

# INVERURIE - LEYLODGE 33kV UNDERGROUND CABLE ABERDEENSHIRE



**- Archaeological Watching Brief -**  
Carried out June – August 2013  
by  
**Murray Archaeological Services Ltd**



**Report No: MAS 2013-15**  
by  
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33kV UNDERGROUND CABLE  
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**1. Background**

- 1.1 Proposals by Scottish & Southern Energy plc (SSE) to lay a 33kV underground power cable between Blackhall Road, Inverurie and Leylodge, Kintore, required that an archaeological watching brief be maintained during several phases of the work
- 1.2 The request for the archaeological watching brief was made in the context of Scottish Planning Policy (PAN 2/2011, SPP, SHEP).
- 1.3 Murray Archaeological Services Ltd was commissioned by SSE to undertake the watching brief on the works; the field element of which was carried out 3<sup>rd</sup> June - 6<sup>th</sup> August 2013.

**2 Methodology**

- 2.1 The corridor for the laying of the power cable was excavated by a full-slew mechanical digger using a toothless ditching bucket. Cleaning by hand was ongoing as the soil strip progressed.

**3. The Work**

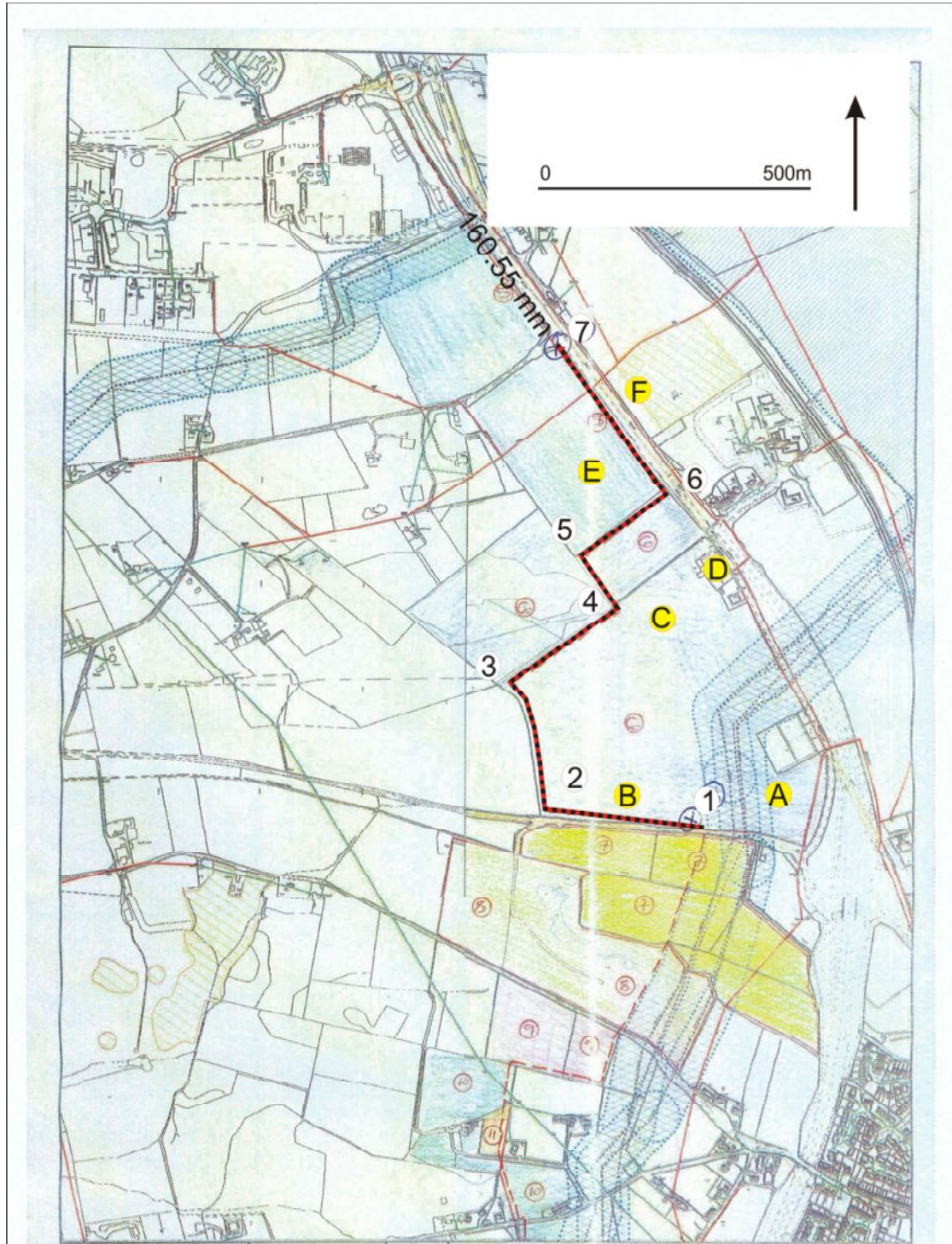
- 3.1 The watching brief was maintained between the field boundaries at NJ 7813 1804 to the N and NJ 7843 1712 to the S; Parish: Kintore. Along this section of the route the cable trench was in close proximity to a number and range of archaeological sites. These are marked alphabetically on the plan (Illus.1).

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Section 1 – 2: (see Plan, Illus.1):

*Dimensions of Section: c.270m x 5m wide*

*Orientation: E-W*



**Illus 1: Plan showing the route of the cable trench observed (by numbers) with archaeological sites A to F. Based on plan provided by SSE.**

NGR: At 1: NJ 7833 1721; At 2: NJ 7814 1715

This section ran parallel to, and slightly to the N of, the Alford Valley Railway. The railway which ran between Kintore and Alford was opened in 1859 and was absorbed by the Great North of Scotland Railway in 1866. It served Kemnay Quarry and three other quarries in the area and also carried passengers. It closed to passengers in 1950 and to goods in 1966.

