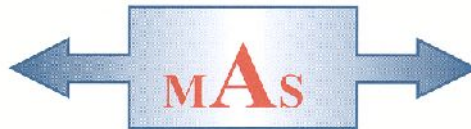


MAINS OF BALQUHAIN CHAPEL OF GARIOCH, INVERURIE ABERDEENSHIRE



- Archaeological Watching Brief -
Carried out 7th May 2012
by
Murray Archaeological Services Ltd



Report No: MAS 2012-14
by
J C Murray

H K Murray BA, PhD, MIFA, FSA Scot
J C Murray BA, MIFA, FSA Scot, FMA
Hill of Belnagoak, Methlick, Ellon, Aberdeenshire AB41 7JN
Telephone: (01651) 806394 e-mail: cmurray@btinternet.com

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-Archaeological Watching Brief-

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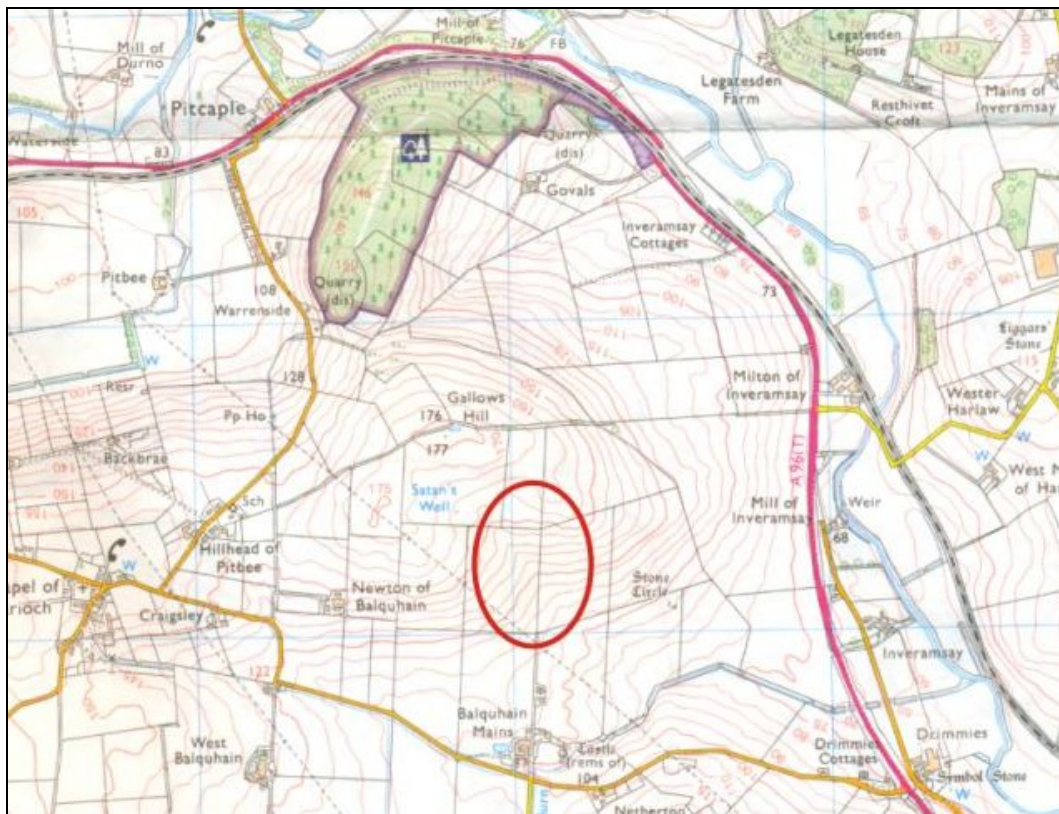
1. Background

- 1.1 A Planning Application (APP/2010/2325) was approved for the installation of a single 850kW, 80m high wind turbine at Mains of Balquhain. An archaeological condition requiring a watching brief to be maintained during the ground works for the turbine base, hard standing and trackway was applied in the context of Scottish Planning policy (PAN 2/2011, SPP, SHEP).
- 1.2 Murray Archaeological Services Ltd was commissioned by Green Cat Renewables Ltd, on behalf of their client Mr Mark Strachan, to undertake the work; the field element of which was carried out on 7th May 2012.

2. The Site

- 2.1 The site lies a short distance to the NE of Inverurie between the A96 and Chapel of Garioch [NGR: NJ 7313 2455; Parish: Chapel of Garioch].
- 2.2 The wind turbine is located on the top of Gallows Hill with panoramic views all around, in an area rich with archaeological sites and finds.
- 2.3 Adjacent to Balquhain Mains are the impressive ruins of Balquhain Castle, a c.15th century castle with a quadrangular keep and a group of buildings around a courtyard [NGR: 73157 23603; NMRS No: NJ72SW 5].

- 2.4 To the SE, on the lower slopes of Gallows Hill, lies a recumbent stone circle with cup marked stones [NGR: NJ 7350 2408; NMRS No: NJ72SW 2].
- 2.5 In addition to the above, numerous finds of flints, stone axe heads and cinerary urns have been found in the immediate area.



