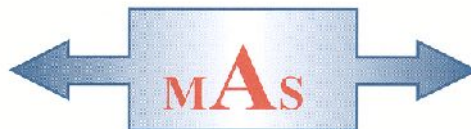


**MIDMILL 2014  
AREA 2  
KINTORE  
ABERDEENSHIRE**



**- Archaeological Evaluation -  
Carried out 18<sup>th</sup> September 2014  
by  
Murray Archaeological Services Ltd**



**Report No: MAS 2014-36  
by  
H K Murray & 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 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 and the evaluation of the present site, Area 2 was undertaken on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2014.

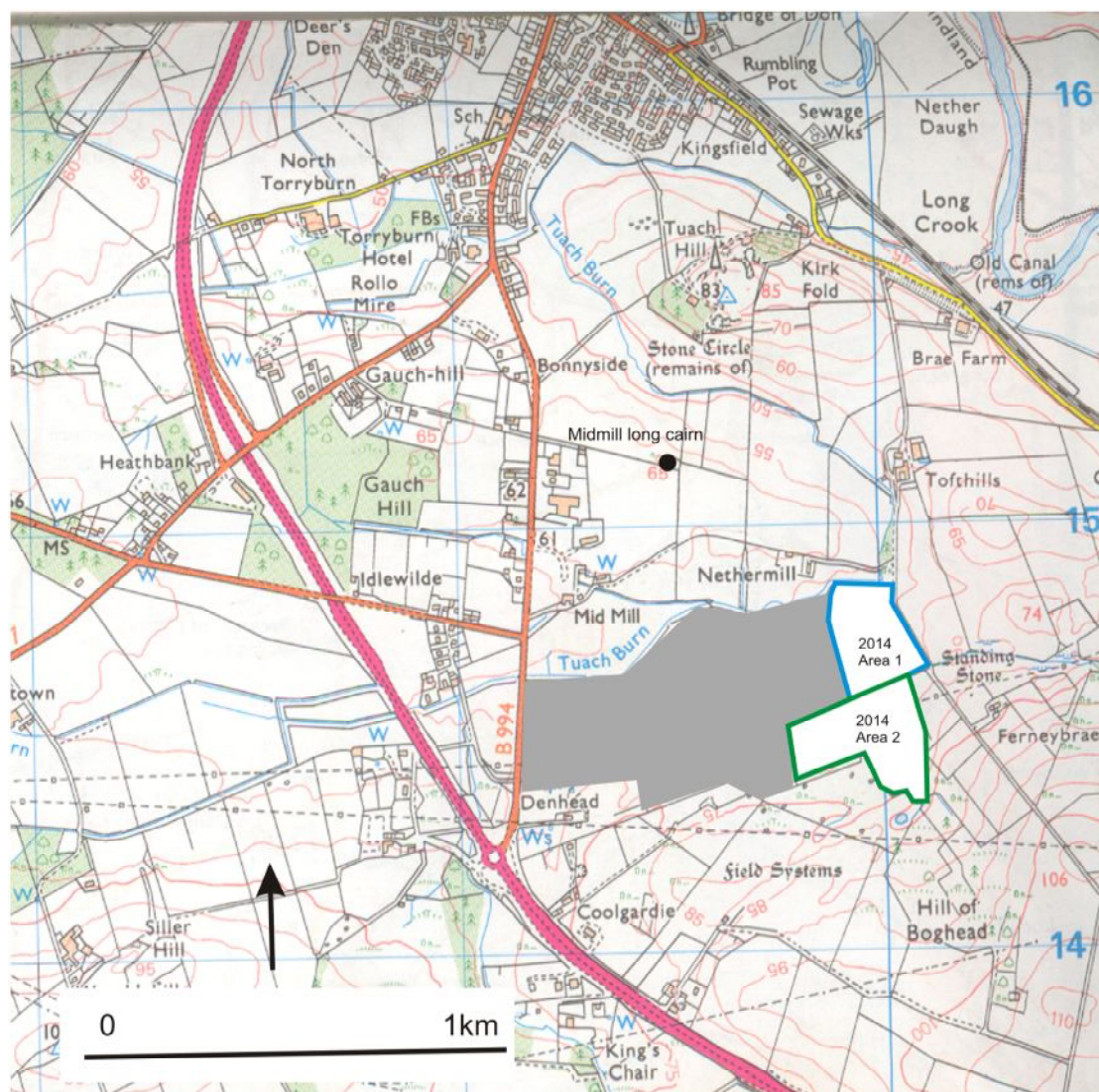
2. Desktop Survey

- 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. The following map search applies to both areas.

