

**PORTSTOWN
INVERURIE
ABERDEENSHIRE**

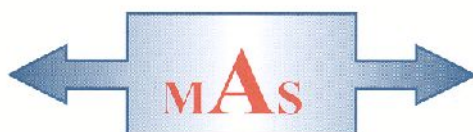


Archaeological Evaluation

Carried out 26th October – 10th November 2015

by

Murray Archaeological Services Ltd



Report No: MAS 2015-35

by

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-Archaeological Evaluation -

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1. Background
 - 1.1 An application for planning permission at Portstown, Inverurie, for a mixed development in two phases by Malcolm Allan Housebuilders Ltd was approved subject to archaeological conditions. Phase 1 [APP/2006/0866] is for a development of 163 houses over an area of 8.73 hectares and Phase 2 [APP/2008/4145] is for a development of 253 houses and 4 commercial units over an area of 15.38 hectares
 - 1.2 The archaeological condition was applied in the context of planning legislation (PAN 2/2011, SPP, SHEP), which states that it is necessary for developers to arrange for archaeological work to take place prior to development, in appropriate circumstances.
 - 1.3 In accordance with a written scheme of investigation, the conditions required that no development should take place before the implementation of a 7% -10% archaeological evaluation of those areas that are due to be developed.
 - 1.4 Murray Archaeological Services Ltd was commissioned by Malcolm Allan Housebuilders Ltd to undertake the work.
 - 1.5 The evaluation was undertaken between 26th October and 10th November 2015.

2. The Site

- 2.1 The evaluation area lay between the B9170 and the B9100, to the NE of Inverurie. The ground is bordered on the W and S by the Lochter Burn, and at the SE by the River Urie after its confluence with the burn. A small unnamed burn (formerly a mill lade) runs S from the farmhouse, dividing the ground, Fields 1-4 being to the N side of it, Fields 5-8 to the S. A trackway runs between Fields 1- 2 and 3- 4, from the bridge over the Lochter Burn towards Balhalgardy up to the Portstown farm steading. The old line of the Inverurie and Oldmeldrum Railway (which was opened in 1856 and closed to regular passenger traffic 1931, and fully closed in 1966) runs across the W side of Fields 1 and 2.



Illus 1 Looking N/NE from SE corner of Field 4, towards Fields 1-3. This shows the high ground of the E end of Field 1 and the N ends of Fields 2 and 3

The highest ground (illus 1), at around 80m OD, is at the N end of Field 1 and the N end of Fields 2 and 3 and part of the N of Field 4, sloping to c 55m OD at the Lochter Burn and the river Urie. The NE and E of Fields 6 and 8 slope down to the burn and river from c. 70m OD beside the B9170 road. To the E of the road this ridge went up to c. 90-100m OD and it was on this ridge that earlier interventions (para 4.3 below) have revealed prehistoric settlement.

The total area was 24.11 hectares.

The area that could be evaluated was limited by a number of factors such as an overhead cables, fences, and low ground beside the burn and river.

Parish: Keithhall and Kinkell

3 Methodology

- 3.1 The cultivated topsoil was removed by 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.

4. Desktop survey

4.1 Map evidence

4.1a Roy Roy's Military map 1747-55

Roy's map shows a small settlement named Portstown, with rig and furrow cultivation surrounding it.



Illus 2 Roy's Military map. Detail. www.nls.ac.uk

4.1b 1st OS map, Aberdeen Sheet XLV.16 (Keith Hall and Kinkell) 1867 (pub 1870) and LIV.4 (Kinkell) 1867 (pub 1869)

The 1867 map shows the Improvement farmhouse and steading at Portstown and the field layout as it survives. A mill lade is shown running to the Lochter Burn past the W

side of the steading; this remains as a running watercourse. Note the very twisty course of the Lochter Burn. The present line of the burn has been straightened (pers. comm. W. Cassie, farmer). This appears to have been undertaken between 1981, when aerial

photographs (AAS/81/1/R1/14-17 accessed <https://canmore.org.uk/site/149753/portstown>)

show its earlier line, and 2002 when the OS map (1:2500 Explorer 421) shows the present straight line. This straightening may account for modern infill in deep dips at the S end of some trenches (eg Trench 35).

Note also the mill and quarry in the SW corner of evaluation field 1. This area had been filled in with rocks (pers. comm. W. Cassie, farmer) and was not evaluated.



