

**Land at Tillybrig West, Dunecht, Westhill,
Aberdeenshire, AB32 7BA
Data Structure Report (DSR)**



**Alison Cameron
Cameron Archaeology
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CONTENTS

1	BACKGROUND	3
2	ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND	4
3	THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION	6
4	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	7
5	REFERENCES.....	7
6	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	7
	APPENDIX 1 MAPS.....	8
	APPENDIX 2 PHOTOGRAPHS	10

ILLUSTRATIONS

COVER Trench 9 completed; facing ESE

Illus 1	Location plan (<i>Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2019</i>).....	3
Illus 2	Plan and elevation of HER NJ70NW0002 (copyright RCAHMS from Welfare 2011)	4
Illus 3	Site plan showing proposed development (<i>copyright Kirkwood Homes</i>)	6
Illus 4	Trench 1 showing one of the palaeochannels; facing NNE	6
Illus 5	Trenches 3, 2 and 1 showing palaeochannels causing undulations in field; facing NW..	7
Illus 6	Thomson's map of 1832 showing Echt House (later Dunecht House with Corskie (now Dunecht) showing the approximate area of the proposed development circled in red (<i>copyright National Library of Scotland</i>)	8
Illus 7	First Edition OS map showing site outline in red (<i>copyright National Library of Scotland</i>) Aberdeen Sheet LXXIII.3 (Echt) Survey date: 1865 Publication date: 1869 ...	8
Illus 8	Second Edition OS map showing site outline in red (<i>copyright National Library of Scotland</i>) Aberdeenshire 073.03 (includes: Cluny; Echt) Publication date: 1900 Revised: 1899	9
Illus 9	1946 aerial photograph with site outline in red; facing N (Copyright RCAHMS NCAP).....	9
Illus 10	2018 aerial photograph of the site showing vegetations differences highlighting the palaeochannels running W to E across the site; facing N (Copyright Google Earth)	10

SUMMARY

A 7% archaeological evaluation was carried out on 6-7 February 2019. 10 trenches were excavated and there was abundant evidence of flooding and palaeochannels across the whole site. No features or finds were recorded and so it is recommended that no further archaeological work is required during this work.

1 BACKGROUND

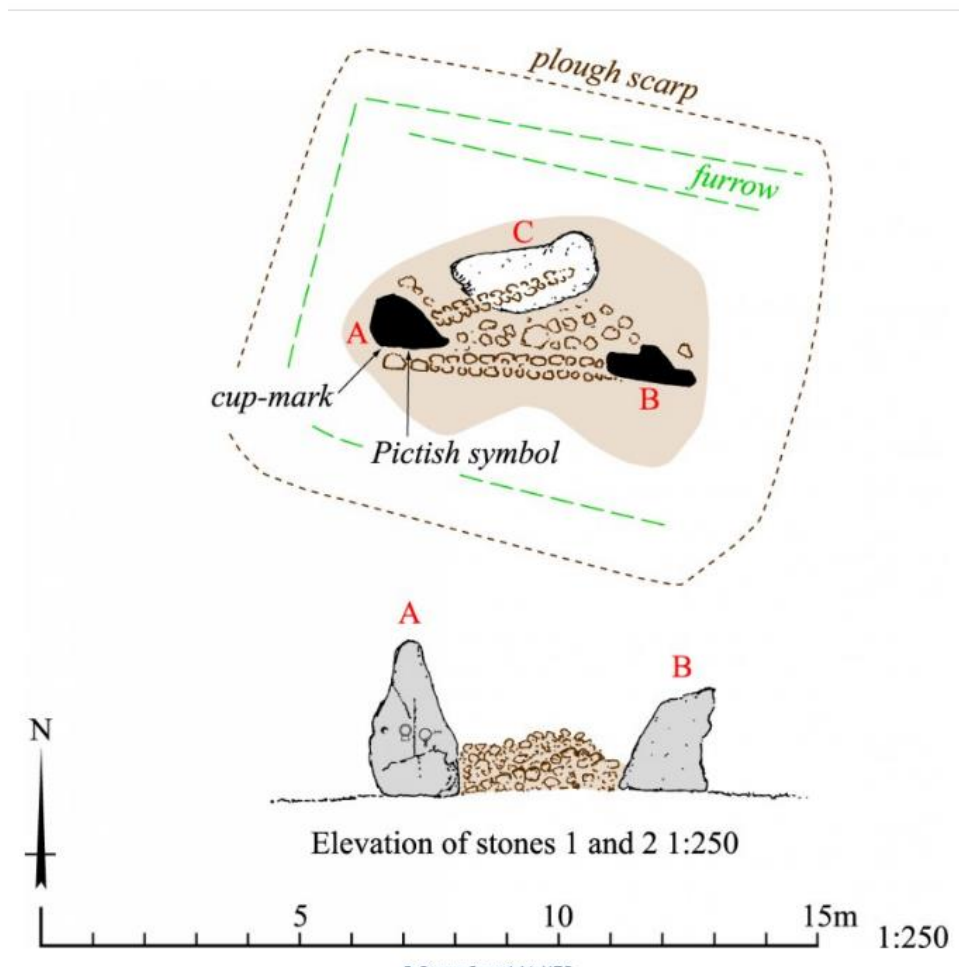
- 1.1 The site (Illus 1) is located W side of Dunecht, on the N side of the A944 Westhill to Alford Road, on the S side of the Corskie Burn and the E side of Tillybrig Farm. It is centred on NGR NJ 74687 09357, at 105-110m OD in the parish of Echt.
- 1.2 The work was commissioned by Colin Mair, Kirkwood Homes. An application to Aberdeenshire Council APP/2018/2430 for erection of 33 Dwellinghouses, with Associated Infrastructure, Landscaping and Open Space was approved on 5.2.19 with an archaeology condition requiring this work.
- 1.3 All the archaeological work was 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.



