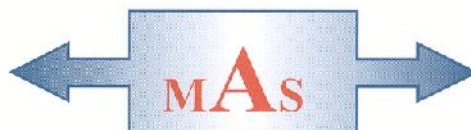


**MIDMILL 2014  
AREA 1  
KINTORE  
ABERDEENSHIRE**



**- Archaeological Evaluation -  
Carried out 13<sup>th</sup> June 2014  
by  
Murray Archaeological Services Ltd**



**Report No: MAS 2014-30  
by  
H K Murray & J C Murray**

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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 areas lying to the E of the current development by Malcolm Allan Housebuilders Ltd, are being discussed with Aberdeenshire Council as part of the planning process.

In the light of previous archaeological discoveries on the Estate, an archaeological evaluation was required.

The archaeological implications for the expansion of the development into the two areas were discussed with Bruce Mann, Archaeologist, Aberdeenshire Council, who proposed that a 5% 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 Area 1 was carried out 13<sup>th</sup> June 2014. The evaluation of Area 2 will be carried out in August 2014.

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. Both Areas 1 and 2 are part of an unenclosed area. Part of this ground is shown as cultivated/grazing but the E side of Area 1 is shown as wet and uncultivated.
- 2.4 **OS 25" Aberdeenshire 065.05 1899 (pub 1900)** shows the land after it had been enclosed into the rectilinear pattern now existing. In Area 1, the field boundaries shown are those dykes that still exist. In Area 2, the N part was enclosed but the SE part is still shown as rough ground.
- 2.5 **OS 25" Aberdeenshire 065.05 1924 (pub 1925)** shows both areas unchanged.



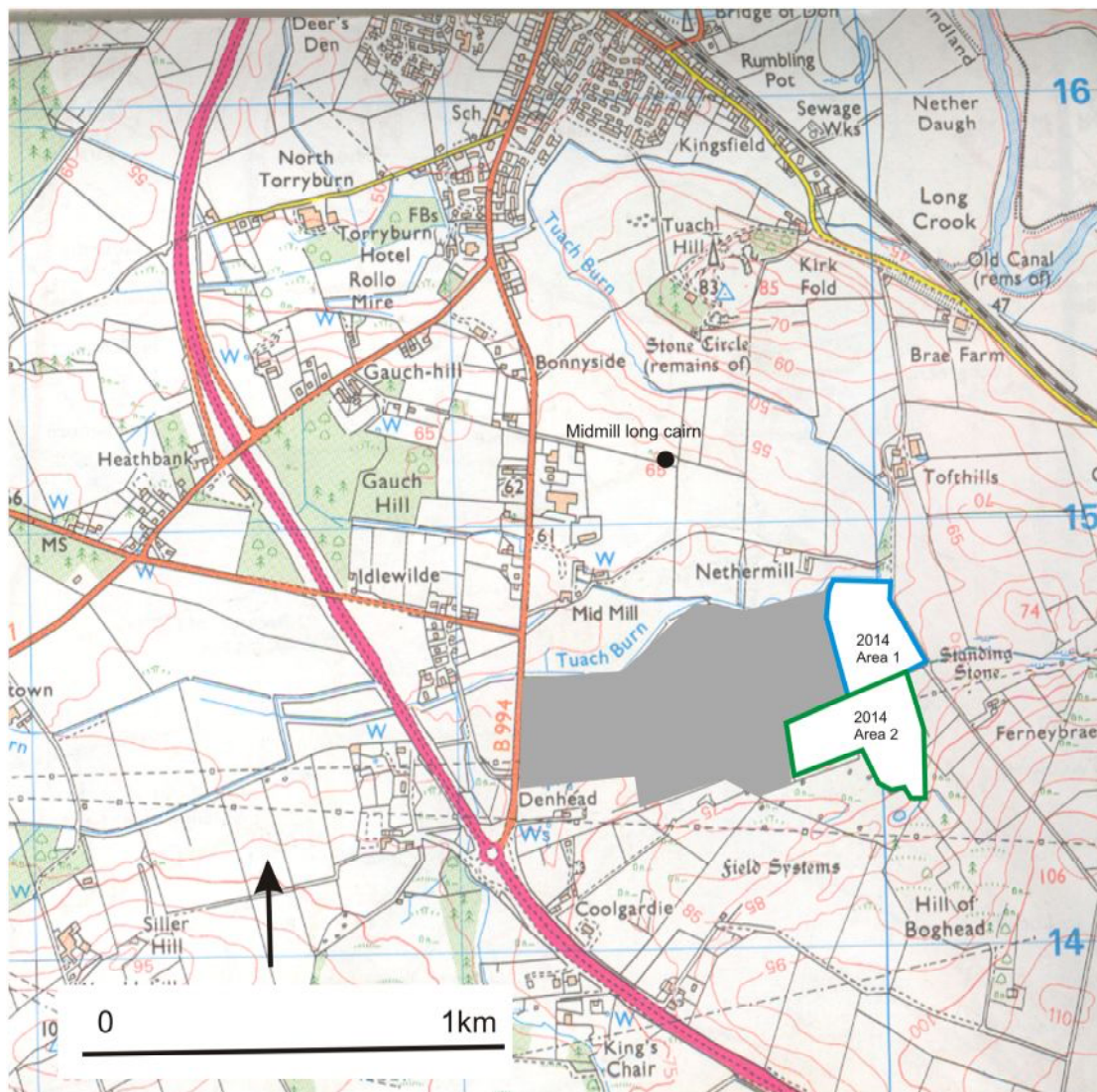
**Illus 1** General view Area 1 and Trench 1, looking N to Tuach Hill