Illus 3 1st OS map, Aberdeen Sheet XLV.16 (Keith Hall and Kinkell) and LIV.4 (Kinkell)

www.nls.ac.uk

4.1c 2nd OS map Aberdeenshire 054.05 1899 (pub 1900) and 045.16 1899 (pub 1900)

The 1899 map shows little change.



Illus 4 2nd OS map Aberdeenshire 054.05 1899 (pub 1900) and 045.16 1899 (pub 1900)

4.2 Recorded sites on evaluation/in immediate area

Site	SMR	Detail	Northing, easting	NMRS No	Evaluation
Mill of Portstown	NJ72SE0254	Site of a farmstead depicted on the OS 1 st edition 1867 Roofless by 1888.	376784, 823801	NJ72SE237	In SW corner of Field 1. Not trenched.
Mill of Portstown	NJ72SE0255	Site of quarry 1867, disused by 1888. It has since been mostly infilled and the site returned to agriculture.	376831, 823797	NJ72SE23	In SW corner of Field 1. Not trenched
Portstown		Macehead. Marischal Museum ABDUA: 16225	3773, 8234	NJ72SE303	No detailed findspot. Portstown ground lies on both sides of B9170
Portstown	NJ72SE0112	Longhouse. Visible on 1981 air photos.	37706,32331	NJ72SE172	Note this is on opposite side of the Lochter Burn from present evaluation and that these were taken before the burn was straightened

Portstown Alternative name/s: River Urie	NJ72SE0135	Cropmark of a series of ring ditches, a small enclosure and pits, probably represent an unenclosed settlement. Overlain by rig and furrow and modern drainage also visible as cropmark.	376988, 823153	NJ72SE130	On opposite side of Lochter Burn from present site.
Shadylea	NJ72SE008	Prehistoric burial cairn, now removed.	377597, 823583	NJ72SE8	Both cairns at Shady Lea are on opposite side of B9170 on higher ground
Shadylea	NJ72SE007	Prehistoric burial cairn, now removed.	377537,823780	NJ72SE7	On opposite side of B9170 on higher ground
Portstown	NJ72SE0265	Remains of rig and furrow cultivation c.240m E of the farm steading ,	377589, 823410	NJ72SE205	On the other side of the B9170

4.3 Recent archaeological investigations in immediate area

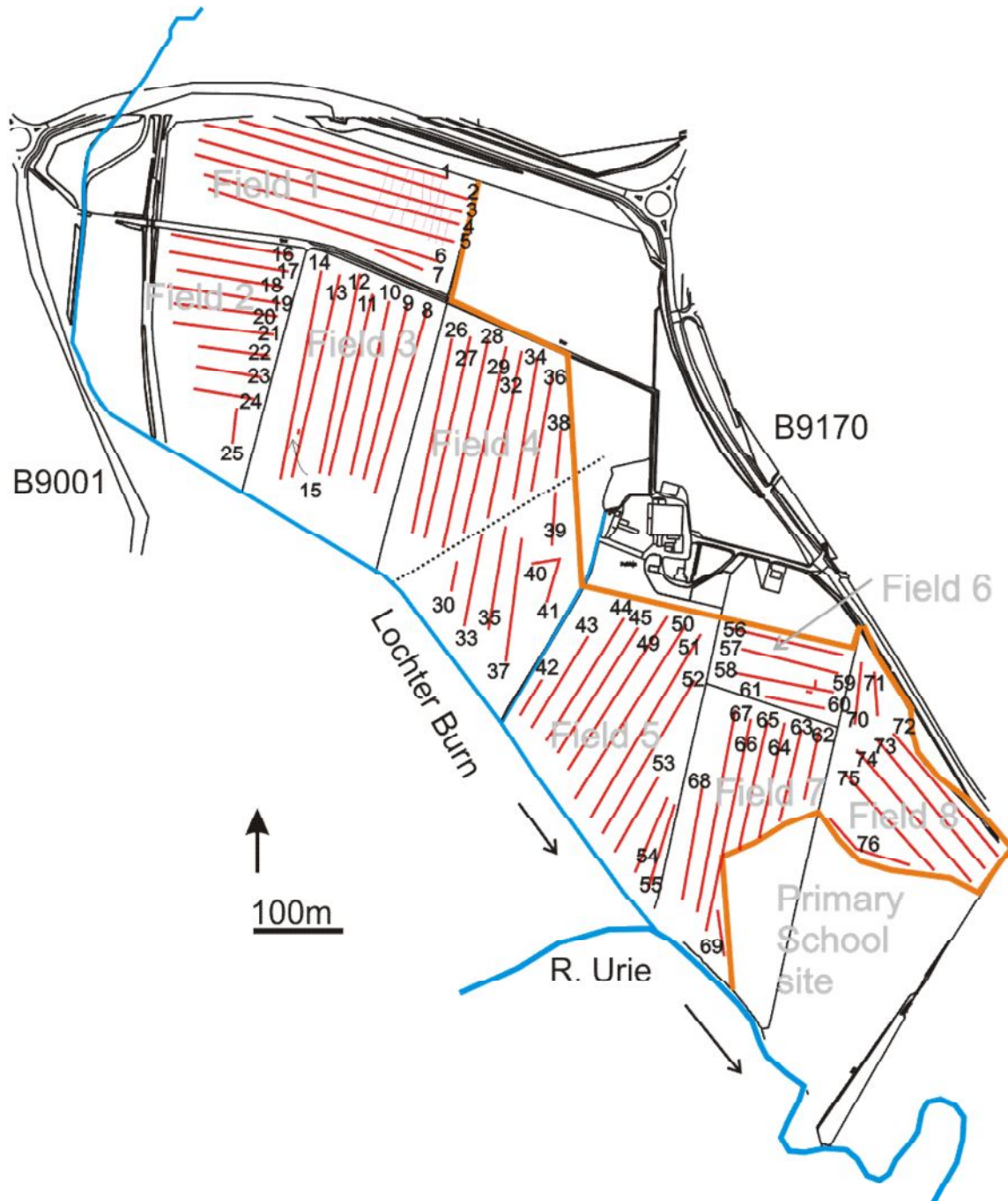
In 2005, in advance of the Osprey Village housing development, to the SE of the current site, a ring-ditch dated to the later prehistoric period was recorded with two further undated ditches in close proximity (Roy 2005).