Along this whole section c.350mm of topsoil overlay a 400-500mm deep deposit of black midden-like material which contained metal bolts, red bricks, small molten glass bottles and other waste debris from the railway.



**Illus 2: Railway midden material below topsoil, looking W**



**Illus 3: S section, showing the depth of Railway midden**

The line of the Railway can be seen on the 1<sup>st</sup> Edition 6-inch Ordnance Survey Map 1867 (published 1869) Aberdeenshire Sheet LIV, running N of the Bridgealehouse Burn ([www.nls.ac.uk](http://www.nls.ac.uk)).

At the E end of this section the trench there is a cropmark site (see ‘A’ Illus.1; Aberdeenshire SMR ref.NJ71NE0073; NMRS No: NJ71NE 138). The trench also passed the location of flint arrowheads found in 1821 (see ‘B’, Illus.1; Aberdeenshire SMR ref: NJ71NE 0007; NMRS No. NJ71NE 10). Nothing is now known of this find.

No archaeological features or finds were evident.

#### 4.2 Section 2 – 3: (See Plan, Illus.1)

*Dimensions of Section:* c.240m x 5m wide

*Orientation:* N-S

*NGR:* At 2: NJ 7814 1715; At 3: NJ 7807 1739

From the break of slope to the crest of the hill, c.300mm of brown topsoil overlay a c.200mm deposit of hard packed black material containing tarred material, modern glass and china and pieces of asbestos. This overlay natural sand and gravel.

No archaeological features or finds were evident.



**Illus 4: Section 2 - 3, looking N**

#### 4.3 Section 3 – 4: (See Plan, Illus.1)

*Dimensions:* 260m x 5m wide

*Orientation:* SW – NE

*NGR:* At 3: NJ 7807 1739; At 4: NJ 7829 1754

This section of the cable trench, at the NE end, ran to the SW of a cropmark of a possible Roman camp (see ‘C’, Illus.1; Aberdeenshire SMR ref: NJ71NE 0066; NMRS No: NJ71NE 135) and the site of a stone circle, of which nothing now is visible (see ‘D’, Illus.1; Aberdeenshire SMR ref: NJ71NE 0014; NMRS No: NJ71NE 17). As elsewhere the depth of topsoil was between 300-350mm. At c.50m NE of Point 3, the underlying natural was hard and stoney with many large boulders. Beyond this for another 100m the natural was hard grey clay with much stone and very poor drainage.

No archaeological features or finds were evident.



**Illus 5: Section 3-4, looking SW**

4.4 Section 4 – 5: (See Illus.1)

*Dimensions:* 112m x 5m wide

*Orientation:* SE – NW

*NGR:* At 4: NJ 7828 1755; At 5: NJ 7821 1764

This section also lay in close proximity to the cropmark of the possible Roman camp (see ‘C’, Illus.1).

The S end of this section lay on the N side of a burn under which the cable was laid. C.300mm of topsoil overlay hard stoney natural, poorly drained at the S end.

No archaeological features or finds were evident.



**Illus 6: Section 4-5, looking S**

4.5 Section 5 – 6: (See Illus.1)

*Dimensions:* 219m x 5m wide

*Orientation:* SW – NE

*NGR:* At 5: NJ 7821 1764; At 6: NJ 7838 1777

As elsewhere, c.300-350mm of topsoil overlay hard beige/yellow sandy natural with stone and boulder.

No archaeological features or finds were evident.



**Illus 7: Section 5-6, looking NE**

4.6 Section 6 – 7: (See Illus.1)

*Dimensions:* 343m x 5m wide

*Orientation:* SE – NW

*NGR:* At 6: NJ 7837 1778; At 7: NJ 7813 1804

This section ran parallel to the A96 and in close proximity to a large circular cropmark (see ‘E’, Illus.1; Aberdeenshire SMR ref: NJ71NE 0081; NMRS No: NJ71NE 100). On the opposite side of the A 96 lies the remnants of a stone circle of which one stone survives (see ‘F’, Illus.1; Aberdeenshire SMR ref: NJ71NE0011; NMRS No. NJ71NE14).

Again, the depth of topsoil was between 300-350mm, over hard beige/yellow stoney natural. A series of six 4” tile field drains were located along this section of the cable track at intervals of 50-27m.

No archaeological features or finds were evident.





**Illus 8: Section 6-7, looking S**



**Illus 9: Section 6-7, looking N**

- 4.7 It was intended that a small section of the cable trench at Blackhall Road, Inverurie, to the W side of the A96, extending from the roundabout at John Sorrie Drive to an extension of the new housing estate to the W should be observed. However, it proved that this section had already been excavated during a previous access road development.

## 5. Results

- 5.1 Although the underground cable track passed in close proximity to a number of known archaeological sites, the shallow depth of topsoil was consistent over the entire stretch of the watching brief and no archaeological features or finds were evident.

Photographs supplied to archive on CD

Photographic catalogue Inverurie-Leylodge Power Cable	
Digital frame no	Content
1-2	Section 1-2, looking W
3-4	Detail of railway midden layer
5-7	Railway midden deposit in S section of trench
8	General view of E end of Section 1-2, looking W
10-11	Section 2-3, looking N
12-14	View of topsoil depth, looking E
15	General view of Section 2-3, looking N
16-18	Section 3-4, looking W
19-20	E end of Section 3-4 (LHS), towards Section 4-5, across burn
21-23	Section 4-5, looking S
24-26	Section 5-6, looking E towards A96
27-28	Section 5-6, looking W
29-31	Section 6-7, looking S
32-33	Section 6-7, looking N
34-36	Section 6-7, looking S