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- 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.

### 3. The Site

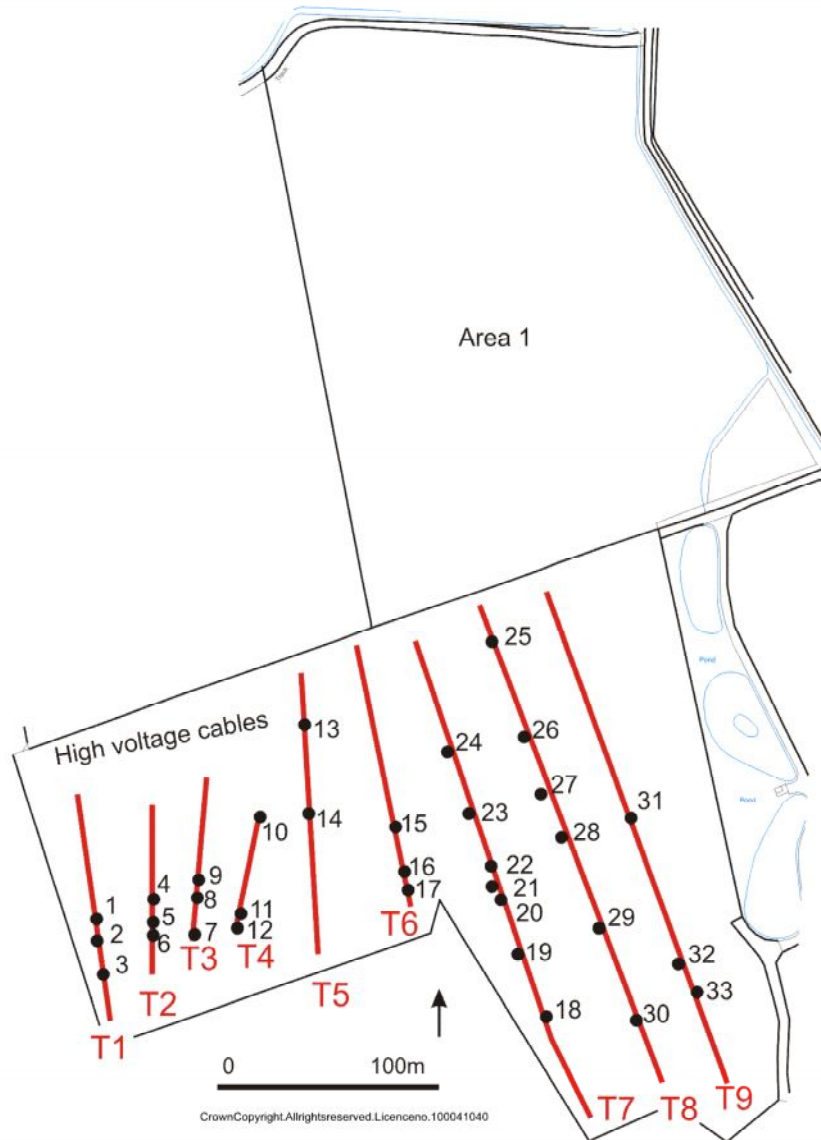
- 3.1 The proposed site comprises parts of two areas lying to the E of the existing Midmill Industrial Estate (Illus 2), to the E of the B994 and N of the A96. Area 2, which is the subject of the present report, lies to the S of Area 1, on higher ground further from the Tuach Burn. The higher ground on a ridge from c 75m OD, directly to the S of the present site, extends to the field systems and cairns that lie between Coolgardie and Hill of Boghead (Murray & Murray 2014. Report MAS 2014-30)  
NGR: NJ 7997 1454 (centre of Area 2). Parish: Kintore