In late 2013 and early 2014, field evaluation by Cameron Archaeology of the housing developments on the E side of the B9170 revealed a series of pits, post holes and circular ditch remains leading to further archaeological excavations (Cameron 2014).

In March and April 2014 and in March 2015, Headland Archaeology conducted excavations at Boynds Farm and Portstown, directly E of the current site, recorded extensive remains of prehistoric settlement with pits, post holes, roundhouses and a possible souterrain. Evidence for metal working and other domestic activities was also recovered (Dalland and Cox 2014 and Ginnever 2015).

5 Results of the Evaluation

Seventy two evaluation trenches were excavated in total. (Note nos 31, 46-48 were not used). For ease of reference the trenches are described by field.



Illus 5 Plan showing evaluation trenches (red). The site boundary is in orange. OS map reproduced Crown Copyright. License 100041040

Field 1

Trenches 1-7 were in Field 1 which was in grass at the time of the evaluation. The old railway line runs across the E end of the field. No trenches were placed on the low ground between the railway and the burn.

The E end of the field forms a stony hill at 80m, sloping down to the W to the Lochter Burn. The slope became steep some 270m from the E end of the trenches, with sandier deposits on the lowest part of the slope to c. 60m OD.

The evaluation showed some traces of rig and furrow cultivation running NE/SW in trenches 1-5, on the top of the hill but no other features were evident apart from an area of animal burrows (16) and a stone drain along the E end of the field (15, 26, 37, 46).

Trench 1

GPS NW end: 376852, 823899

SE end: 377087,823832

Orientation: NW/SE Length: 244 m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: 250-300mm



Illus 6 Field 1, Trench 1. Rods indicate furrows of rig and furrow

Stratigraphy: Topsoil over very rocky gravel at E, sandier to W.

Features

Context No	Easting	Northing	Comment
1	377045	823845	Furrow of rig and furrow
2	377052	823843	Furrow of rig and furrow

3	377058	823841	Furrow of rig and furrow
4	377074	823836	Furrow of rig and furrow
5	377081	823834	Furrow of rig and furrow

Trench 2

GPS NW end: 376812, 823893 SE end: 377109, 823809

Orientation: NW/SE Length: 308m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: SE: 300mm deepens to 500mm below slope to W

Stratigraphy: Topsoil over very rocky gravel at E, sandier to W.

