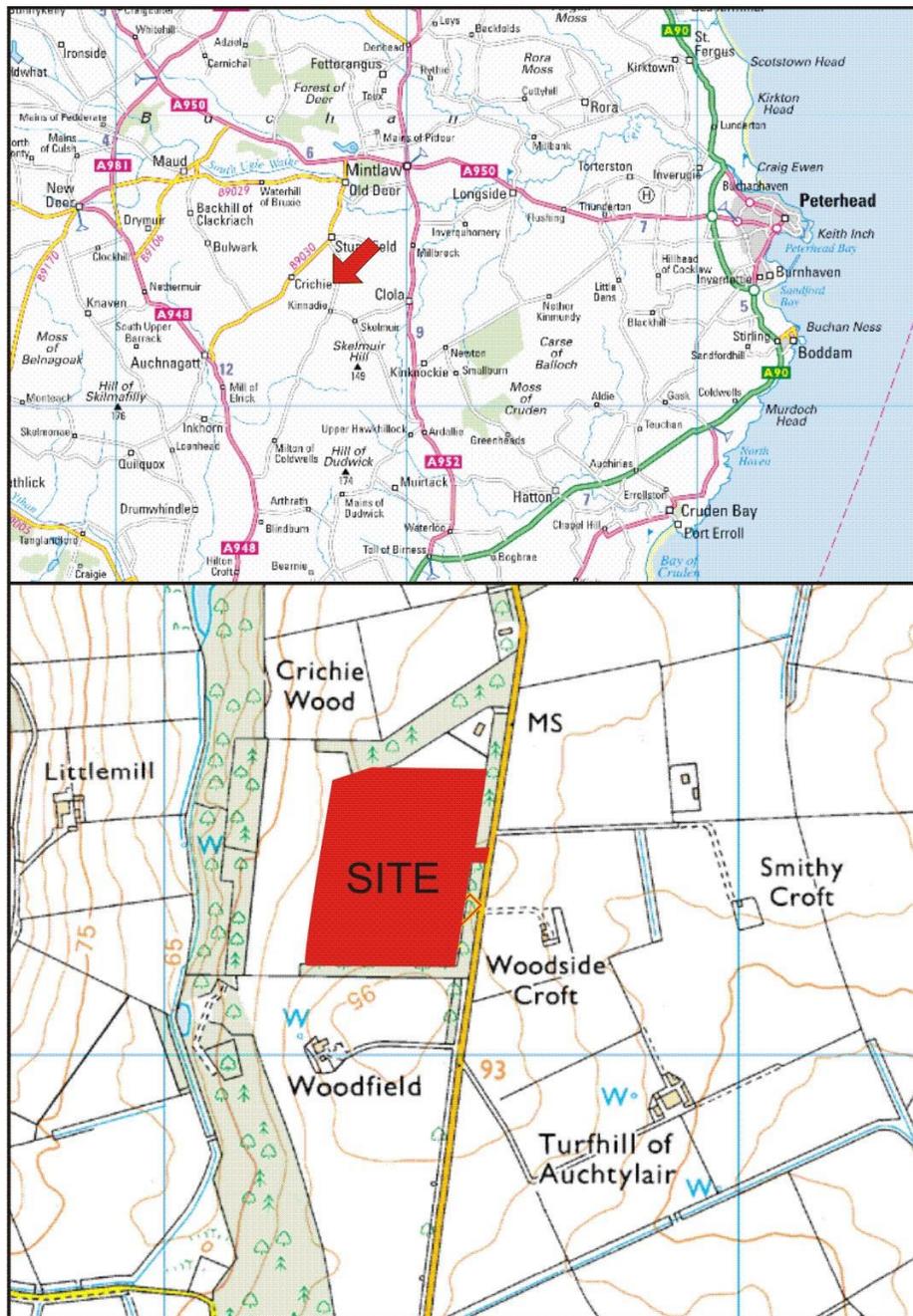
Illus 1	Location plan	3
Illus 2	Site plan showing proposed development with phases	4
Illus 3	Plan showing area of watching brief and features.....	6
Illus 4	F1; facing SW	7
Illus 5	F3 with large earthfast boulder <i>in situ</i> in background; facing S.....	7
Illus 6	First Edition OS map showing site of stone circle, Little Mains farmstead	14
Illus 7	Second Edition OS map showing site of stone circle, Little Mains farmstead	15
Illus 8	Aerial photograph showing approximate outline of proposed development.....	16

SUMMARY

The watching brief took place on 8-16th September 2104 and was maintained during the soil strip for the new road, the house and the menage. The features identified during this archaeological work include areas of burning F1 and F2 which have now been sealed under the new road. Pits F3 and F4 were probably created by removing large earthfast boulders for agricultural purposes in the 19th century but these have now been machined away and this cannot be ascertained. It is therefore recommended that no further work is required during the current planning application.

