

**Glen Lethnot Sheep Handling Building
Dikehead, Bridgend, Edzell
Cameron Archaeology CA337
Report on a Watching Brief**



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SUMMARY

On April 17th, 2017 a watching brief took place during a 0.165Ha soil strip for a sheep handling building to be constructed some 450m NW of Dikehead Cottage in Glen Lethnot. Beyond the ruts of a trackway which appears to have been used in modern times, and may be associated with construction of the stone dyke running parallel to the site, no other archaeological finds or features were noted.

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

1 BACKGROUND

1.1 The site (Illus 1-4) is located 460m NW of Dikehead, Bridgend, Edzell, DD9 7UQ. It is centred on NGR NO 52943 69397 in the parish of Lethnot and Navar at 226-230m OD, on a gentle SW-facing slope.

1.2 The work was commissioned by Paul Fretwell Architects Scotland Ltd. An application 17/00136/PRIORN, Angus Council, indicates an archaeological watching brief should be carried out on behalf of the planning authority during any groundbreaking and development work.

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 Historic Environment Scotland's Policy Statement (HESPS) which state that archaeological remains should be regarded as part of the environment to be protected and managed.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 While no Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs) lie within 1km of the project area, there are two Scheduled Ancient Monuments located within 1.5km which are deemed of relevance to the immediate archaeological landscape surrounding the project area.

The first SAM is Newbigging Hut Circle (SM6874) located 1070m ENE of Dikehead at NO 540 696. "The monument comprises a hut circle of prehistoric date, visible as turf-covered wall footings. The monument is situated in improved grassland at around 260m OD. It comprises a hut circle measuring about 9m in diameter, defined by a turf-covered wall measuring about 0.4m high and spread to a width of about 3m. The hut circle is situated on a low eminence that rises about 1m above the surrounding land. There is an entrance on the SE. Hut circles are characteristic of Bronze and Iron Age settlement sites and represent the remains of timber-roofed roundhouses." (Historic Environment Scotland 2017).

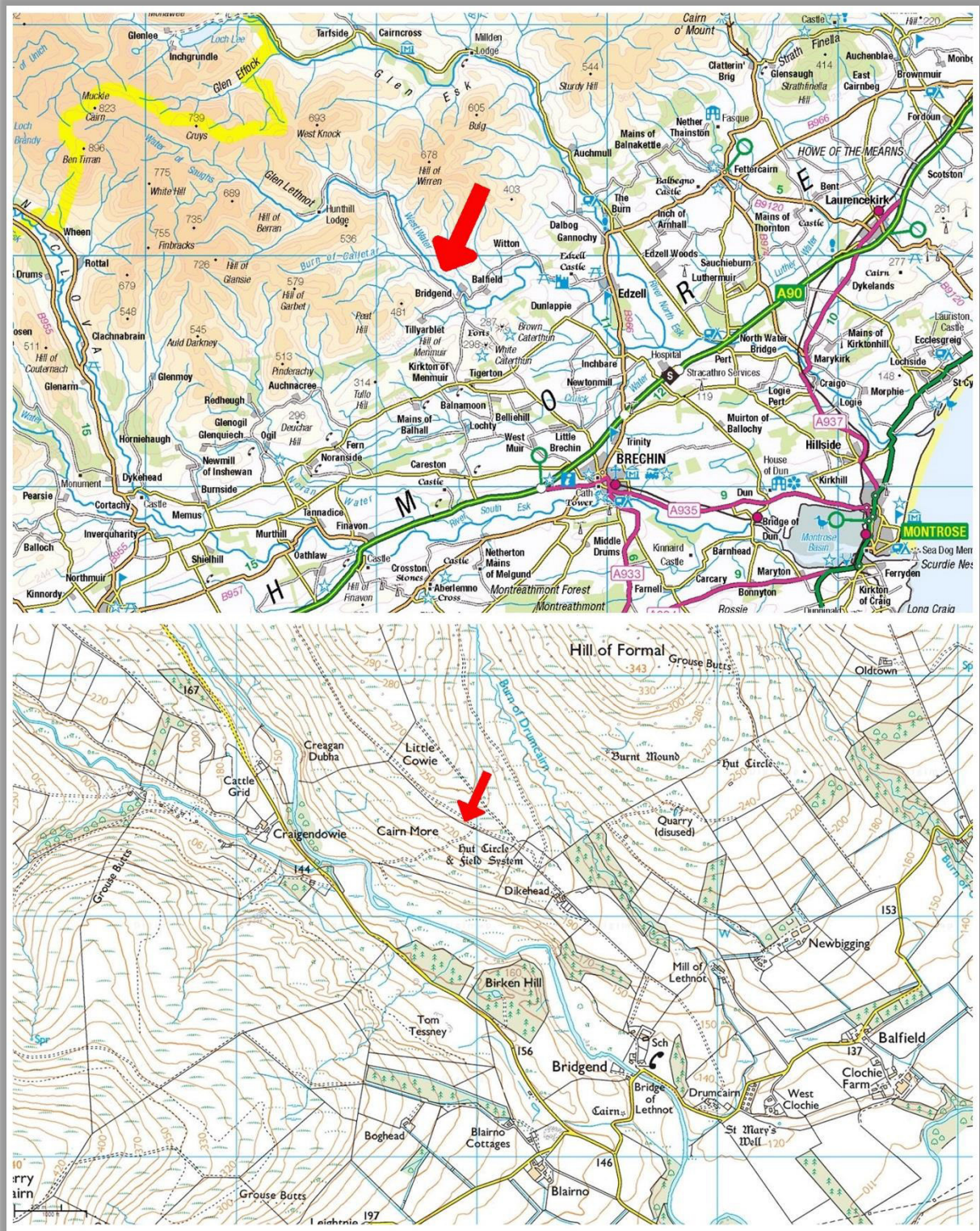
2.2 The second SAM is Bridgend Cairn, (SM4416), located 1340m SSE of the project area at NO 535 681. "The monument is a cairn with a heavy boulder kerb, measuring 9.2m overall and standing to a height of up to 1m. The largest boulders are in the SW. Several boulders have been displaced recently, presumably during ploughing. The monument is a well preserved example of a rare type. It is of particular interest because the boulders of its kerb are more massive to the SW implying a link with recumbent stone circle and the ring cairn of E Scotland. The underlying old ground surface may preserve pollen and other material allowing an insight into Bronze Age agriculture. It is of national importance to the theme of Bronze Age burial traditions in E Scotland." (Historic Environment Scotland 2017a)

