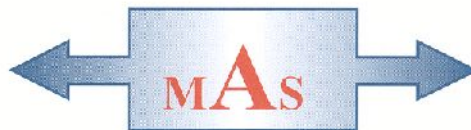


**MIDMILL 2012  
KINTORE  
ABERDEENSHIRE**



**- Archaeological Evaluation -  
Carried out 10<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> April 2012  
by  
Murray Archaeological Services Ltd**



**Report No: MAS 2012-12  
by  
H K Murray & J C Murray**

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# MIDMILL 2012 KINTORE ABERDEENSHIRE

## **-Archaeological Evaluation-**

**H K Murray and J C Murray**

### 1. Background

- 1.1 Proposals for the extension of the Midmill Industrial Estate into two fields lying to the E and S of the current development by Malcolm Allan Housebuilders Ltd, are being discussed with Aberdeenshire Council prior to a full planning application.

In anticipation of this, and in the light of previous archaeological discoveries on the Estate, it was thought likely that an archaeological response would be required.

The archaeological implications for the expansion of the development into the two adjoining fields were discussed with Bruce Mann, Archaeologist, Aberdeenshire Council, who proposed that a 10% archaeological evaluation would be appropriate.

This proposal was made in the context of Scottish Planning Policy (PAN 2/2011, SPP, SHEP).

- 1.2 Murray Archaeological Services Ltd was commissioned by Malcolm Allan Housebuilders Ltd to undertake the work, the field element of which was carried out 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> April 2012.

### 2. Desktop Survey

- 2.1 A search was carried out in the Sites and Monuments Records of the Royal Commission for Ancient and Historic Monuments in Scotland (RCAHMS) through Canmore and Pastmap. The historic OS maps for the area were also consulted.

- 2.2 **Roy's Military map of Scotland 1747-55** shows settlements just to the E of Midmill at *The Braye* (Brae Farm) and at *Tofthills* (Tofthill) but no settlement at Midmill itself, although the general area is shown as partly cultivated.