### 3. The Site

- 3.1 The proposed site comprises parts of two areas lying to the E of the existing Midmill Industrial Estate (Illus 2), to the E of the B994 and N of the A96.

Area 1, which is the subject of the present report, lies directly S of the Tuach Burn and just W of the road to Brae Farm.

NGR: NJ 7997 1474 (centre of Area 1). Parish: Kintore



**Illus 2** Location of the 2014 sites (blue= Area 1. green = Area 2) in relation to the 2007-2012 evaluations and excavations. Ordnance Survey © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Licence number 100049810.

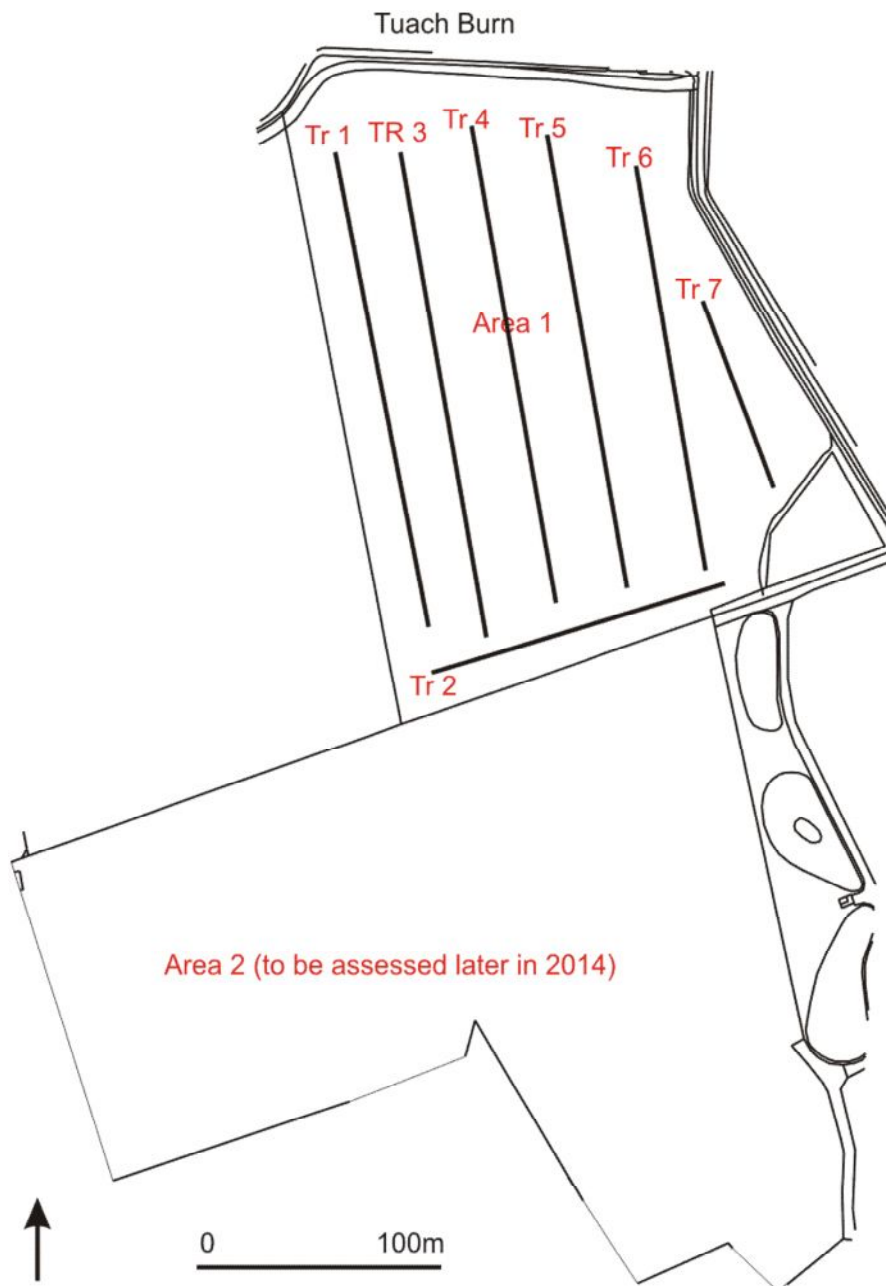
3.2 Area 1 (4.537 hectares: 11.21 acres) lies on a slope down to the N towards the Tuach Burn. The field slopes down from the S towards the Tuach burn, and also slopes towards the NE corner of the field.

The N and NE parts of the field were visibly wet at the time of the evaluation and an area of rushes had clearly been avoided by recent cultivations.

3.3 At the time of the evaluation the field was fallow with moderate weed growth.

#### 4. Methodology

- 4.1 Seven evaluation trenches were excavated in Area 1. Topsoil was removed using a full slew excavator with a 2.1m wide toothless ditching bucket. Any possible features were cleaned and excavated by hand.
