

ADEN COUNTRY PARK, ABERDEENSHIRE, AB42 5FQ

Evaluation of field for tree planting



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ILLUSTRATIONS

COVER Drone photo of trenches; facing N. Thanks to William Fowlie for the photograph.

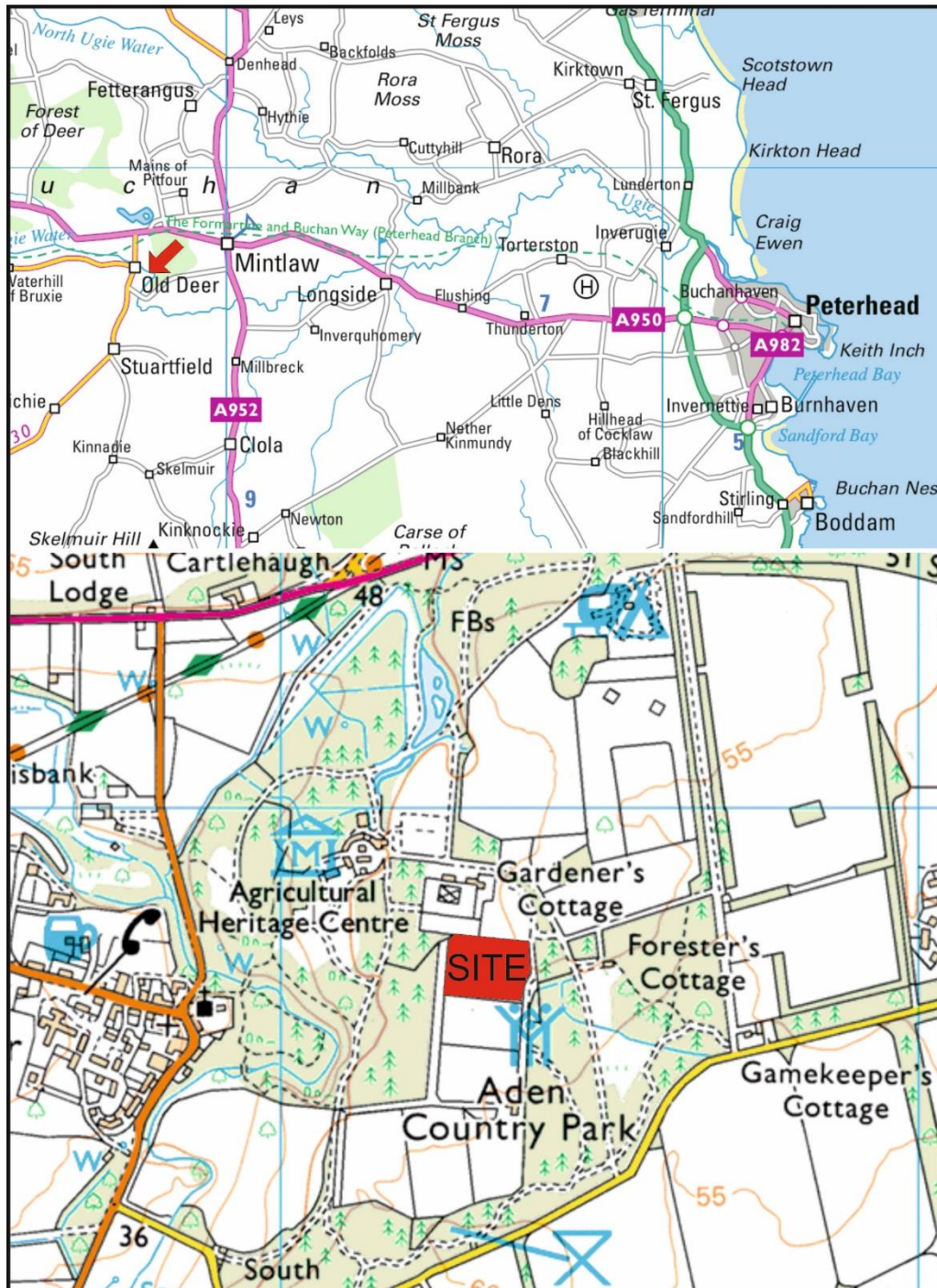
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SUMMARY

Eight trenches were excavated on 25-26 June 2019 with a wheeled JCB and a 2m toothless ditching bucket. The topsoil was 0.25-0.4m deep and there were no archaeological finds or features identified.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This site is located within Aden Country Park (Illus 1) on the S of Hareshowe. The excavation area is located at NJ 98203 47731 in the parish of Old Deer and at 50-55m OD on a gently SW facing slope.
- 1.2 This evaluation was carried out in advance of tree planting. The current authors agreed to carry out the work during the soil strip for the Neolithic excavation (Cameron 2019) and Stewart MacIntyre carried out the evaluation with the assistance of A Cameron. This was agreed as the park management could not afford to carry out the evaluation under normal payment terms.