2.3 The project area for the Sheep Handling Building lies within Dikehead (NO56NW75) a multi-period archaeological landscape which comprises the following five archaeological components:

2.3.1 NO56NW 75.01 (NO 534 691) Cottertoun

In the ground to the NW of the buildings at NO 534 691, there are the grass-covered stone footings of a further six rectangular buildings, some of which overlie the rig-and-furrow.

To the NE of the drystone dyke running up the ridge, these include from W to E: a two-compartment building (9.5m by 4.5m overall and with an outshot on the E end), which is



Illus 3 Location plan of proposed Dikehead Sheep Handling Building (Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2017)



Illus 4 Site plan showing proposed development (copyright @rchitects Scotland Ltd 2017)



Illus 3: Location of soil strip in relation to Dikehead Cottage in lower right (image copyright Digital Globe 2017).

(cont. from p.2) attached to a rectilinear enclosure; outside the enclosure to the NW, a second two-compartment building, of similar size but with a rounded E end; a three-compartment building (13m by 4m overall) overlies the rig and the enclosure bank to the NW of the buildings (at NO 534 691); a single cell building (14m by 4.5m overall), with a rounded W end as well as traces of a small enclosure to its NW, both of which are situated to the E of the main enclosure bank; a single cell building, which is situated end-on and to the N of a second of similar size (7m and 6m long respectively and 3.5m wide overall), both overlying the enclosure bank; and an open-ended structure (10m by 4.5m overall), with its open end to the S, which is situated immediately to the N.

To the SW of the dyke three rectangular buildings are located to the W of the sheepfold, all reduced to grass-covered stone footings about 0.3m high. These comprise a two-compartment building (9m by 5m overall), a longer and narrower building of four compartments (14m by 4m overall) and a kiln barn itself of two compartments (13m by 4.5m overall), with the kiln on the W end. The east end of the kiln-barn runs up against a cultivation terrace on a NW-SE axis. There are a number of stone heaps in this area, possibly due to the collapse of stone dykes, but much of it clearance from recent ploughing.