- 4.2 All mapping was done with a Magellan Mobile Mapper 120 GPS and Glonass.



Illus 3 Plan of trenches evaluated in Area 1, 2014. Reproduce from Ordnance Survey digital map data, © Crown Copyright, All rights reserved. 2014. Licence No 0100031673

## 5. The Results

### Trench 1

GPS N end: 379888, 814826 S end: 379925, 814629

Orientation: N/S Length: 200m Width: 2.1m

Stratigraphy: Topsoil of 250-400mm overlay natural for much of the trench but there were three palaeochannels at 39m, 135m and 168m from the N end of the trench where there were depths of between 700 and 900mm of topsoil and silt.

At the N end of the trench, natural comprised sand which was yellow in the drier areas and leached grey where there were drainage issues. At the higher S end, natural was gravel.

Feature	GPS
Water pipe running SE	S end 379892, 814801
Telephone cable NW/SE	379896, 814786
Drain SE/NW	379897, 814779
Drain SW/NE	379904,814742
Drain SE/NW	379906, 814729
Drain SW/NE	379922, 814646



**Illus 4 Trench 1, looking N**

### Trench 2

GPS W end: 379926, 814610 E end: 380048, 814648

Orientation: E/W Length: 127m Width: 2.1m

Stratigraphy: Topsoil of 400mm overlay stony gravel natural, deepening to 750mm in a N/S gully between 23 and 32m from W end of trench.