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The site (Illus 1) is located on the west side of the C97B the minor road running south from Stuartfield to join with the A948 opposite Woodside Croft. It is centred on NGR NJ 97457 44187, at 80-95m OD and in the parish of Old Deer.
- 1.2 The work was commissioned by Morgan Stephen, Mackie Ramsay Taylor. The application B/APP/2013/3888 was agreed by Aberdeenshire Council on 15 May 2014 with a standard archaeology condition (Condition 6). Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service require a watching brief during any ground-breaking or development work at this site.
- 1.3 All the archaeological work will be 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 2014)



Illus 2 Site plan showing proposed development with phases (copyright Mackie Ramsay Taylor)

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Within the area of the development are three archaeological sites. The site of a possible stone circle (NJ94SE 13; Illus 3). Six or seven remaining standing stones of this circle were removed for building purposes by J Milne's (of Little Mains) father many years before 1870. 'One, the altar stone was a very large one and was lying flat on the ground at the east end' (?recumbent stone) (Name Book 1870, 131). The term altar stone is one used during the 19th century to describe recumbents and this has led Aberdeenshire Archaeology Service to suggest that Woodfield may have been a recumbent stone circle. It is certainly a possibility, and

the unusual position of the supposed recumbent on the east should probably not be taken too literally, particularly as it seems to have been removed so long before the OS surveyors' visit. (Welfare 2011, 548).

- 2.2 There is also the site of a farmstead, Little Mains, within the development area. It appears on the First Edition but has been mostly removed and is unnamed on the Second Edition of 1901 (Illus 4)
- 2.3 There is a small quarry on the First Edition OS (Illus 3) beside the road and within woodland; it is not present in the Second edition map (Illus 4).
- 2.4 Two cists were found in a mound at Woodfield (NJ94SE 3) in 1943 on the farm of Woodfield, near Stuartfield, by the owner Mr J Slessor. The small cist, 'measuring 23 1/2" by 6 1/2" and 8" deep', had contained an urn but only the base was retained by the farmer. It is '2 3/4" in diameter', blackened on the inside and ornamented with fine horizontal lines with some impressed markings between the lines. The larger cist measuring '42 1/2" by 23 1/2" and 18" deep' was empty according to local report. Both cists had cover-stones and were left *in situ* (Lockhart 1944 130-1).
- 2.5 At West Knock, Stuartfield (NJ94SE 124) a watching brief was carried out 31 May–21 June 2011 during topsoil stripping on the footprint of three wind turbine bases in an area of prehistoric activity. No archaeological features or finds were recorded (Murray 2011, 25).
- 2.6 Approximately 0.6km north of the proposed site is the remains of Camp 110 a German Working Camp from World War Two. A number of buildings still survive, although in a dilapidated state. A circular concrete structure, said to be the ablutions area, still stands. Initially it housed Italian prisoners before Germans were sent there. The POW's worked on neighbouring farms until the end of the war. The camp was then used to house displaced persons before being abandoned (NJ94SE 47).
- 2.7 At Mains of Crichtie is White Cow of Crichtie, a huge block of quartz used as a boundary marker, destroyed by 1870 (Name Book 1870, 129). The stone may now be lying within the avenue at Crichtie (Coles 1904, 262). A cinerary urn was also found near the farm in 1809 (NJ94NE 15). Mains of Crichtie is also the location of the site of St Drostan's Well (NJ94SE 14) which was covered in some years before 1870 by Mr M Barron (Mains of Crichtie). It was a fine spring well (Name Book 1870, 126).
- 2.8 An area of rig and furrow lies within the wood of Crichtie; its cited location falls on a gentle slope at an altitude of 70m OD (NJ94SE 46).
- 2.9 Farmsteads include Woodside Croft (NJ94SE 97), Smithy Croft (NJ94SE 50), Mains of Crichtie Cottage (NJ94SE 96), Littlemill (NJ94SE 85) and Damhead (NJ94SE 67).
- 2.10 'Crechy', 'Dens' and 'Kynady' appear on Gordon's map of Banff c1636-52 and 'Creechy', 'Kynady' and 'Ochtelar' on Blaeu 1654. The area is wooded on Keith and Gibb Map of the North eastern extents of Aberdeenshire dated 1858.