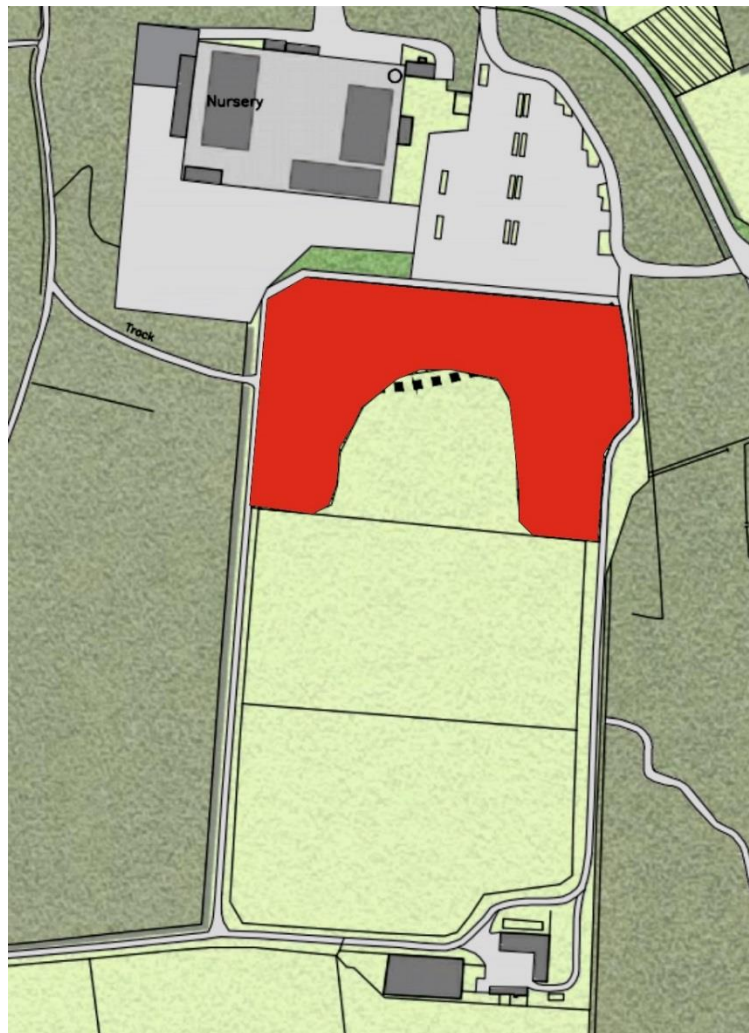


Illus 1 Site location (Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2019).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 There are no known sites within the field to be planted. There is one Scheduled Monument within 1km the medieval parish church at Old Deer (NJ94NE0002).
- 2.2 Two stone foundations have been identified in woodland within Aden Country Park (NJ94NE 63.11). The most southerly of these has been identified on Canmore as the remains of an Episcopal Meeting House (NJ94NE 70) but this identification is uncertain.
- 2.3 An evaluation in September 2015 revealed the foundations of a rectangular and T-shaped foundations; small test pits failed to reveal any dating evidence and the finds from the soil in the trenches ranged from prehistoric flint to modern bottle and plastic.
- 2.4 Further excavation of two stone structures in Aden Country Park was carried out from 6-19th June 2016 by a team of 36 archaeologists, Book of Deer members, students and volunteers as well as staff and nearly 300 pupils from local primary schools and Mintlaw Academy. Structure 1 is a T-shaped building, probably built on the medieval period, possibly as a tower house and possibly later used as an Episcopalian Meeting House. Nearly 20 coins of the late 18th century, copper alloy heart-shaped brooch and copper alloy book fittings are included in the finds from the later use of the building. Burnt timbers and stone were excavated from the demolition of the building which had been burnt prior to demolition. Structure 2 may have an agricultural or mixed domestic and agricultural use. There is a hearth inside the S wall surrounded by a well-laid cobbled floor and a stone-lined pit in the NE corner of the N room which may have been an exterior courtyard. 2.3 As part of a Book of Deer funded project, an evaluation was carried out by Murray Archaeological Services of a group of 27 circular enclosures or possible huts lie in a plantation 40m N of the former stables of Aden House between NJ 9805 4798 and NJ 9811 4819 (NJ94NE 88). An excavation of a series of features in March and April 2017 as part of the HLF project revealed an extensive military training ground and it is suggested that the Murray site may also be of a similar nature and not a Bronze Age site. A trench was also dug in the park by Guard Archaeology with no significant archaeological results.
- 2.5 Excavations in March-April 2017 in the north of the park on the west side of the camping and caravan site identified 19th and early 20th-century military trenches which were part of a military training area for local militia (Cameron 2017).