Features

Context No	Easting	Northing	Comment
6	377003	823841	Furrow of rig and furrow
7	377017	823837	Furrow of rig and furrow
8	377028	823833	Furrow of rig and furrow
9	377039	823830	Furrow of rig and furrow
10	377045	823828	Furrow of rig and furrow
11	377058	823824	Furrow of rig and furrow
12	377066	823822	Furrow of rig and furrow
13	377074	823820	Furrow of rig and furrow
14	377082	823817	Furrow of rig and furrow
15	377104	823811	NE/SW stone drain

Trench 3

GPS NW end: 376807, 823876 SE end: 377104, 823795

Orientation: NW/SE Length: 307m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: 300mm at E to 400mm at W

Stratigraphy: As Trench 1

Features

Context No	Easting	Northing	Comment
16	376823	823873	From here to W end trench and towards T2, old (out of use) badger sett.
17	376972	823832	? test pit
18	377023	823818	Furrow of rig and furrow
19	377032	823815	Furrow of rig and furrow
20	377044	823812	Furrow of rig and furrow

21	377060	823808	Furrow of rig and furrow
22	377067	823806	Furrow of rig and furrow
23	377075	823803	Furrow of rig and furrow
24	377083	823801	Furrow of rig and furrow
25	377090	823799	Furrow of rig and furrow
26	377101	823796	NE/SW stone drain

Trench 4

GPS NW end: 376804, 823860 SE end: 377102, 823780

Orientation: NW/SE Length: 308m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: 300mm at E to 400mm at W

Stratigraphy: As Trench 1

Features

Context No	Easting	Northing	Comment
27	377010	823806	Furrow of rig and furrow
28	377026	823801	Furrow of rig and furrow
29	377032	823800	Furrow of rig and furrow
30	377037	823798	Furrow of rig and furrow
31	377053	823794	Furrow of rig and furrow
32	377060	823792	Furrow of rig and furrow
33	377068	823790	Furrow of rig and furrow
34	377076	823788	Furrow of rig and furrow
35	377084	823786	Furrow of rig and furrow
36	377091	823784	Furrow of rig and furrow
37	377097	823782	NE/SW stone drain

Trench 5

GPS NW end: 376812, 823839 SE end: 377095, 823762

Orientation: NW/SE Length: 293m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: 300mm at E to 400mm at W

Stratigraphy: As Trench 1

Features

Context No	Easting	Northing	Comment
38	377006	823788	Furrow of rig and furrow
39	377018	823785	Furrow of rig and furrow

40	377030	823781	Furrow of rig and furrow
41	377044	823778	Furrow of rig and furrow
42	377058	823773	Furrow of rig and furrow
43	377066	823771	Furrow of rig and furrow
44	377074	823768	Furrow of rig and furrow
45	377081	823766	Furrow of rig and furrow
46	377091	823763	NE/SW stone drain

Trench 6

GPS NW end: 376816, 823822 SE end: 377077, 823739

Orientation: NW/SE Length: 272m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: 250-300mm

Stratigraphy: As Trench 1

Features None

Trench 7

GPS NW end: 377002, 823754 SE end: 377060, 823730

Orientation: NW/SE Length: 61m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: 250-300mm

Stratigraphy: As Trench 1

Features None

Field 2

Trenches 16-25 were in Field 2 which was in grass at the time of the evaluation. As with Field 1, the old railway line runs across the E end of the field. No trenches were placed on the low ground between the railway and the burn.

The NE corner of the field forms part of the same stony hill as seen in Field 1 at 80m OD, sloping down in two terraces to the W and S to the Lochter Burn, which bends around the SW end of the field at c. 60m OD.

Trench 16

GPS NW end: 376775, 823771 SE end: 376916, 823748

Orientation: NW/SE Length: 142 m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: 250-600mm

Stratigraphy: Topsoil over stony gravel at top of hill, sandier on lower slope

Features None

Trench 17

GPS NW end: 376774, 823752 SE end: 376910, 823729

Orientation: NW/SE Length: 138m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: SE end 300mm, with topsoil up to 600mm in the dips and as little as 150-200mm over the ridges.

Stratigraphy: Topsoil over stony gravel at top of hill, sandier on lower slope

Features

Context No	Easting	Northing	Comment
63	376785	823750	Stone drain N/S

Trench18

GPS NW end: 376782, 823733 SE end: 376906, 823711

Orientation: NW/SE Length: 125m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: 250mm topsoil to SE, with topsoil up to 600mm in the dips and as little as 150-200mm over the ridges.

Stratigraphy: Topsoil over stony gravel at top of hill, sandier on lower slope

Features

Context No	Easting	Northing	Comment
64	376787	823732	Stone drain N/S

Trench 19

GPS NW end: 376770, 823714 SE end: 376901, 823693

Orientation: NW/SE Length: 132 m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: 150mm topsoil to SE, with up to 450mm in single dip.