Illus 1 Location plan (Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2019)

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 There is one Scheduled Monument within 1km of the proposed development., 175m to the NNE of the N edge of the proposed development is Upper Corskie stone circle and Pictish symbols (HER NJ70NW0002; Illus 2) which comprises crosses and carved stones: symbol stone, Prehistoric ritual and funerary: cupmarks or cup-and-ring marks and similar rock art; stone circle or ring. The monument comprises the remains of a stone circle of the prehistoric period, probably of the Later Neolithic or Bronze Age, with later, Pictish symbols incised upon one stone. It stands on the slope to the N of the Corskie Burn. Two unusually massive standing stones remain of the circle. Both are of granite and they stand about 3.0m apart and with their long axes aligned E-W. The E stone stands 2.1m high, and measures 1.8m long and 0.6m wide. The W stone stands 3.0m high, and measures 1.5m long and 0.9m wide. The W stone has two cupmarks, one each on the S & W faces, which are probably contemporary with their erection as part of a stone circle. The W stone also has later Pictish symbols incised on its S face; a "mirror" and a "comb" to the right and a "mirror case" to the left. The symbols have been weathered and are only clearly seen in a strong side light. The monument is of national importance as the remains of a stone circle, with unusually massive standing stones, one of which is cupmarked. It is of particular interest because Pictish symbols were incised upon it at a later date, and these are not often found in their original location. Although the stone circle is incomplete the monument has the potential to increase our knowledge of the ceremonial practice and social organisation of the prehistoric population, particularly as the stone circle is one of the group of broadly contemporary stone circles and other remains which survive in the vicinity and which are probably related.

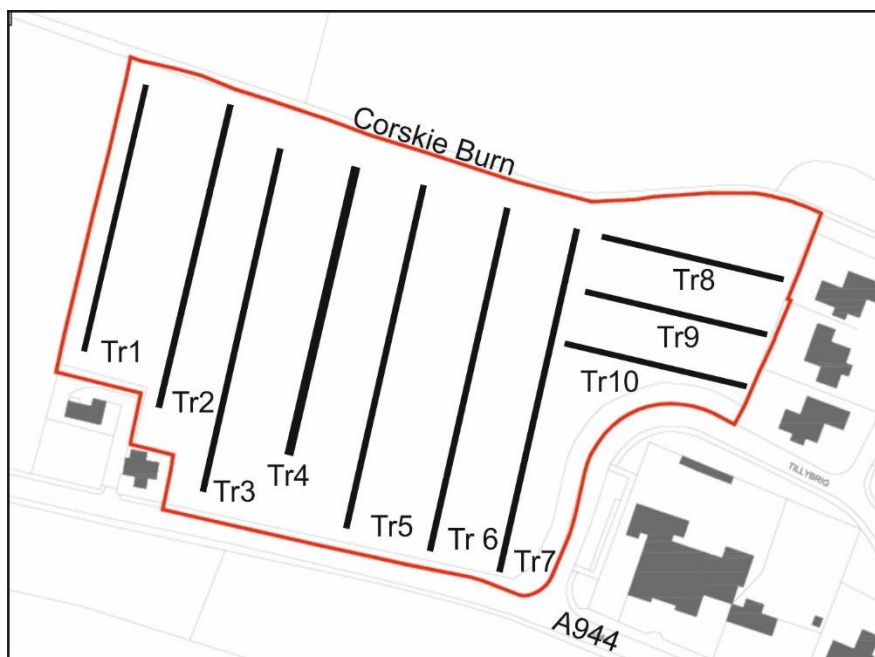


Illus 2 Plan and elevation of HER NJ70NW0002 (copyright RCAHMS from Welfare 2011)