- 2.6 Previous work in a field W of Hareshowe included geophysical survey by Rose Geophysics, fieldwalking and an excavation on 3-10 June 2017; the 2017 team included 21 students from Universities of Aberdeen, Edinburgh, UCL and Minnesota as well as local volunteers and archaeologists. Three post-holes were uncovered in Trench 2 and flints were recovered dating to the early to late Neolithic (Ballin 2019). In 2018 a JCB was used to clear the three post-holes and chase the feature to its extents. A trench 30x16m was cleared, cleaned and features half excavated. The team included 35 adults and 17 children and in 2017-18 we hosted eight school classes totalling 167 pupils and 23 adult helpers. In 2019 52 people took part in the excavation including University students from Aberdeen, UHI and Nottingham, volunteers from Manchester, Elgin and the local area and professional archaeologists. 222 school pupils, Brownies and Young Archaeologists assisted with the excavation.

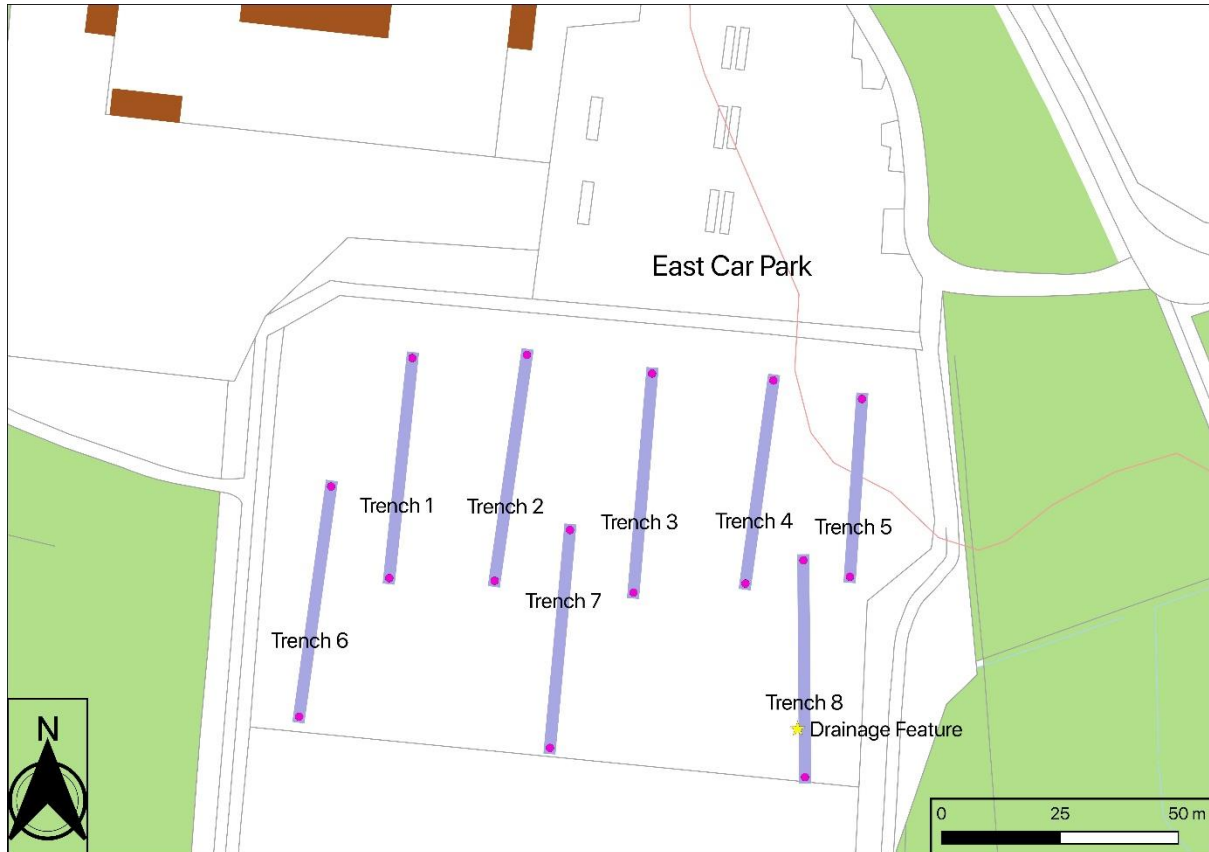
2.7 The First Edition OS map (Illus) shows a small copse of trees in the NW corner of the field and a field boundary cutting across the SE corner. By the 2nd Edition OS map (Illus) a track has been constructed running approximately W-E across the centre of the field. No evidence of the track, field boundary or copse of trees now survives; the field has been dumped on from the contents of the base of the lake (Jack Grant pers comm). There is a local story that Mrs Russel (wife of Frank Shirley Russel) got servants to throw Mr Russel's armament collection into the lake (date unknown). The story was handed down through the family that his wife told him to get rid of the armaments from the entrance to the mansion house. In 1887 Frank Shirley Russell, although the youngest son, inherited Aden. He joined the 14th Hussars, became a Captain and was the Aide-de-Camp to the General Officer in command of the forces in Ireland in 1873. For his action Zulu wars, he received the brevet rank of Major and later served in the Boer War. He was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel in command of his regiment, then transferred to the command of the First Dragoon Guards. In 1888, he married Phillipa Baillie of Redcastle. Phillipa was appointed Lady-in-Waiting to Her Royal Highness, the Duchess of Albany in 1886. Almost immediately after their marriage, Frank was appointed military-attache in Berlin where he was a highly successful diplomat and develop strong opinions about the need for British re-armament. In 1892 Colonel Frank and Mrs Russell returned from Germany to take up residence at Aden. They had five children, three sons and two daughters.