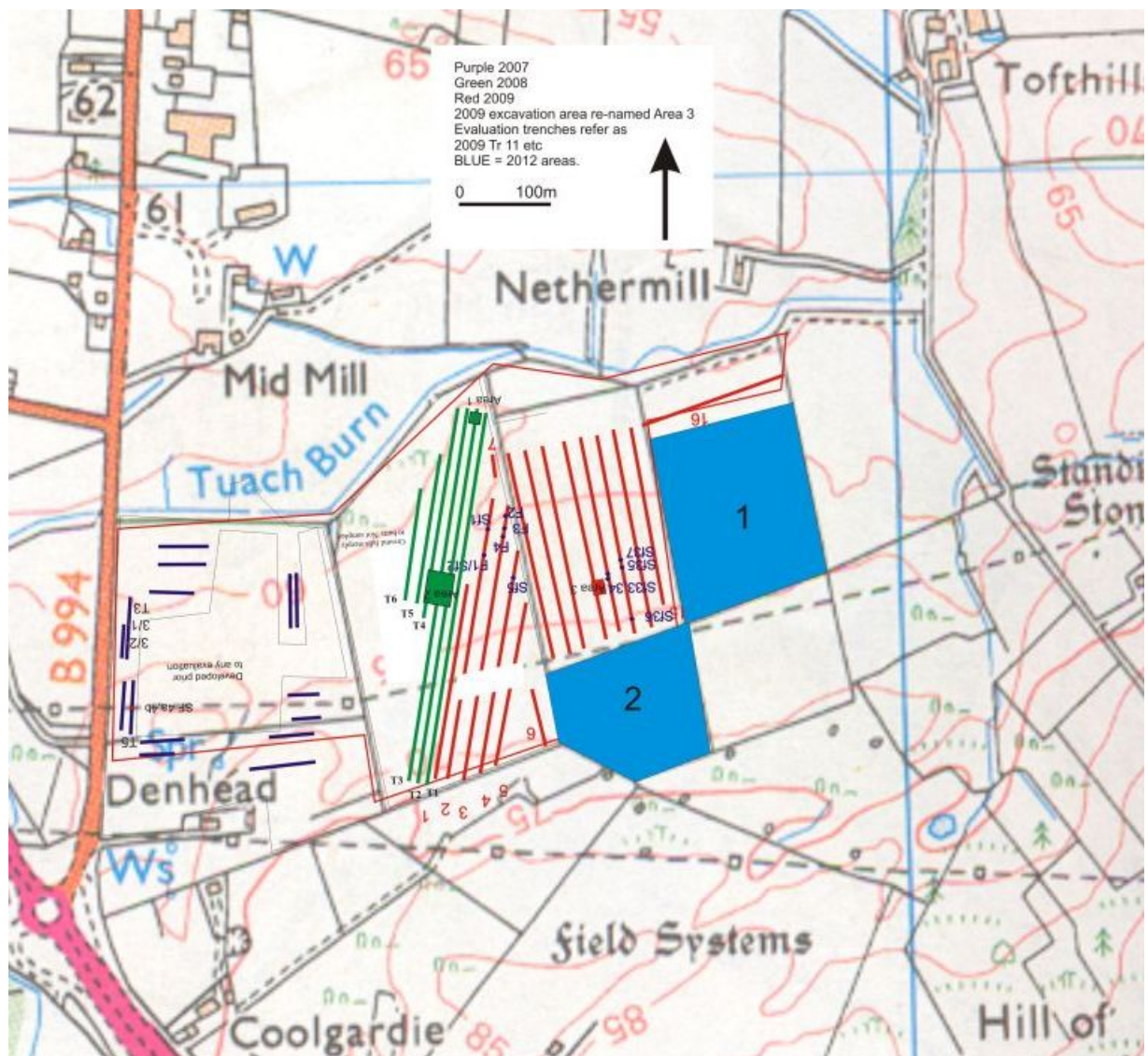
- 2.3 **The 1<sup>st</sup> ed OS 25" Aberdeen sheet lxxv.5 (Kintore) 1865 (pub 1869)** shows this area before it was improved. Field 1 is shown as open cultivated ground. Field 2 is an area of rough and boggy ground with two small enclosures to the S side of a road running more or less along the present N boundary of the field. This road extends NE to Wade's Military road just N of Ferneybrae. In the smaller of the enclosures a small farm named Mains of Kintore is shown. It consists of two rectangular buildings lying NE/SW. A small building lies to NE of the N building.
- 2.4 **OS 25" Aberdeenshire 065.05 1899 (pub 1900)** shows the land after it had been enclosed into the rectilinear pattern now existing. Field 1 is shown with its present boundary dykes. Field 2 around Mains of Kintore is part of this enclosure system although it is still shown as rough boggy ground. The track to the Wade Road is not shown although a de facto track exists to the present. The N building remains at this time with a number of small extensions to the gables and N side. A rectangular enclosure is shown to the S of it. A small unroofed structure to the WSW appears to have a culvert/dyke running from it across the main dyke line and to the SW towards Denwell, a separate croft that still exists as low ruins.
- 2.5 **OS 25" Aberdeenshire 065.05 1924 (pub 1925)** shows Field 1 unchanged. In Field 2, the N building is unroofed. The ground is still shown as rough with a pronounced boggy den NE/SW across the middle of it.
- 2.6 The Aberdeenshire SMR has an entry for Mains of Kintore (*SMR NJ71SE0074* centred at 3797130040, 814493640). This describes it as the ruins of a cottage with walls to 0.7m, based on the visit to the site by RCAHMS in 2002. However in c. 2007, Mr Hugh Moir, who owned the ground at that time, demolished the ruins and sold the lintel stones. At the same time the boggy dell across the field was infilled to make level drained ground.

2.7 Field 2 lies just to the N of the cairns listed in the Aberdeenshire SMR as *Hill of Boghead* (SMR NJ81SW0005 centred at 380364170,814050110 ) but none of the OS maps show the cairns extending into Field 2.

### 3. The Site

3.1 The proposed site comprises parts of two fields lying to the E and SE of the existing Midmill Industrial Estate (Illus 1), to the E of the B994 and N of the A96.

NGR: NJ 7976 1453 (centre of site). Parish: Kintore



**Illus 1 Location of the 2012 sites (blue) in relation to the 2007-2009 evaluations and excavations**

3.2 Field 1 (3.1144 hectares: 7.70acres) lies on a slope down to the N towards the Tuach Burn. The N end of this field was evaluated in 2009 and is now a water

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holding pond. The S end of the field levels out around 65m OD. Field 2 lies at the top of this slope between 65 and 70m OD.