- 2.2 The proposed development is on the west side of former Dunecht School (HER NJ70NW0116) and the village of Dunecht (HER NJ70NE0048) which is a planned village for the estate workers of Dunecht Estate.
- 2.3 In the centre of the village is Dunecht House (formerly Echt House; Illus 4), Estate Workshops and sawmill (HER NJ70NE0041) Office, hall and sawmill, still in use. The office and hall were built c.1925-7, designed by Dr William Kelly. The office is a harled, two-storey block with a large central coat of arms panel, while the hall block, on the E side, has a large Venetian window. The sawmill, or work's yard, is earlier, built in 1922 and designed by David Morris (Dunecht Estate Office). It is a tall single storey U-plan building constructed of bull-faced granite block with shouldered lintels.
- 2.4 Hill of Corskie Plantation N of the proposed development is the remains of two areas of rig and furrow. An area of rig-and-furrow (HER NJ71SE0100) was recorded by the RCAHMS during a field visit in 1998. The rigs measure 3m breadth, are mainly aligned N and S, but in a small area on the N they are aligned E and W. An further area (HER NJ71SE0144) area of rig and furrow was recorded during a field visit by the RCAHMS in 1996. They lie in mature woodland about 600m west of Back Mains farmsteading. The rigs measure 5m in breadth and are aligned NNW and SSE. S of the proposed development is Springfield (RCAHMS NJ70NW 118) is a small area of rig-and-furrow is visible in a triangular copse 250m NE of Springfield. The rigs measure 5m in breadth and are aligned roughly E and W. In Dunecht Lodge Wood (RCAHMS NJ70NE 73) is an extensive area of rig-and-furrow is visible in woodland immediately to the SW of North Lodges (NJ70NE 15.02). The rigs, which measure up to 6m in breadth, are arranged in plots on several different alignments. Also in Dunecht House Policies *(RCAHMS NJ70NE 128) A small area of rig-and-furrow is visible in mature woodland immediately SE of the North Lodges at Dunecht (NJ70NE 15.02). The rigs measure 5m in breadth and are aligned NNW and SSE.
- 2.5 Dunecht House (HER NJ70NE0136, RCAHMS NJ70NE 15) is the remains of a 17th to 19th century designed landscape. Dunecht House was built in 1820, by architect John Smith.
- 2.6 There is a site of a quarry (HER NJ70NW0090) is depicted on the 1st and 2nd edition OS maps, now infilled on the S side of the A944 opposite the proposed development.
- 2.7 There are a number of farmsteads and cottages including Tilly Brig (NJ70NW0115), Tillyfoddie (NJ70NW0040), Corskiecroft (NJ70NW0135)
- 2.8 Upper Corskie cottage and enclosure (NJ70NW0134) Hill of Corskie crofts (NJ71SW0145 and 146), Bogentory Wood cottage (NJ70NE0072), Corskiemillcroft (NJ70NE0073) now destroyed.
- 2.9 Dunecht is a fairly modern village and the area has been primarily farmland. Thomson's map of 1932 (Illus 4) shows Echt House and the Corskie Burn with the area of the proposed development as farmland. The First and Second OS maps show the land as agricultural fields and there are no features obvious on these maps or on the 1946 (Illus 7) or 1988 (Illus 8) aerial photographs.

3 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

A 7% archaeological evaluation was carried out on 6-7 February 2019. 10 trenches were excavated across the field (Illus 3) which is sloping SSW-NNE down to the Corskie Burn at the N of the field. The ground level indicates that there were palaeochannels (Illus 4, 5) running from the W and these were recorded in Trenches 1-7. The palaeochannels were cleaned and a section put through each one but no finds or features were recorded. The topsoil was sandy and 0.2-0.5m deep and the subsoil was sand and gravel over most of the site apart from the extreme NW corner at the NNE end of Tr1 and 2 where there was heavy waterlogged clay. There were numerous ceramic and stone drains running WSW-ENE across the site and area where there was 0.2m of topsoil, modern plough marks were recorded.