Illus 2 Plan showing area of tree planting in red (copyright Ironside Farrar)

3 THE EVALUATION

Eight trenches were excavated on 25-26 June 2019 with a wheeled JCB and a 2m toothless ditching bucket prior to tree planting by Aberdeenshire Council. The topsoil was 0.25-0.4m deep and there were no archaeological finds or features identified.



4 RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

Although no archaeological features were recorded in these trenches, new archaeological sites have been found throughout the park and so if further areas of tree planting are to take place within the park they should also be subjected to archaeological evaluation.

5 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Stewart MacIntyre for carrying out this trenching and to Bruce Mann, Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service for his advice during the project. Thanks to William Fowlie for the drone photos.

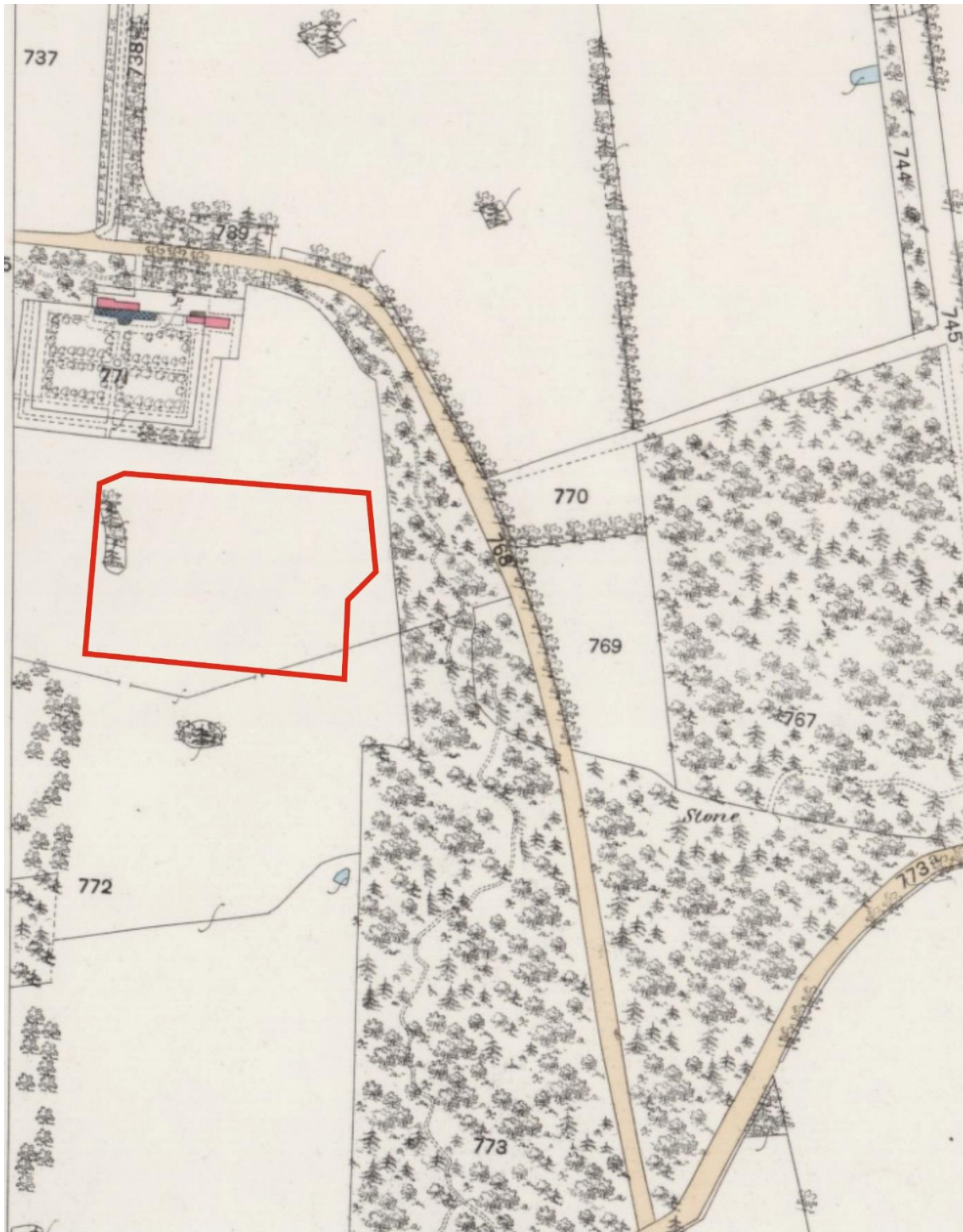
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Cameron AS 2019 Aden Country Park Neolithic Site DSR. Report for client.

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APPENDIX 1 MAPS



Illus 3 First Edition OS map showing field outline in red. Aberdeenshire XXII.1 (Old Deer & Longside - Combined) Survey date: 1869 to 1870 Publication date: 1881 (copyright National Library of Scotland).