(formerly [NO56NW 75.01.03](#))

About 100m W of the main concentration of the settlement, on the SW flank of the ridge, there are three small rectangular buildings with their long axes aligned along the contour. The foundations, which are of grass-covered boulders, stand up to 0.35m high and are terraced into the slope. The buildings measure between 4.5m and 8m in length and 3.5m and 4m in width. It is possible that they are not part of the same phase or type of settlement as Cottertoun (Historic Environment Scotland 2017b)

2.3.2 NO56NW 75.02 (NO 532 692) Rig

To the NW of the buildings ([NO56NW 75.01](#)), and in part overlain by them, there is an area of broad rigs. These consist of four furlong units, of which three lie to the SW of a trackway leading along the ridge from the SE towards Finnoch farm to the NW. The fourth which is of less well defined rigs, lies to the NE, but these are narrower (3m-7m wide) than those to the SW, probably due to sub-division. The rigs to the W are generally 8m-12m wide and display the reverse-S curve typical of medieval ploughing. However, some curious features were noted: along some of the furrows there are stony banks, some of which had the appearance of cairns that have been elongated by the ploughing; in other places, due to the exigencies of the slope of the ground, asymmetrical rigs have been formed, creating terraces up to 0.4m high along the downhill side.

To the NE of the stone dyke running up the crest of the ridge are traces of narrow ridging 2.5m-3m wide on top of the broad rigs, but following the same alignment. This may have been more extensive since it is too slight to have survived the modern ploughing that has taken place to the SW of the dyke.

(formerly [NO56NW 75.02.02](#))

Running around most of the ridged land there is a sinuous bank up to 1.5m thick and 0.5m high. This encompasses all but the furlong of narrower rig to the E of the trackway, which it cuts in half and indeed it sits on the crest of one of the ridges. There is evidence, however, of a phase of enclosures in which this area too was enclosed by a bank, the dilapidated remains of which run roughly parallel to it some 25m to the NE.

(formerly [NO56NW 75.02.03](#))

This trackway, extending from NO 5295 6940 - NO 5346 6913, has a well-defined hollow up to 3m wide (but generally only about 2m) and 0.5m deep. Its course and relationships indicate it must be secondary to the ridging. The track appears to occupy the line of a ridge and also cuts the end of some of the terraced ridges.

2.3.3 NO56NW 75.03 (NO 531 693) Small cairns

The area of cairns may once have been more extensive than that defined in the survey since most of them are scattered around the fringes of the area of rig-and-furrow cultivation. A number of small cairns, many of them elongated by the action of the plough, are also visible in the ridged ground, and some of them may predate the ridging. The cairns vary between 2m and 6m in diameter and stand up to 0.5m in height. One or two alignments of cairns were noted at the top of the cairnfield along with several stony banks. Two of these banks appear to define a trackway (NO 5311 6933 - 5304 6936) extending 60m WNW from the hut-circles [NO56NW 75.4](#)). Another pair of parallel banks 50m NE of the hut-circles may have served the same purpose. The areas around the first trackway and the hut-circle are relatively free of stones and small cairns.

2.3.4 NO56NW 75.04 (NO 5311 6933) Hut-circles; Trackway

The trackway [NO56NW 75.2.3](#) cuts through a hut-circle some 15m NW of the ridged ground. The hut-circle measures 12m in diameter inside a stony bank 2m in thickness and 0.4m in height.

A possible second hut-circle lies 10m to the NW; it has a staggered entrance on the SE and measures 10m in diameter inside a stony bank 1.5m in thickness and up to 0.4m in height. The N side of the trackway abuts the bank of the possible second hut-circle. The area around is free of cairns.

2.3.5 NO56NW 75.05 (NO 5299 6934) Buildings

To the SW of the drystone dyke at the NW extremity of the site are the slight remains of at least four round-ended buildings, cleared plots and some narrow ridging. The more substantial remains of a fifth and possible sixth lie some 100m SE.

(formerly [NO56NW 75.05.01](#))

This group of four round ended buildings lies immediately W of the drystone dyke, adjacent to an entrance. The footings comprise low turfed-over lengths of stony bank not more than 0.25m in height. Adjacent to the buildings there is some evidence of small cleared plots (c.20m square in one case) defined by low stony banks. The buildings are of three different sizes: the two smallest are about 7m long by 5m wide overall, one is 14m long by 5.5m wide; and a fourth is a 'banana-shaped' structure 26m long by 5.5m wide. There are opposed entrances in the long sides of one of the buildings and none of them has any sign of a sub-division. There is also a slight depression within the interiors of the buildings, especially the longest. An area of narrow rig, c.3m in width, is visible SE of the buildings.