- 3.3 At the time of the evaluation Field 1 had been ploughed and a number of unstratified finds were found in the plough surface.

In Field 2 (1.99 hectares: 4.91 acres) some of the turf had been stripped prior to the evaluation but the topsoil remained.

## 4. Methodology

- 4.1 Twelve evaluation trenches were excavated in Field 1 and ten in Field 2. Topsoil was removed using a full slew excavator with a 2m wide toothless ditching bucket. Any possible features were cleaned and excavated by hand.
- 4.2 All mapping was done with a Magellan Mobile Mapper CX.

## 5. The Results

### Field 1

Within Field 1 a primary focus was on those areas just below the break of slope where survival of prehistoric activity had been recorded in 2007-2009.

#### Trench 1

GPS NW end: 379870,814773 SE end: 379905,814600

Orientation: NW/SE Length: 177 m Width: 2.0m

Stratigraphy: Topsoil of 300-350mm overlay natural which was sandy at the N end of the trench and stony further up the ridge to the S.

On the lower N end of the trench eleven possible furrows of rig and furrow cultivation have been identified. These showed as shallow dips in the natural between 2 and 2.5m wide, filled with greyer, more humic soil. They crossed the trench approximately ENE/WSW.



**Illus 2 General view looking N across Field 1. Midmill Industrial Estate to LHS**

#### Trench 2

GPS NW end: 379859,814768 SE end:379841,814596

Orientation: NW/SE Length: 175 m Width: 2.0m

Stratigraphy: Topsoil of 300-350mm overlay natural which was sandy at the N end of the trench and stony further up the ridge to the S. In one area at the base of the slope there was c. 500mm of subsoil and topsoil.

Eight furrows of rig and furrow were identified (as Trench 1).

#### Trench 3

GPS NW end: 379849,814765 SE end: 379882,814590

Orientation: NW/SE Length: 177m Width: 2.0m

Stratigraphy: Topsoil depth above natural ranged between 350-400mm, deepening to 600mm at the base of slope.

Ten furrows of rig and furrow were identified (as Trench 1).

#### Trench 4

GPS NW end: 379837,814762 SE end: 379871,814585

Orientation: NW/SE Length: 178 m Width: 2.0m

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Stratigraphy: Topsoil depths ranged between 300 and 600mm at the base of slope.  
Eight furrows of rig and furrow were identified (as Trench 1).  
A small pit/post-hole at 379841,814741 (Diam: 200mm, Depth 250mm) had a charcoal-rich fill but there were no other associated features and no associated finds.  
(Illus 3 blue dot)

#### Trench 5

GPS NW end: 379831,814733      SE end: 379861,814582  
Orientation: NW/SE      Length: 152m Width: 2.0m  
Stratigraphy: Topsoil depths ranged between 300 and 600mm at the base of slope.  
Seven furrows of rig and furrow were identified (as Trench 1).