Illus 4 Second Edition OS map showing field outline in red. Aberdeenshire XXII.1 (Longside; Old Deer) Publication date: 1902 Revised: 1899 (copyright National Library of Scotland).

APPENDIX 2 PHOTOGRAPHS AND GPS POINTS

	Trench GPS P1	Trench GPS P2	Photographs
Trench 1	NJ 98291 47776	NJ 98286 47730	P1020102 to P1020104
Trench 2	NJ 98315 47777	NJ 98308 47729	P1020105 to P1020107
Trench 3	NJ 98341 47773	NJ 98337 47727	P1020108 to P1020110
Trench 4	NJ 98367 47771	NJ 98361 47729	P1020111 to P1020113
Trench 5	NJ 98385 47767	NJ 98383 47730	P1020114 to P1020116
Trench 6	NJ 98273 47749	NJ 98267 47701	P1020117 to P1020120
Trench 7	NJ 98324 47740	NJ 98320 47694	P1020121 to P1020124
Trench 8	NJ 98373 47734	NJ 98373 47688	P1020125 to P1020136
Trench 8 Drainage Feature	NJ 98372 47698		P1020126 to P1020134



P1020102



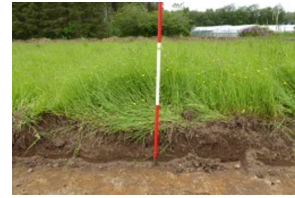
P1020103



P1020104



P1020105



P1020106



P1020107



P1020108



P1020109



P1020110



P1020111



P1020112



P1020113



P1020114



P1020115



P1020116



P1020117



P1020118



P1020119



P1020120



P1020121



P1020122



P1020123



P1020124



P1020125



P1020126



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P1020128



P1020129



P1020130



P1020131



P1020132



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