(formerly [NO56NW 75.05.02](#))

A fifth round-ended building lies 110m to the SE of those described above at NO 5311 6928 but its remains are much more substantial, with grassed-over rubble walls 0.5m high. This building may be of different type since it stands 0.5m high compared to 0.25m and there is no sign that this difference can be explained by robbing. Immediately E there are traces of another building overlain by the W corner of a ruinous 19th-century enclosure, which has been butted on to the drystone dyke. The building has been reduced to little more than a grass-grown platform about 0.35m high. A bank runs E from the building for a distance of about 15m and is traceable on both sides of the enclosure bank ([NO56NW 75.02](#)).

2.4 Newbigging Sheepfold (NO56 NW72) lies 630m due east of the project area. On the SW face of the Hill of Formal, 800m NW of Newbigging Farm, there is a demolished sheepfold, partly overlain by a smaller square drystone sheepfold (still in use). The earlier sheepfold survives as a low footing of grass-covered stone up to 0.3m high and

measures about 30m square. An old sheepfold is recorded on the 1st edition OS 6-inch map at this location in 1865 (Forfar (1865) xix).

2.5 Tom Tessney (NO56 NW62) lies 480m SSW of the project area. A building reduced to grass-grown footings 0.7m thick and up to 0.4m high, is situated on the SW bank of the West Water 400m N of Tom Tessney. The building has three compartments, each with an entrance in the SSW wall, and measures 24m in overall length by 5.4m in breadth. There are also traces of a rectangular structure immediately to the WNW, 13.9m in length by 4m in breadth. An estate plan of 1766 depicts a cottage and enclosure at this location

2.6 Tom Tessney II (NO56NW 60.04) lies 750m to the SSW. This building is situated on a knoll about 250m NW of Tom Tessney. It is rectangular, with grass-grown stone walls up to 0.5m in height, but there is a round-ended outshot on the N. The enclosure lies to the E of the building; beyond the enclosure there are two short lengths of bank set parallel to each other on the N bank of the burn. Further upstream (NO 5265 6865) there are traces of a dam built across the burn; it is not clear whether this dam was independent of the lades visible on the slope above (see [NO56NW 70](#)). The existence of the dam probably indicates the presence of a mill, but it is not clear whether this mill was situated at the dam or further down the burn.

2.7 Tom Tessney III (NO56NW 60.03) lies 750m to the S. A small building is situated on the edge of the improved ground about 100m ESE of the structure NO56NW 60.4. It has been reduced to turf-covered stony footings about 0.3m high, and three large boulders have been dumped on the S end.

2.8 Newbigging Cairnfield (NO56NW 74) a disused quarry, lies 850m due E. A group of at least ten small grass-grown cairns are located on the southern slope of the Hill of Formal around a disused quarry. They measure from 2m to 5m in diameter and up to 0.4m in height.

2.9 Hill of Formal (NO56NW 54), a prehistoric burnt mound, lies 635m to the NE. The burnt mound is situated on the SE side of an old water-course which drains the boggy ground on a terrace on the SW flank of the Hill of Formal. It is roughly oval and measures about 6m by 4m and 0.5m in height. The upcast from a burrow on the SE reveals that the mound is composed of angular fragments of stone in a matrix of black soil and fragments of charcoal.

2.10 Newbigging Cairnfield II (NO56 NW50 – not to be confused with cairnfield NO56NW74 of the same name) lies 875m to the ENE. Situated on a terrace on the SE slopes of the Hill of Formal 1km NNW of Mill of Lethnot, there are at least twenty-five small cairns measuring up to 5m in diameter and 0.5m in height.

2.11 Craigendowie (NO56NW 61.01) are the ruins of a building and enclosure which lie 620m to the SW. A building with an attached enclosure is situated on a low rise on the SW side of the public road, some 300m SE of Craigendowie. The building, the walls of which still stand up to 0.8m in height, has four compartments, but the easternmost is an outshot and the partition between the two western ones is probably inserted. A holiday chalet stands in the enclosure to the W of the building. An estate plan of 1766 (SRO RHP 1667) depicts several cottages and enclosures at this location, although none of them can be identified with the remains visible today.