#### Trench 6

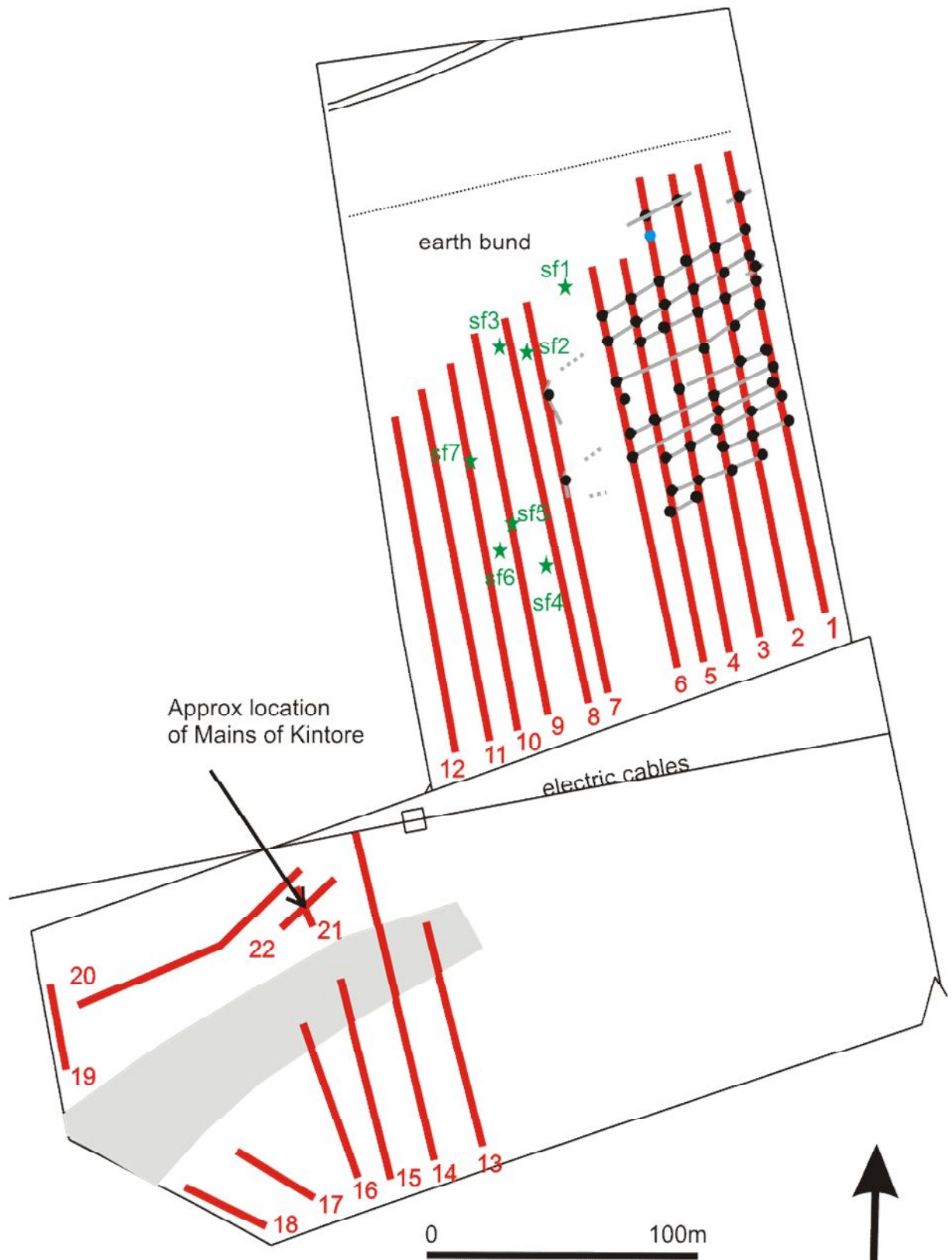
GPS NW end: 379820,814729      SE end: 379851,814580  
Orientation: NW/SE      Length: 151m Width: 2.0m  
Stratigraphy: Topsoil depths between 300 and 350mm.  
Six furrows of rig and furrow were identified (as Trench 1).

#### Trench 7

GPS NW end: 379796,814717      SE end: 379826,814569  
Orientation: NW/SE      Length: 150m Width: 2.0m  
Stratigraphy: A pronounced hollow some 35m wide extended between 45 and 70m from the N end of the trench. In this area the clean natural sand was at 600-750mm below the surface. The dip appeared to have been filled with greyish silt which merged into the topsoil. There was no evidence of anthropomorphic activity.  
Elsewhere topsoil depths were 300-350mm.  
The regular rigs did not extend into this trench but there were two places where what appeared to be a turning furrow curved in from the E side of the trench.

#### Trench 8

GPS NW end: 379788,814710      SE end: 379819,814567  
Orientation: NW/SE      Length: 145 m Width: 2.0m  
Stratigraphy: Topsoil 300-350mm deepening to c. 600mm in the hollow at the base of slope.



Illus 3 Main plan of evaluation trenches (red). Rig furrows shown as black dots with probable furrow lines in grey. Green stars are small finds. Grey area in S field (Field 2) shows the approximate extent of filled in gully. Blue dot in trench 4: undatable post pit/pit



### Trench 9

GPS NW end: 379777,814705 SE end: 379804,814562

Orientation: NW/SE Length: 145 m Width: 2.0m

Stratigraphy: At both ends of the trench there was between 300-400mm of topsoil above natural. In the base of an E/W natural hollow/gully this deepened to c. 600mm. SF 5- a sherd of abraded medieval pottery was found at 379789,814632 just above the natural in the silt in the hollow.