**Illus 1** 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. Note the field systems to the S of Area 2.

- 3.2 Area 2 (c 5.24 hectares) lies on a slope down to the N.  
A small area of the W end of the field had been previously disturbed in an attempt to drain a natural spring which was flooding ground to the N.
- 3.3 At the time of the evaluation the field was in grass.
4. Methodology
- 4.1 Nine 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 2 Plan of trenches (red) evaluated in Area 2, 2014. Black dots indicate field drains. Reproduced from Ordnance Survey digital map data, © Crown Copyright, All rights reserved. 2014.**

## 5. The Results

As the only features exposed were late 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-century drains, these have been plotted on the plan (illus 2) but have not been tabulated below. There were no finds of any date.



**Illus 3 Trench 8, indicating very shallow topsoil.**

### Trench 1

GPS N end: 379782,814514 S end: 379796, 814410

Orientation: Approx N/S Length: 105m Width: 2.1m

Stratigraphy: Topsoil of 200-250mm in depth overlay natural for much of the trench with 300mm in a few shallow dips.

Natural comprised compact sand with stones and boulders, especially towards the higher S end of the trench.

*Features:* Drains 1-3 (illus 2)

### Trench 2

GPS N end: 379815, 814508 S end: 379815, 814430

Orientation: Approx N/S Length: 78m Width: 2.1m

Stratigraphy: Topsoil of 200-250mm overlay natural compact stony sand.

*Features:* Drains 4-6 (illus 2)

### Trench 3

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GPS NNE end: 379840, 814520    SSW end: 379834, 814446

Orientation:    NNE/SSW                      Length: 75m Width: 2.1m

Stratigraphy: Topsoil of between 280 and 300mm overlay stony natural sand.

*Features:* Drains 7-9 (illus 2)

#### Trench 4

GPS NNE end: 379864,814505    SSW end: 379853,814451

Orientation:    NNE/SSW                      Length: 55m Width: 2.1m

Stratigraphy: Topsoil of between 200 and 300mm overlay stony natural sand.

*Features:* Drains 10-12 (illus 2)

#### Trench 5

GPS N end: 379883,814569    S end: 379891,814439

Orientation:    N/S                      Length: 130m Width: 2.1m

*Features:* Drains 13-14 (illus 2)

#### Trench 6

GPS N end: 3799081,814580    S end: 379932,814461

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

Stratigraphy: Topsoil depths between 180 and 300mm over stony natural sand.

*Features:* Drains 15-17 (illus 2)

#### Trench 7

GPS NW end: 379934,814583    SE end: 380014,814365

Orientation:    NW/SE (with slight dog-leg)                      Length: 232m Width: 2.1m

Stratigraphy: Topsoil depths between 150 and 300mm over stony natural sand.

*Features:* Drains 18-24 (illus 2)

#### Trench 8

GPS NW end: 379963,814599    SE end: 380047,814381

Orientation:    NW/SE                      Length: 233m Width: 2.1m

Stratigraphy: Topsoil depths between 150 and 300mm over stony natural sand.

*Features:* Drains 25-30 (illus 2)

### Trench 9

GPS NW end: 379994,814605 SE end: 380075,814381

Orientation: NW/SE Length: 237m Width: 2.1m

Stratigraphy: Topsoil depths between 150 and 300mm over stony natural sand.

*Features:* Drains 31-33 (illus 2)

## 6. Discussion

There was no evidence of prehistoric or medieval activity in the areas evaluated. The soils were exceptionally shallow which might argue that there would have been greater loss of features; however the total lack of any artefacts (even modern china etc) suggests there was a genuine lack or very low level of land use in the prehistoric period.

It can be argued that, prior to cultivation and drainage in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, this area might have been rough ground not dissimilar to the slightly higher ground to the S.

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



**Illus 4 Trench 8, looking S to higher ground to the S**



## 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

<b>Photographic catalogue</b>	
<b>Digital frame no</b>	<b>Content</b>
1-2	General views looking S down towards Tuach Burn with Tuach Hill in the background.
3-4	Trench 8 S end showing the very shallow topsoil
5-6	Trench 8, looking S to higher ground to the S