Stratigraphy: Topsoil over stony gravel at top of hill, sandier on lower slope.

Features

Context No	Easting	Northing	Comment
65	376787	823711	Stone drain N/S

Trench 20

GPS NW end: 376779, 823694 SE end: 376898, 823678

Orientation: NW/SE Length: 120 m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: 200mm topsoil at SE, up to 550mm in dips between terraces.

Stratigraphy: Topsoil over stony gravel at top of hill, sandier on lower slope with rock and fractured stone on terraces. Clay at SE end towards burn.

Features

Context No	Easting	Northing	Comment
66	376794	823692	Stone drain N/S

Trench 21

GPS NW end: 376777, 823673 SE end: 376893, 823659

Orientation: NW/SE Length: 117 m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: 300-500mm

Stratigraphy: Topsoil over stony gravel at top of hill, sandier on lower slope with rock and fractured stone on terraces. Clay at SE end towards burn.

Features

Context No	Easting	Northing	Comment
67	376794	823671	Stone drain N/S

Trench 22

GPS NW end: 376804, 823645 SE end: 376888, 823635

Orientation: NW/SE Length: 84 m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: 300mm topsoil at SE, with up to 600mm in dip below ridge

Stratigraphy: Topsoil over stony ridge, SE 30m sloping to sandier near burn.

Features

Context No	Easting	Northing	Comment
68	376806	823645	Stone drain NE/SW
69	376829	823643	Stone drain NE/SW

Trench 23

GPS NW end: 376803, 823624 SE end: 376881, 823611

Orientation: NW/SE Length: 78m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: 300mm topsoil at SE, with up to 600mm in dip below ridge.

Stratigraphy: Topsoil over is stony ridge over SE 30m sloping to sandier near burn.

Features

Context No	Easting	Northing	Comment
70	376806	823624	Stone drain NE/SW
71	376815	823622	Clay drain NE/SW
72	376832	823620	Drain NE/SW
73	376849	823616	Drain running along trench from context 72

Trench 24

GPS NW end: 376800, 823599 SE end: 376874, 823588

Orientation: NW/SE Length: 75 m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: 350mm at SE end, deepens to 700mm topsoil in dip below ridge, then gradual slope to 400mm at NW end.

Stratigraphy: Topsoil over is stony ridge to SE sloping to sandier near burn.

Features

Context No	Easting	Northing	Comment
74	376805	823598	Clay drain N/S
75	376810	823597	Stone drain N/S

Trench 25

GPS NE end: 376850, 823579 SW end: 376845, 823535

Orientation: NE/SW Length: 45m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: 300mm at N end, deepening to 600mm in dip below upper ridge and then more steeply to 1.2m towards burn.

Stratigraphy: Topsoil over stony ridge to N sloping to sandier near burn. At base of the very deep topsoil at S end, there was a thin slightly darker peaty layer over the sand natural.

Features None

Field 3

Trenches 8-15 were in Field 3 which was in grass at the time of the evaluation.

The N end of the field forms part of the same stony hill at 80m OD as seen in Fields 1 and 2, sloping down in two terraces to the W and S to the Lochter Burn, which bends around the S end of the field. About halfway down the trenches there was a deep gully

with topsoil of up to 1m over greyish leached silt. Similar, almost peaty silt was seen at the S end of the longer trenches over wet grey clay towards the burn.

Two small fire pits of undetermined date were found in Trenches 11 and 13; these may relate to early activity on the site but there were no related artefacts.

Trench 8

GPS NE end: 377060, 823689 SW end: 377002, 823480

Orientation: NE/SW Length: 216 m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: NE: 250mm

SW: 300mm.

300mm over ridges with up to 1m in deep gully between 377023, 823564 and 377020, 823556.



Illus 7 Field 3, trench 8, looking S to deep gully between 377023, 823564 and 377020, 823556. Lochter Burn at end of grass field, flood plain between Burn and River Urie beyond.

Stratigraphy: At N end and on ridges topsoil over gravelly clay. In deep dip c. 1m undifferentiated topsoil over c 50mm greyish silt. S end: topsoil over dark grey silt lying on wet grey clay. The silt contained very small amounts of charcoal, although this may have been washed down slope.