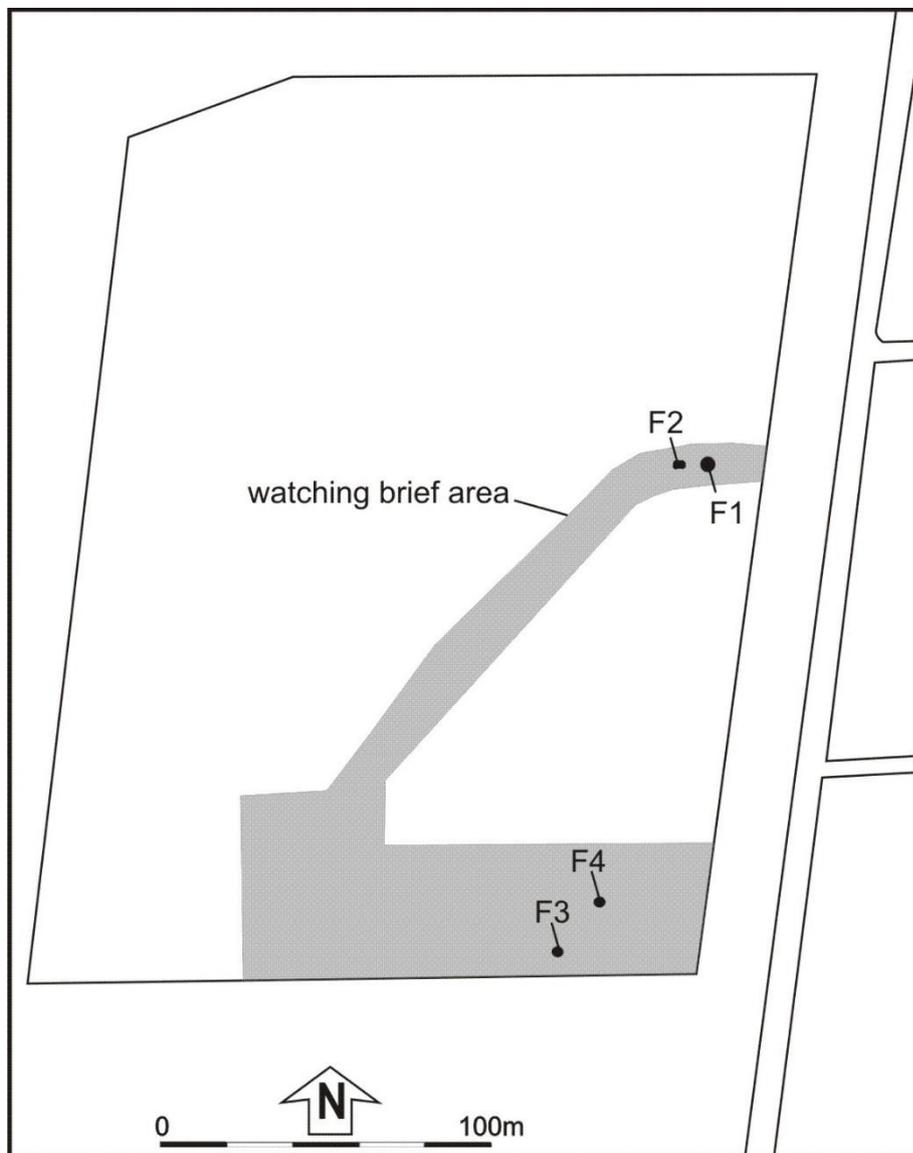
3 THE WATCHING BRIEF

The watching brief took place on 8-16th September 2014 and was maintained during the soil strip for the new road, the house and the menage. Two area of charcoal, F1 and F2 (Illus 3, 4) at the NE of the soil strip for the new road appeared shallow and a sherd of 19th-century pottery was recovered whilst cleaning the top of F2. These are likely to be associated with agricultural activity.