2.12 Craigendowie, the site of a suspected stone circle or cairn (NO56NW 1) lies 675m to the WSW. The site of a stone circle which Jervise describes as extant in 1853 (A Jervise 1853) but which Warden says was removed before 1834 (A J Warden 1885) and which was certainly gone by 1843. (New Statistical Account [NSA], Rev A Gardner:

written 1843; 1845) Jervise describes it as being c 12' in diameter composed of stones varying in height and breadth from 18" to 2', set at short distances from one another and situated "among the mass of artificial looking cairns" (A Jervise 1853). By c.1861 only a patch of uncultivated ground remained to mark the site. The circle was locally believed to have been demolished during the construction of a road. (Name Book c 1861).

2.13 Priest's Stone was a standing stone (NO56NW 5) located 1150m to the SW. The is a large upright stone standing in the middle of "the priest's field" just behind the site of the old farm steading of Townhead (F. Cruikshank 1899). This stone has been removed by the farmer at Newbigging (OS(JLD) 22 July 1958).

2.14 Newbigging Carin and Ringcairn (NO56NW 3) lies 1135m due E. The site of a cairn, 40' in diameter, surrounded by a double circle 50' or 60' in diameter composed of 20 or 30 large stones of which only one remained in 1843. The cairn, according to Ramsay who removed it, contained 400 cart-loads of stones, According to Jervise it was composed of small stones to a depth of 3' under which lay a quantity of black, clammy earth mixed with charcoal, while a 2' wide track of loose, red sandstone, a few inches deep, ran through this deposit to the outer circle on either side. The perimeter of the cairn was visible c 1861 as a slightly raised area and the sole survivor of the encircling stones stood 5'4" high and was 9' in circumference at the base, tapering to 6'3" at the top. Many flint arrowheads were found in the vicinity prior to 1853. In 1899 the blasted remains of the other stones were visible in the foundation of the neighbouring field dyke. The remaining stone of this circle has been removed within the past few years. No trace of the circle now exists. This cairn was removed in the 19th century and is reported to have been surrounded by a double circle of stones (possibly kerb-stones). Nothing remains of this cairn, the site of which was under plough at the date of visit.

Nothing remains of a substantial cairn that stood on the slope above Newbigging until the early 19th century. It had been largely removed by the time Andrew Jervise published a description in 1853, and about ten years later, the OS surveyors found no more than a low swelling in the surface of the field and an upright stone some 1.6m high. The tenant of Newbigging, John Ramsay, estimated that he had removed 400 cartloads of stones from the cairn (Name Book, Forfarshire, No. 60, p 61). Jervise's description is more detailed, if cryptic. He describes it as follows: 'a good specimen of concentric circles... but of the twenty or thirty large stones that enclosed an area from fifty to sixty feet [15m–18m] in diameter, only one remains... This boulder, which is about eight feet high [2.4m], is sometimes called Druidical... When demolished, the middle area of the inner circle was found to be filled with small stones to the depth of about three feet [0.9m], under which lay a quantity of black clammy earth, mixed with pieces of charcoal, while a track about two feet [0.6m] broad, composed of loose red sandstone, laid to the depth of a few inches, ran directly through the clammy earth and pebbles, from side to side of the outer circle' (Jervise 1853 152–3). Jervise's knowledge of cairns and stone circles was becoming quite extensive, so his reference to concentric circles and then an inner and outer circle can be taken with some confidence to indicate that he was describing more than just a kerb of boulders ringing the cairn. His estimate of the height of the single stone that survived was wildly adrift, and is closer to the girth of 9 feet (2.7m) measured by the OS surveyors. Yet, even at 1.6m in height this is an unlikely kerbstone and can therefore be taken as evidence that Jervise's outer circle was a surrounding ring of orthostats. The significance of the deposits at the centre is more difficult to understand, unless the 'track ... from side to side of the outer circle', was a platform between the ring of orthostats and the kerb of the cairn. Burl was first to suggest that this was possibly a recumbent stone circle enclosing a ring-cairn (1970, 79; 1976a, 354, Ags 9; 2000, 423, Ags 12), an interpretation in which he has been followed by Ruggles (1984, 60; 1999, 188, no. 97). Barnatt, however, considered the evidence insufficient for such an identification (1989, 463, no. 6:148), a conclusion with which the present survey concurs. The presence of a cairn surrounded by a ring of orthostats, possibly set out along an encircling platform, are all features of recumbent stone circles, but they are also found in other monuments, notably at the cairn close by at Bridgend of Lethnot (NO56NW 14).