Illus 3 Site plan showing proposed development (copyright Kirkwood Homes)



Illus 4 Trench 1 showing one of the palaeochannels; facing NNE



Illus 5 Trenches 3, 2 and 1 showing palaeochannels causing undulations in field; facing NW

4 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A 7% archaeological evaluation was carried out on 6-7 February 2019. 10 trenches were excavated and there was abundant evidence of flooding and palaeochannels across the whole site. No features or finds were recorded and so it is recommended that no further archaeological work is required during this work.

5 REFERENCES

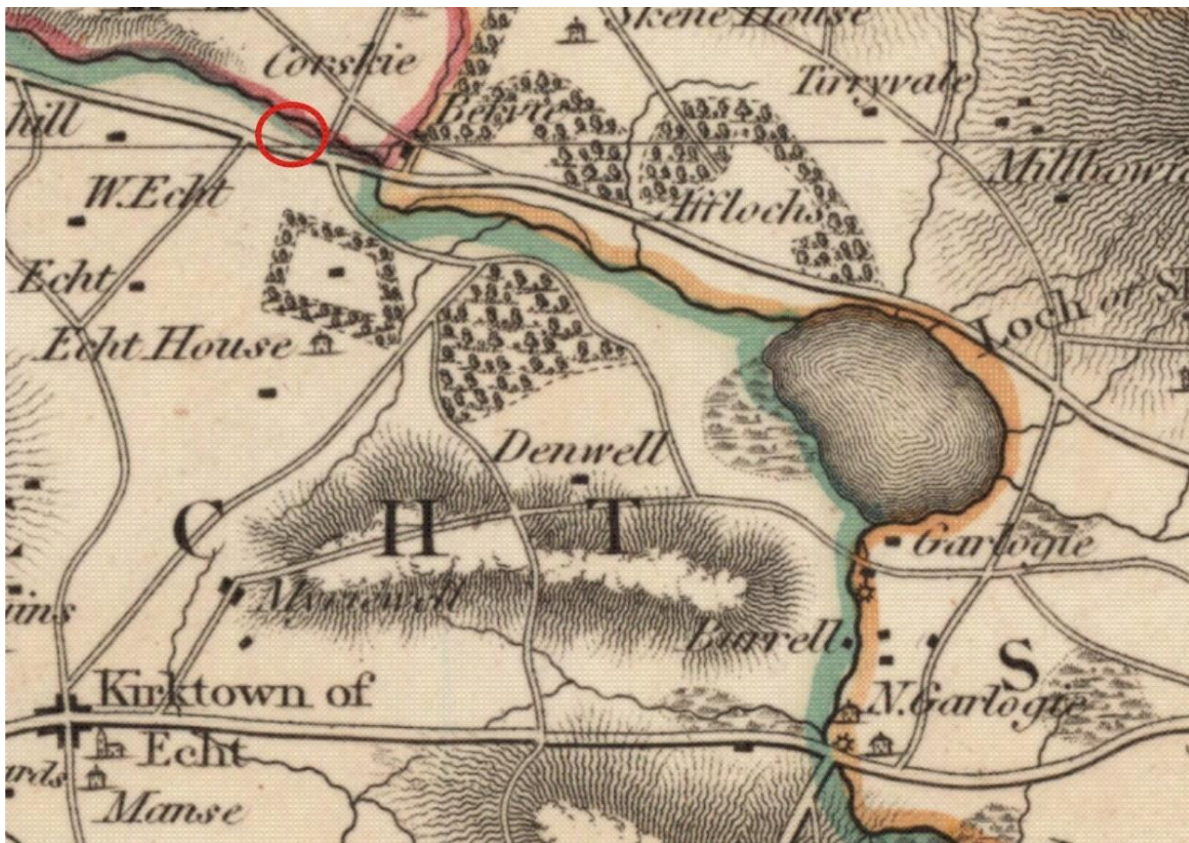
Welfare, A. 2011 *Great Crowns of Stone: The Recumbent Stone Circles of Scotland*. Edinburgh.