Two circular pits, F3 and F4 (Illus 3), each 2m in diameter and filled with dark grey loam and stone are probably associated with the removal of large earthfast boulders during agricultural work. There were several large earthfast boulders still *in situ* on the site (Illus 5).

One flint core was recovered from the topsoil but no other finds were recovered during this work.

The area around F3 and F4 was then reduced in height by 1m for the creation of the menage without an archaeologist being present and a visit on 16 September 2014 revealed that the features had been machined away.



Illus 3 Plan showing area of watching brief and features



Illus 4 F1; facing SW



Illus 5 F3 with large earthfast boulder *in situ* in background; facing S

4 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The features identified during this archaeological work include areas of burning F1 and F2 which have now been sealed under the new road. Pits F3 and F4 were probably created by removing large earthfast boulders for agricultural purposes in the 19th century but these have now been machined away and this cannot be ascertained.

It is therefore recommended that no further work is required during the current planning application.

5 REFERENCES

Lockhart, R D 1944 'Cists on the farm of Woodfield, near Stuartfield, Old Deer, Aberdeenshire', *Proc Soc Antiq Scot*, vol.78, 130-1.

Murray, JC 2011 'West Knock Wind Cluster, Stuartfield, Aberdeenshire (Old Deer parish), watching brief', *Discovery Excav Scot, New*, vol.12 Cathedral Communications Limited, Wiltshire, England, 25.

Ordnance Survey 1870 (Name Book) Object Name Books of the Ordnance Survey (6 inch and 1/2500 scale), Book No.68, 131.

Welfare, A 2011 Great Crowns of Stone: The Recumbent Stones Circles of Scotland: Gazetteer and Appendices, in S Halliday Edinburgh, 548.

Coles, F R 1904 'Report on the stone circles of the North-East of Scotland - the Buchan District - with measured plans and drawings, obtained under the Gunning Fellowship', *Proc Soc Antiq Scot*, vol.38, 262.

6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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APPENDIX 1 PHOTOGRAPHS

Photo no	Description	Facing
P1020112-4	Raised platform, probably the site of the former farm; not within watching brief area	W
P1020115-20	Soil strip NE end of road	WSW
P1020121	F1	SW
P1020122	F1	WSW
P1020123	F1	SW
P1020124	Soil strip NE end of road	NE
P1020125	Soil strip NE end of road	SW
P1020126-27	Soil strip NE end of road	SW
P1020128-30	Soil strip SW end of road	NE
P1020131-32	Soil strip SW end of road	SW/NE
P1020140-66	Soil strip SW end of road	SW/NE
P1020178	Soil strip for menage	S
P1020179-90	Soil strip for menage east end	
P1020191-94	F3	
P1020195-97	Large earthfast boulder 4m SE of F3	
P1020198-99	Soil strip for menage east end	
P1020200-04	F3	
P1020205-17	Soil strip for menage east end	
P1020218-21	Large earthfast boulder west of F3	
P1020222-24	Soil patch, non archaeological	
P1020225-34	Soil strip for menage central area	
P1020235-38	Large earthfast boulder west of F3	
P1020239-40	Soil strip for menage west end showing trenches for field drains and wheel ruts from dumper	
P1020241-47	Soil strip for menage west end showing trenches for field drains and wheel ruts from dumper	
P1020248-49	Large earthfast boulder west end of site	
P1020250-53	Soil strip for menage west end showing wheel ruts from dumper	
P1020254-55	F4	
P1020256-61	Soil strip for menage NE corner	