Illus 4: GPS-derived detail of soil strip location with remains of trackway (white) running across site and borrow pit location opposite main track (*image copyright Digital Globe 2017*).

3 THE WATCHING BRIEF

On April 17th, 2017 a watching brief took place during a c.1,650m² soil strip for a sheep handling building to be constructed some 450m NW of Dikehead Cottage in Glen Lethnot (Illus 3 & 4). The site is on a SW facing slope between 226 and 230m OD which gradually leads up to the summit of the Hill of Wirren (678m OD) some 4.5km due north. The soil strip employed a 14 ton JCB using a 1.5m bladed bucket to remove topsoil. Soil formation in the area is very limited and mainly forms dark organics interwoven with a mat of roots underlying the native vegetation of heather and grasses. Topsoil depth rarely exceeded 10cm throughout the site. Below this, the natural consists of a reddish-brown sandy silt with considerable amounts of stone inclusions ranging from >10mm angular pebbles up to small boulders exceeding 1m in length. The remains of a largely stone-filled gully (Illus 5) contained dark organic soils which initially appeared to be archaeological was closely investigated but was discovered to be a natural feature. Beyond the ruts of a trackway which appears to have been used in modern times and likely associated with construction and upkeep of the stone dyke running parallel to the site, no other archaeological finds or features were noted.

4 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Although the site lies within the Dikehead multi-period archaeological landscape (NO56NW 75) which comprises hut circles, rig and furrow, settlement remains (Cottertoun), a trackway to the NE of the site and small clearance cairns, the area of the soil strip was relatively small and did not reveal archaeological finds or features beyond wheel ruts from a short section of track which appeared to match up with modern vehicle track widths, though the track could well have been in use prior to this and was recorded with GPS. It was concluded that this track has been in sporadic use in associated with the sheep pens immediately to the east and possible maintenance of the stone dyke running parallel to the site.

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



Illus 5: Natural stone-filled gully encountered during the early phases of the soil strip.



Illus 6: Visible traces of trackway within project area running from bottom left of frame.

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6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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APPENDIX 1

Archaeological and historical sites within 1.5km of the proposed site

Site		Site Type/Comments
Newbigging	SM6874	Hut Circle (marked as 'Castle of Dennyfern' on early OS maps)
Bridgend Cairn	SM4416	Kerbed Cairn
Dikehead (Five main components)	NO56NW 75	Multiperiod archaeological palimpsest comprised of Cottertourn (settlement), rig and furrow, small cairns, hut circles, trackway and round-ended buildings
Newbigging	NO56NW 72	Sheepfold
Tom Tessney	NO56NW 62	Ruined building, period unknown
Tom Tessney II	NO56NW 60.04	Ruined build and dam, period unknown
Tom Tessney III	NO56NW 60.03	Ruined building, period unknown
Newbigging Cairnfield I	NO56NW 74	Disused quarry with at least ten small cairns.
Hill of Formal	NO56NW 54	Prehistoric Burnt Mound
Newbigging Cairnfield II	NO56 NW50	A cluster of at least 25 small cairns
Craigendowie	NO56NW 61.01	Ruined building and enclosure, period unknown
Craigendowie	NO56NW 1	Stone circle or cairn
Newbigging Cairn and Ringcairn	NO56NW 3	Now destroyed, this once substantial cairn had some 400 cart-loads of stone reported removed in the mid-19 th century. Numerous arrowheads reported in immediate vicinity.