### Trench 10

GPS NW end: 379768,814695 SE end: 379792,814557

Orientation: NW/SE Length: 140m Width: 2.0m

Stratigraphy: At both ends of the trench there was between 350-400mm of topsoil above natural. In the base of an E/W natural hollow/gully this deepened to c. 1.25m. The base of the gully included peaty humic material suggesting it had been an open boggy pool at some stage before silting up.

A 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century stone-filled drain ran into the gully at 379774,814659.

SF 7- two joining sherds (recent break) of medieval pottery were found at 379774,814655 in the silt at c.800mm below the present surface.

### Trench 11

GPS NW end: 379757,814685 SE end: 379782,814553

Orientation: NW/SE Length: 134m Width: 2.0m

Stratigraphy: The N end of the trench was at the N side of the boggy hollow seen in trenches 9 and 10. This dipped to a maximum depth of 850mm, with similar silt over a peaty fill. A stone drain at 379760,814676 running into the hollow is of probable 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century date.

### Trench 12

GPS NW end: 379746,814674 SE end: 379770,814550

Orientation: NW/SE Length: 126m Width: 2.0m

Stratigraphy: At the N end of the trench there was c 600mm of topsoil in a slight dip; to the S up the slope there was only 350-400mm.

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## Field 2

Within Field 2 a primary focus was to locate the area of known 19<sup>th</sup>-century activity and to determine if this was on the footprint of any earlier settlement. As noted above, the last remains of the former croft, Mains of Kintore had been demolished by the then owner, Mr Hugh Moir. At the same time the deep boggy hollow across the centre of this field was infilled, with stone and with soil from the industrial development to the W. The 19<sup>th</sup>-century stone-built culvert noted by RCAHMS had become blocked and a new drain was installed, by-passing the blockage and draining out beside the industrial estate. The drain ran along the central infilled area. As a result of these considerable land-movements, the central infilled dip was deemed to be beyond archaeological evaluation.

### Trench 13

GPS NNW end: 379758,814487                      SSE end: 379781,814401

Orientation: NNW/SSE                      Length: 88m Width: 2.0m

Stratigraphy: Over most of the trench there was only 150-250mm of topsoil above a very stony natural.

A rubble stone drain was noted at 379767,814447. This was possibly related to the Mains of Kintore croft.

### Trench 14

GPS NNW end: 379733,814522                      SSE end: 379763,814396

Orientation: NNW/SSE                      Length: 128m Width: 2.0m

Stratigraphy: The N end of the trench cut across the natural gully that was infilled c. 5 years ago. Elsewhere there was c. 200mm topsoil over stony natural.

### Trench 15

GPS NNW end: 379727,814468                      SSE end: 379746,814391

Orientation: NNW/SSE                      Length: 78m Width: 2.0m

Stratigraphy: The N end of the trench cut across the natural gully that was infilled c. 5 years ago. Elsewhere there was 150-200mm topsoil over stony natural.



**Illus 4 Trench 15 looking N**

Trench 16

GPS NNW end: 379713,814450

SSE end: 379733,814389

Orientation: NNW/SSE

Length: 63m Width: 2.0m

Stratigraphy: The N end of the trench cut across the natural gully that was infilled c. 5 years ago. Elsewhere there was 150-200mm topsoil over stony natural.

Trench 17

GPS NW end: 379687,814403

SE end: 379718,814384

Orientation: NW/SE

Length: 38m Width: 2.0m

Stratigraphy: 150-200mm topsoil over stony natural.

Trench 18

GPS ESE end: 379699,814374

WNW end: 379669,814388

Orientation: ESE/WNW

Length: 32m Width: 2.0m

Stratigraphy: 150-200mm topsoil over stony natural.

Trench 19

GPS NE end: 379619,814466

SW end: 379625,814432

Orientation: NE/SW

Length: 34m Width: 2.0m

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Stratigraphy: 150-200mm topsoil over stony natural.

#### Trench 20

GPS E end: 379711,814506                      W end: 379630,814456

with angle at 379681,814479.

Orientation: E/W (dog-legged)              Length: 95m Width: 2.0m

Stratigraphy: 150-200mm topsoil over stony natural. A small area of stony rubble between 379707,814501 and 379710,814504 was non-structural but its location suggests it was derived from the Mains of Kintore croft building.