Illus 1: Location Map, with Turbine site outlined in red

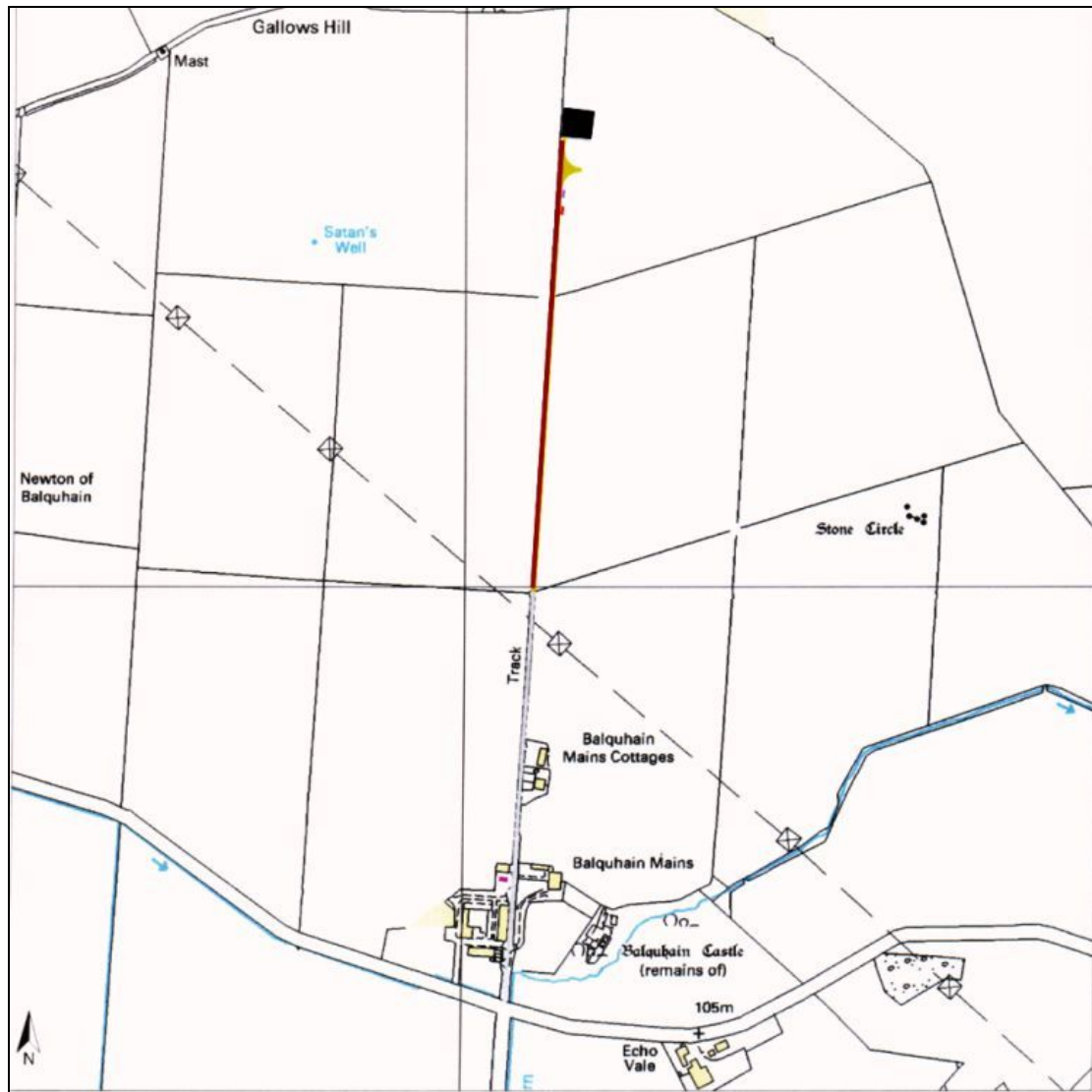
3 Methodology

- 3.1 Excavations were carried out using a full slew mechanical digger with a toothless 2m wide ditching bucket. Following this, areas of potential interest were cleaned by hand

4. The Work

- 4.1 Access Track: The new access track to the site of the wind turbine began at the end of an existing track to the N of Balquhain Mains Cottages and

extended uphill for c.180m running parallel to the E side of the field boundary and was 4.5m wide (see red line, Illus 2).



Illus 2: Site plan with the access track in red and the turbine base and hard-standing in black

The average depth of ploughsoil removed was c.250-260mm, which overlay yellow/beige hard sandy natural. Apart from modern plough marks, no other features were distinguishable.

No archaeological features or finds were evident.



Illus 3: S end of new access track, looking N



Illus 4: N end of new access track, looking S

- 4.2 Area of Turbine Base and Hard Standing: Located at the summit of the hill, this area measured 43.5m (N-S) x 30m (E-W). In general, the depth of dark brown ploughsoil removed was c.250-260mm, except on the N side of the area where it was as little as 180mm (see Illus 6). The soil overlay yellow hard sandy natural.
- 4.3 With the exception of modern plough marks and a single modern field drain, no other features were present.

No archaeological features or finds were evident.



Illus 5: General view across the area of hard standing to Bennachie, looking SW



Illus 6: Section on N side of area of hard standing, showing the slight depth of ploughsoil

5 Results

- 5.1 Although in relatively close proximity to a number of archaeological sites, the excavations for the new access track and the area of hard standing for the turbine base and associated works produced no archaeological features or finds.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Catalogue of digital photographic record (on CD)

Photographic catalogue – Mains of Balquhain, Chapel of Garioch	
Digital frame no	Content
1-2	N end of new access track and hard standing, looking S
3-4	N end of new access track, looking S
5-8	View across area of hard standing to Bennachie, looking W
9-10	Area of hard standing, looking SW
11-12	Area of hard standing, looking S
13-14	Section on N side of hard standing, looking N
15-17	S end of new access track, looking N