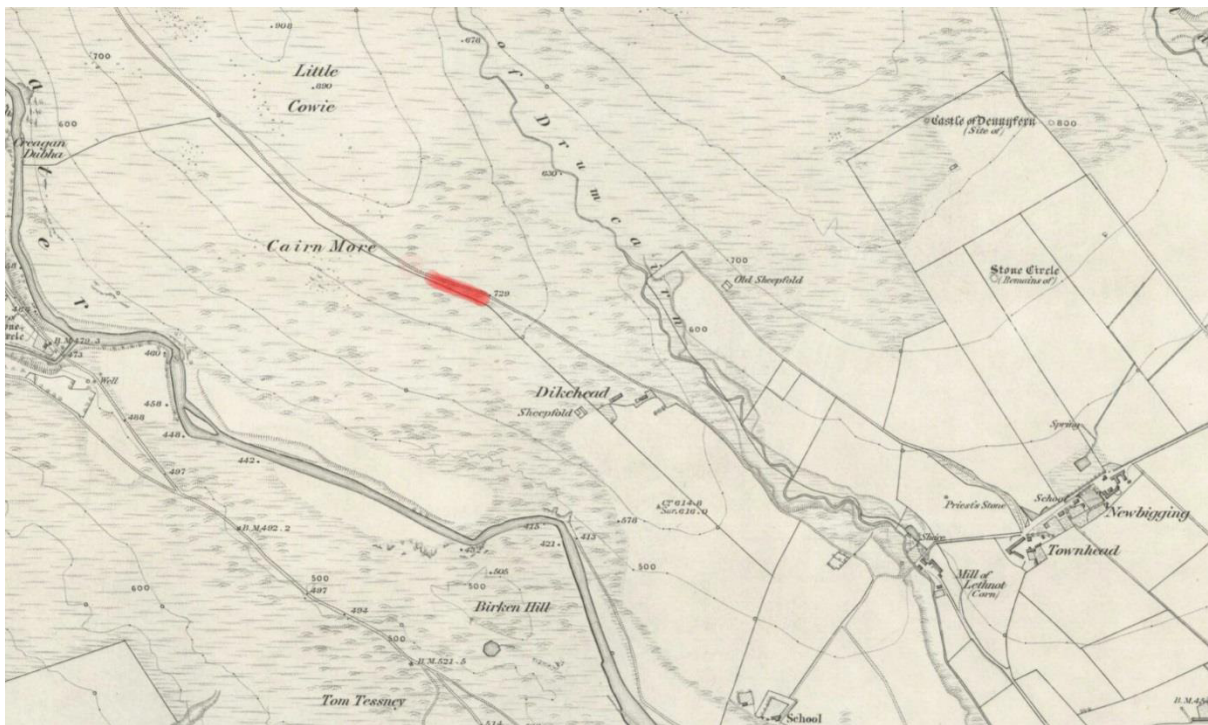
APPENDIX 2: PHOTOS

Photo ID	Direction Facing	Comments
_DSC1231	NE	Soil strip for borrow pit commencing
_DSC1235	SSW	Soil strip for borrow pit nearing completion
_DSC1238	SW	Soil strip for borrow pit nearing completion (photo taken atop rear deck of machine)
_DSC1241	NE	Soil strip for borrow pit nearing completion
_DSC1258	SW	Natural stone filled gully located in SE corner of main soil strip area for building
_DSC1266	WNW	Soil strip underway in main project area. Note robust stone dyke running parallel to site and continuing on in distance.
_DSC1268	NW	Soil strip underway in main project area