#### Trench 21

GPS NW end: 379709,814501              SE end: 379716,814486

Orientation: NW/SE                      Length: 16m Width: 2.0m

Stratigraphy: 200-250mm topsoil over stony natural.

#### Trench 22

GPS NE end: 379725,814504              SW end: 379704,814483

Orientation: NE/SW                      Length: 29m Width: 2.0m

Stratigraphy: 200-250mm topsoil over stony natural.

### 6. Medieval pottery

Five sherds, (2 conjoining), of medieval pottery were recovered during the evaluation in Field 1. Two were unstratified (SF3 & 6) and found on the surface of the plough soil, one in T9 (SF5) and the two conjoining sherds in T10 (SF7)

All were in the Scottish Redware tradition and likely to have been produced locally. Although abraded, some still bore traces of external of drab, olive green glaze. They are typical of wares produced in the 13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> century.

#### *Catalogue*

SF3    Unstratified. Plain upright collared rim sherd with olive green glaze surviving on the top and internal surface of the rim. Probably small jug.

SF5 Tr.9. Abraded body sherd with faint traces of spots of external glaze.

Probably jug.

SF6 Unstratified. Abraded body sherd. No glaze evident.

SF7 Tr.10. Two conjoining sherds from basal angle of a large jug. Course sandy fabric with traces of external olive green glaze.

All the finds will be retained with the finds from Midmill 2007-2009 and reported to SAFAP as part of that assemblage.

## 7. Flint

Three pieces of worked flint were found in the surface of the plough soil in Field 1 during the evaluation.

### *Catalogue*

SF1 Unstratified. Flake

SF 2 Unstratified. Flake

SF 4 Unstratified. Core fragment.

All the finds will be retained with the finds from Midmill 2007-2009 and reported to SAFAP as part of that assemblage.

## 8. Discussion

### **Field 1**

In Field 1 there was evidence of rig and furrow cultivation surviving at the lower N end of the site. This could be medieval and post-medieval in date.



**Illus 5 Trench 5 showing furrows of rig and furrow at N end**

The small number of medieval sherds are likely to have been introduced to this area as the result of midden manuring during cultivation. This area is shown as cultivated, although not enclosed, ground on the 1<sup>st</sup> OS map of 1865 and is within the general area shown as cultivated on Roy's map of 1747-55. Two sherds of medieval pottery were found in 2009 in the adjacent field.

There is no evidence of the settlement associated with this pottery.

There was no evidence of prehistoric activity in this area apart from three unstratified flints in the top of the ploughsoil.

The hollow in Trenches 9-11 appears to have been a natural boggy hollow that had gradually silted and later possibly been levelled. The sherds found in Trenches 9 and 10 were within the silt in the hollow.



**Illus 6 Trench 10, showing natural boggy hollow. Looking N.**

## **Field 2**

Field 2 had been extensively infilled, drained and levelled in c. 2007 when the ruins of the last surviving building of Mains of Kintore were demolished. Trenches 21 and 22 were sited to cross the known site of the building but apart from a small patch of unstructured rubble in Trench 20 at its junction with Trench 21, there was no surviving structural evidence of the croft.

There was a scatter of sherds of late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century domestic ceramic and glass around the area of the former croft. However, in the light of the known movement of soil onto the site from elsewhere, these were not retained.

## **8. Impacts and Mitigations**

Impacts There was no evidence of surviving archaeology.

Mitigations None

This does not preclude the possibility of chance finds or archaeological discoveries outwith the evaluation trenches. Should such chance finds occur, then the Archaeology Service, Aberdeenshire Council, or Murray Archaeological Services Ltd, must be informed immediately so that an appropriate archaeological response can be formulated and agreed by all parties concerned.



**Illus 7 General view of Field 2. The site of the former croft house would have been between the machine and the grass**

Photographs supplied to archive on CD

<b>Photographic catalogue</b>	
<b>Digital frame no</b>	<b>Content</b>
1-3	General view of Field 1, looking N
4-8	T10, Field 1, looking N
9-14	Rig and Furrow in T5, Field 1, looking N
15	General view, looking SW, across Field 1
16	As 15, looking SE
17-18	T15, Field 2, looking N
19	General view across Field 2, looking NW
20	As 19, looking, looking W
21	General view across NW sector of Field 2
22	General view across N sector of Field 2
23-25	General views of Field 2, looking SW
26	T15, Field 2, looking S