Feature	GPS
Drain SW/NE	380047, 814647
Drain N/S	380007, 814635
Drain NE/SW	380004, 814634
Stone drain ENE/WSW	379979, 814626

### Trench 3

GPS N end: 379914, 814826 S end: 379951, 814623

Orientation: N/S Length: 205m Width: 2.1m

Stratigraphy: Topsoil of 500mm at N end, deepening to 700mm between 65 and 108m from N end in two hollows with topsoil and silt overlying up to 100mm peat above natural sand. Further S there was a drier ridge with only 350-400mm topsoil over natural but again deepening at the top of the ridge to a hollow 1m in depth (also seen in Trench 2).

Feature	GPS
Asbestos water pipe to cistern in field to SW (see also Tr 4, 5). NE/SW	379943, 814667
Stone drain N/S	379928, 814747
Stone drain E/W	379927, 814754
Stone drain E/W	379922, 814780
Drain NW/SE	379919, 814795
Stone drain N/S	379917, 814808

### Trench 4

GPS N end: 379943, 814836 S end: 379978, 814638

Orientation: N/S Length: 201m Width: 2.1m

Stratigraphy: Topsoil depths ranged between 250mm and 500mm over sand and gravel natural.

Feature	GPS
Asbestos water pipe to cistern in field to SW (see also Tr 3, 5). NE/SW	379963, 814721
Stone drain NNE/SSW	379945, 814829
Stone drain E/W	379948, 814805
Water pipe running NNW/SSE	379970, 814682
Stone drain N/S	379974, 814663

#### Trench 5

GPS N end: 379974, 814834 S end: 380007, 814647

Orientation: N/S Length: 190m Width: 2.1m

Stratigraphy: Topsoil depths ranged between 250-300mm for most of trench, deepening to 600mm for the N 5m of the trench. Sandy natural, changing to stony at ridge to S.

Feature	GPS
Stone drain NE/SW	379981, 814795
Stone drain NNE/SSW	379992, 814733
Asbestos water pipe to cistern in field to SW (see also Tr 3, 4). NE/SW	379984, 814776
Clay drain alongside water pipe	379984, 814776
Drain SE/NW	379985, 814769
Stone drain NE/SW	379995, 814713

#### Trench 6

GPS N end: 380010, 814820 S end: 380040, 814653

Orientation: N/S Length: 170m Width: 2.1m



Stratigraphy: Topsoil depths between 250 and 300mm. Ground rises in two gentle ridges towards S. Natural very stony. Modern plough marks visible over much of trench.

Feature	GPS
Drain E/W	380022, 814756
Drain E/W	380023, 814747
Drain NNE/SSW	380027, 814721

### Trench 7

GPS N end: 380038, 814766    S end: 380069, 814686

Orientation: N/S                      Length: 86m Width: 2.1m

Stratigraphy: Topsoil depths between 250 and 300mm. Ground rises in two gentle ridges towards S. Natural very stony.

Feature	GPS
Stone drain NE/SW	380065, 814694



**Illus 5 Trench 7, looking N**

## 6. Discussion

There was no evidence of prehistoric or medieval activity in the areas evaluated. The evidence suggests that prior to drainage in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>

century, this area would have consisted of pools and boggy patches with seasonal drainage streams into the Tuach Burn. While it is possible it was utilized for purposes such as gathering of wood or hunting and wildfowling, it would not have been attractive to settlement.

The large number of stone drains and more recent clay drains logged above illustrate the wet nature of the ground.



**Illus 6 Trench 7, Stone drain**

## 7. 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.

Photographs supplied to archive on CD

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<b>Photographic catalogue</b>	
<b>Digital frame no</b>	<b>Content</b>
1	General view looking N
2	General view looking W
3	General view looking NW
4	General view looking NE
5-7	Tr 1, looking N
8-11	Tr 2, looking E
12-14	Tr 7, looking N
15	Tr 7, Stone drain, looking N