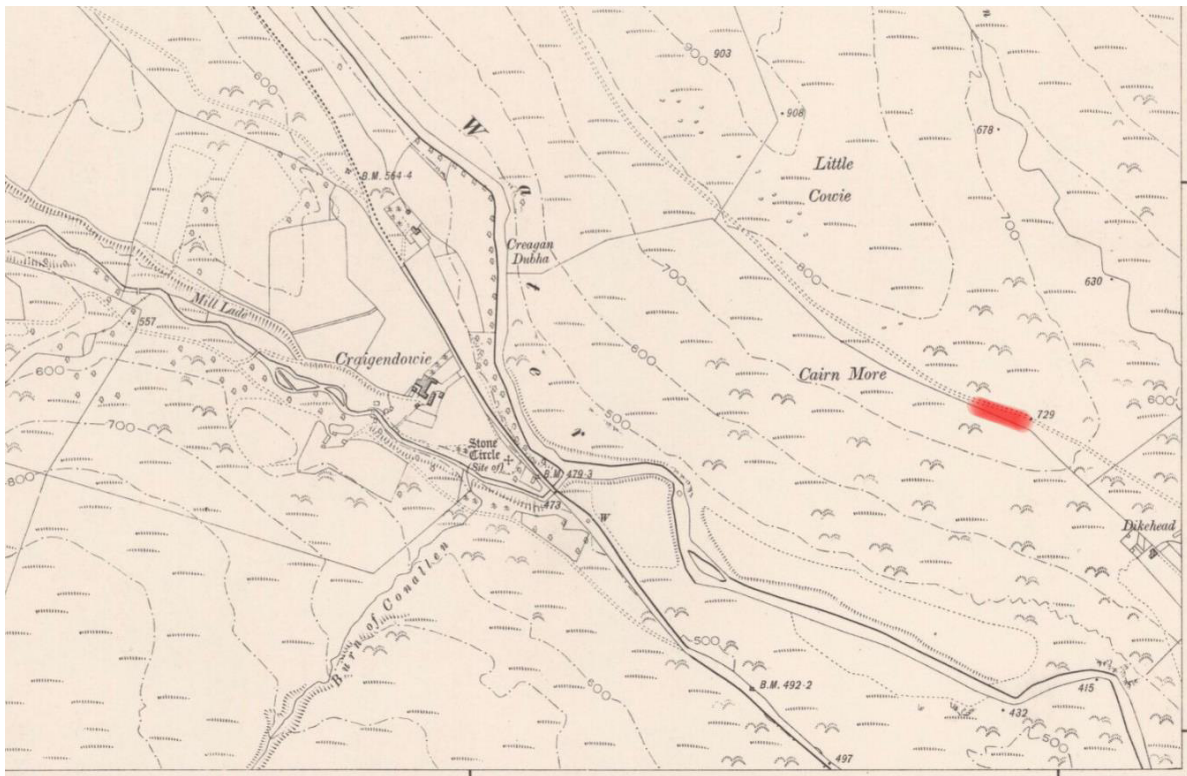
_DSC1272	WNW	Soil strip underway in main project area
_DSC1286	NW	Soil strip underway in main project area. Traces of ruts from trackway now becoming more visible (foreground)
_DSC1287	NW	Soil strip underway in main project area. Traces of ruts from trackway now becoming more visible (foreground)
_DSC1289	SE	Traces of ruts from trackway visible across most of site, becoming fainter at SE end in distance towards vehicle.
_DSC1295	NW	Soil strip approximately 75% completed
_DSC1299	SE	Soil strip approximately 75% completed
_DSC1305	WSW	Large stones and small boulders in subsoil visible in foreground. Not archaeological upon investigation. Natural feature.
DSC1307	SE	Site largely stripped minus area underneath spoil heap and margins along main track.
DSC1305	NW	Site largely stripped minus area underneath spoil heap and margins along main track.
DSC1312	SW	General view of site from atop rise located to NW and indicating extent of stone dyke in area.
DSC1315	SSW	View of site and locations of newly installed gates (far right of frame)
DSC1323	SW	Second pass with excavator to investigate strip under spoil heap and complete margins along main trackway
DSC1326	NW	Second pass with excavator to investigate strip under spoil heap and complete margins along main trackway
DSC1329	NW	Second pass with excavator to investigate strip under spoil heap and

		complete margins along main trackway
DSC1338	SSE	Second pass nearing completion
DSC1340	SE	Spoil heap shifted to SW away from margins along main trackway
DSC1341	NW	Spoil heap shifted to SW away from margins along main trackway

APPENDIX 3 MAPS



Illus 7: 1st edition OS map showing site in red. (Copyright National Library of Scotland) Forfarshire Sheet XIX, surveyed 1863, published 1865.



Illus 8: 2nd edition OS map showing site in red (copyright National Library of Scotland), Forfarshire Sheet XIX.NW, surveyed 1900, published 1902.



_DSC1222.jpg



_DSC1223.jpg



_DSC1224.jpg



_DSC1225.jpg



_DSC1226.jpg



_DSC1231.jpg



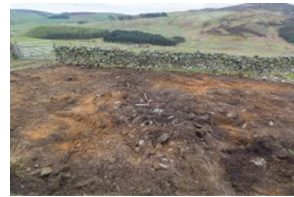
_DSC1235.jpg



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_DSC1258.jpg



_DSC1266.jpg



_DSC1268.jpg



_DSC1272.jpg



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_DSC1287.jpg



_DSC1289.jpg



_DSC1295.jpg



_DSC1299.jpg



_DSC1305.jpg



_DSC1307.jpg



_DSC1308.jpg



_DSC1312.jpg



_DSC1315.jpg



_DSC1323.jpg



_DSC1326.jpg



_DSC1329.jpg



_DSC1338.jpg



_DSC1340.jpg



_DSC1341.jpg