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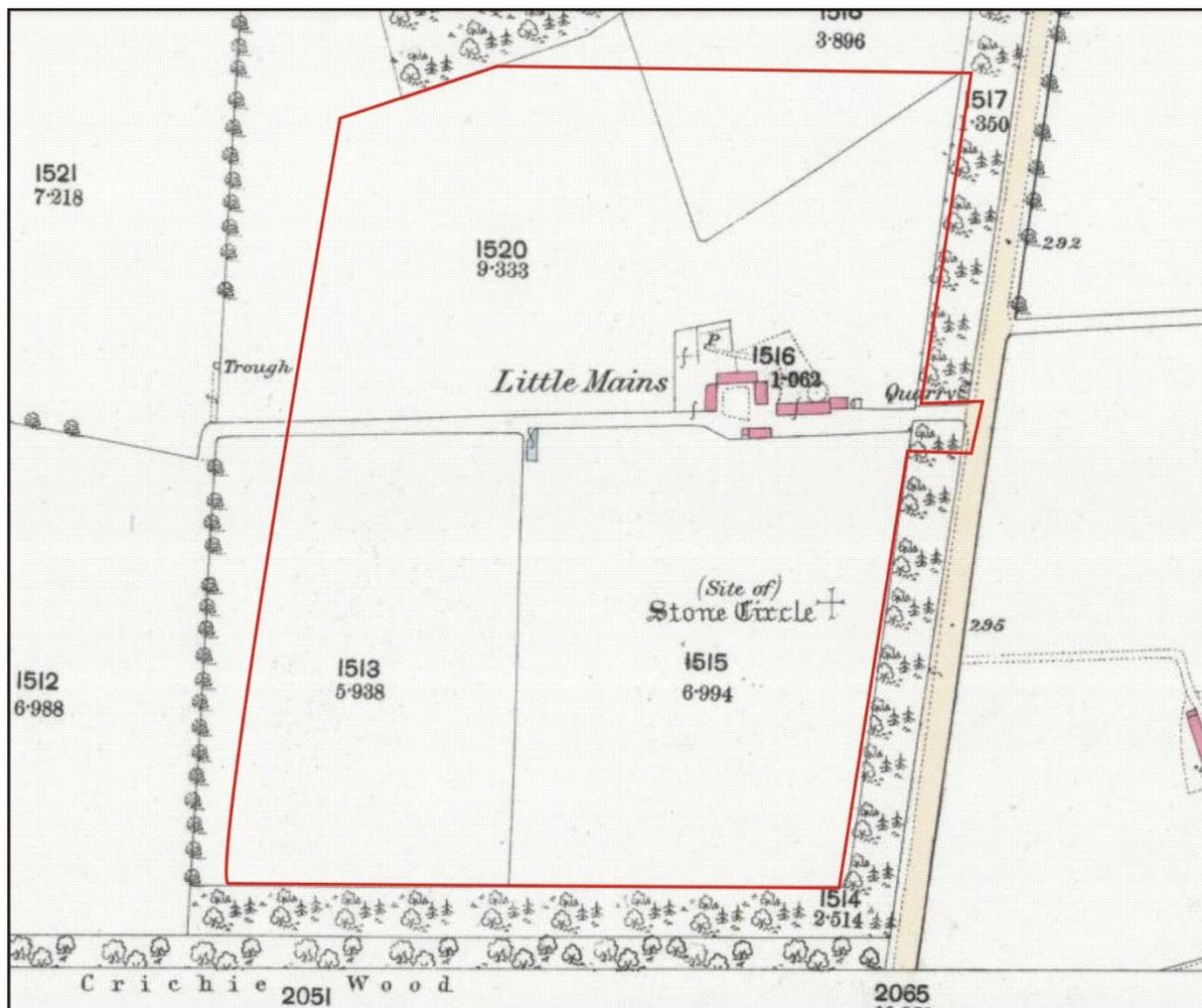
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APPENDIX 3 FEATURES

Feature no	Description	Size
F1	Sub-circular area of charcoal and loam	1.3m N-S, 1.25m E-W
F2	Sub-oval spread of charcoal and loam; sherd of willow pattern type china from cleaning top surface	1m x 0.7m
F3	Circular pit filled the dark grey clay loam and stone	2m diameter
F4	Circular pit filled the dark grey clay loam and stone	2m diameter

APPENDIX 2 MAPS



Illus 6 First Edition OS map showing site of stone circle, Little Mains farmstead and location of the small quarry adjacent to the road within woodland (copyright *National Library of Scotland*) Aberdeen Sheet XXI.12 (Combined) Survey date: 1870 Publication date: 1873



Illus 7 Second Edition OS map showing site of stone circle, Little Mains farmstead unnamed and a series of walls and a pump and no evidence of the former quarry (copyright *National Library of Scotland*) Aberdeenshire, Sheet 021.12 Publication date: 1901 Revised: ca. 1899



Illus 8 Aerial photograph showing approximate outline of proposed development in red and a cropmark showing the former location of Little Mains (centre) (copyright NCAP)
Date: 10 August 1973 Location: Kinnadie, Old Deer, ABERDEENSHIRE, SCOTLAND
Coordinates (lat, lon): 57.484369, -2.054351 UNI: NCAP-000-000-075-292
Sortie: MER/040/73