6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

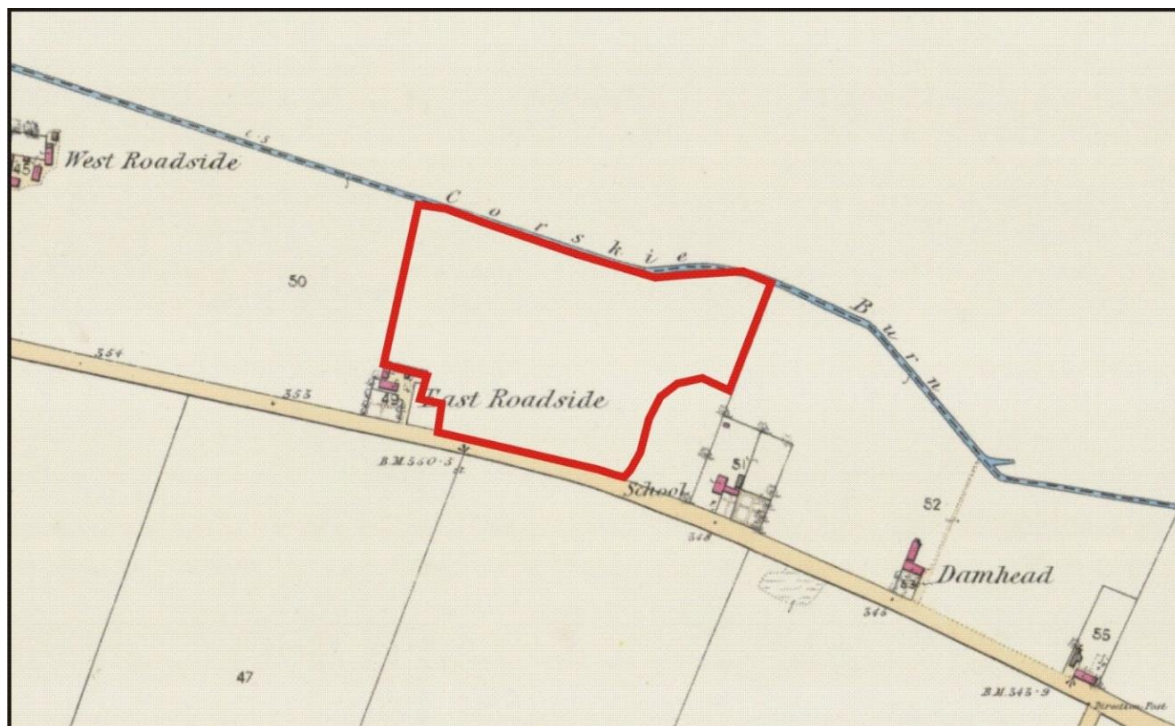
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Cameron Archaeology
45 View Terrace
Aberdeen
AB25 2RS
01224 643020
07581 181057
cameronarch@btinternet.com
www.cameronarchaeology.com
Company registration no 372223 (Scotland)
VAT registration no 990 4373 00

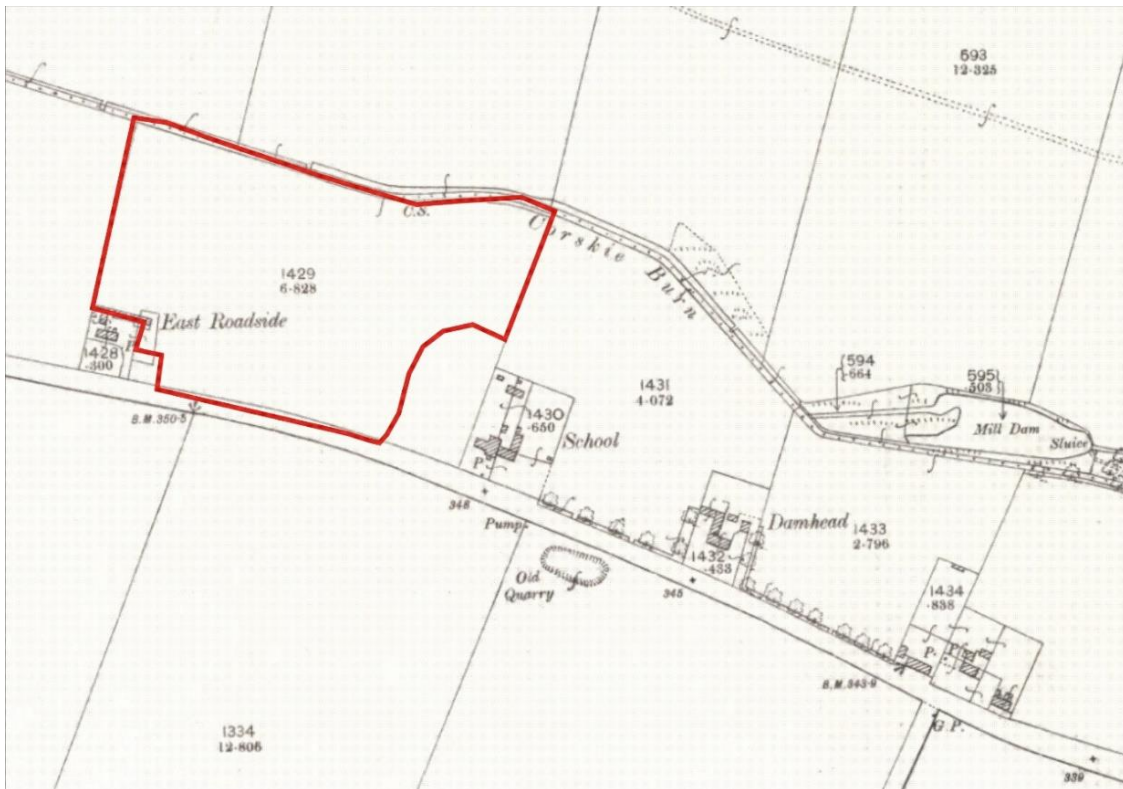
APPENDIX 1 MAPS



Illus 6 Thomson's map of 1832 showing Eicht House (later Dunecht House with Corskie (now Dunecht) showing the approximate area of the proposed development circled in red (copyright National Library of Scotland)



Illus 7 First Edition OS map showing site outline in red (copyright National Library of Scotland) Aberdeen Sheet LXXIII.3 (Echt) Survey date: 1865 Publication date: 1869



Illus 8 Second Edition OS map showing site outline in red (*copyright National Library of Scotland*) Aberdeenshire 073.03 (includes: Cluny; Echt) Publication date: 1900 Revised: 1899



Illus 9 1946 aerial photograph with site outline in red; facing N (Copyright RCAHMS NCAP)



Illus 10 2018 aerial photograph of the site showing vegetations differences highlighting the palaeochannels running W to E across the site; facing N (Copyright Google Earth)

APPENDIX 2 PHOTOGRAPHS

Photo no	Description	Facing
P2060070	Tr 1 SSW end	NNE
P2060071	Tr 1 palaeochannel	NNE
P2060072-3	Tr 1 palaeochannel	NNE
P2060074	Tr 1 palaeochannel	NNE
P2060075	Tr1 deep plough marks in sand N end of trench	NNE
P2060076	Tr1 completed	SSW
P2060077	Tr2 SSW end	NNE
P2060078-80	Tr2 stone and ceramic drain in palaeochannel	NNE
P2060081	Tr2 NNE end	SSW
P2060082	Tr3 SSW end	NNE
P2060083	Tr3 palaeochannel	NNE
P2060084	Tr3 palaeochannel with Tr 1 and Tr2 in background	W
P2060085-6	Tr3 ceramic and stone drains in palaeochannel	NNE
P2060087	Tr3 wood in peat	NNE
P2060088-9	Tr3 completed	SSW
P2060090-1	Tr1-3	NW/N
P2060092	Tr4 SSW end	NNE
P2060093	Tr4 completed	SSW
P2070094	Tr5 SSW end	NNE
P2070095	Tr5 completed	SSW
P2070096	Tr6 SSW end	NNE
P2070097	Tr6 plough marks	NNE
P2070098	Tr8 ESE end deep, plough marks	WNW
P2070099	Tr8 ceramic and stone drains	WNW
P2070100	Tr8 completed	ESE
P2070101	Tr9	WNW
P2070102	Tr9 completed	ESE
P2070103	Tr10	WNW
P2070104	Tr10 completed	ESE



P2060070



P2060071



P2060072



P2060073



P2060074



P2060075



P2060076



P2060077



P2060078



P2060079



P2060080



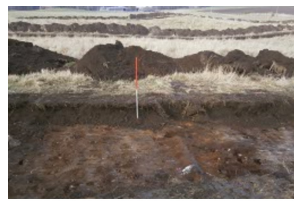
P2060081



P2060082



P2060083



P2060084



P2060085



P2060086



P2060087



P2060088



P2060089



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P2070096



P2070097



P2070098



P2070099



P2070100



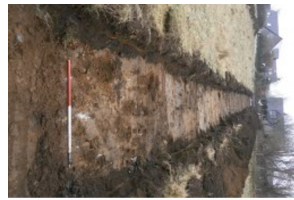
P2070101



P2070102



P2070103



P2070104