Features

Context No	Easting	Northing	Comment
47	377003	823486	NW/SE clay drain
48	377004	823488	NW/SE clay drain
49	377004	823492	E/W stone drain
50	377005	823495	E/W stone drain
51	377006	823499	NE/SW stone drain

52	377014	823528	NNE/SSW drain cut along and across trench
53	377022	823556	S end of grey silt
54	377024	823565	N end grey silt

Trench 9

GPS NE end: 377041, 823696 SW end: 376990, 823495

Orientation: NE/SW Length: 206 m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: NE: 250mm. SW: 400mm. Dip at 377007, 823571 to 800mm.

Stratigraphy: As Trench 8. Natural very stony.

Features

Context No	Easting	Northing	Comment
55	376990	823495	Stone drain

Trench 10

GPS NE end: 377020, 823699 SW end: 376975, 823501

Orientation: NE/SW Length: 203m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: NE: 200mm. SW 300mm. Dip between 376992, 823581 and 376989, 823568 up to 800mm deep topsoil.

Stratigraphy: As Trench 8

Features None

Trench 11

GPS NE end: 377002, 823707 SW end: 376952, 823501

Orientation: NE/SW Length: 212 m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: NE: in localised dip c. 10m across: 800mm. Ridges in places as little as 150mm topsoil. Dip from 376972, 823592 to 376968, 823578: 800mm depth.

Another dip from 376962, 823550 to 376961, 823545 up to 500mm deep.

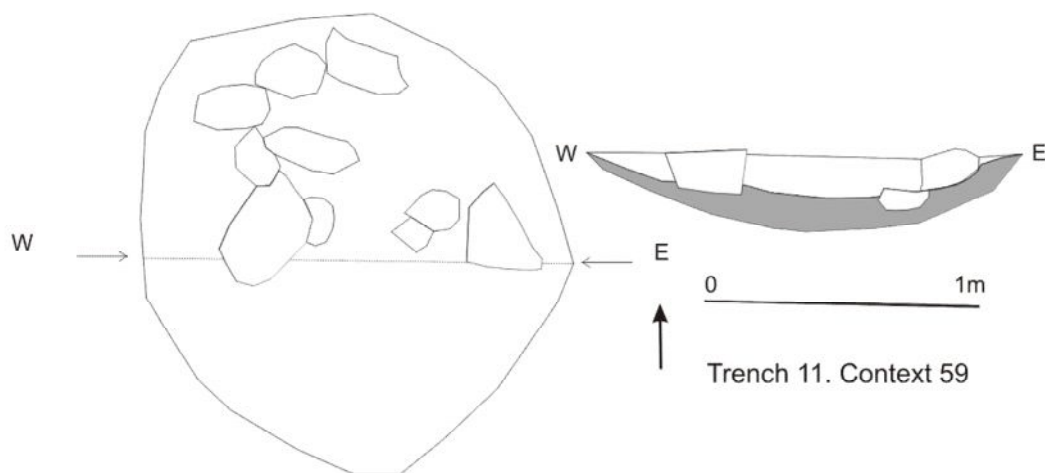
Stratigraphy: As Trench 8

Features

Context No	Easting	Northing	Comment
56	376953	823507	E/W stone drain
57	376955	823514	NW/SE stone drain
58	376958	823531	NW/SE stone drain

59 **	373679	823625	Firepit
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Context 59 was an irregular hollow 800mm N/S by 850mm E/W and 150mm deep, cut into natural. A thin layer of charcoal-rich silt at the base was sealed by an irregular spread of stones, one of which was heat-cracked. Above the stones, there was greyish silt, probably through bioturbation from the charcoal. The feature was 100% sampled (MAS 2015-35. Sample 2) and excavated. There were no associated finds.



Illus 8 Plan and section Context 59



Illus 9 Field 3. Trench 11, Context 59

Trench 12

GPS NE end: 376986, 823730 SW end: 376940, 823502

Orientation: NE/SW Length: 232 m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: 150-300mm topsoil over much of trench. Dip between 376957, 823601 and 376955, 823590 up to 650mm.

Stratigraphy: As Trench 8 but very stony ridges.

Features

Context No	Easting	Northing	Comment
60	376956	823593	S end of drain cut which ran 24m along trench
61	376950	823563	N end of drain cut

Trench 13

GPS NE end: 376964, 823728 SW end: 376911, 823498

Orientation: NE/SW Length: 237m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: NE: 250mm. Dip from 376941, 823636 to 376928, 823577 up to 700mm topsoil. Dip to S at 376916, 823524 up to 900mm.

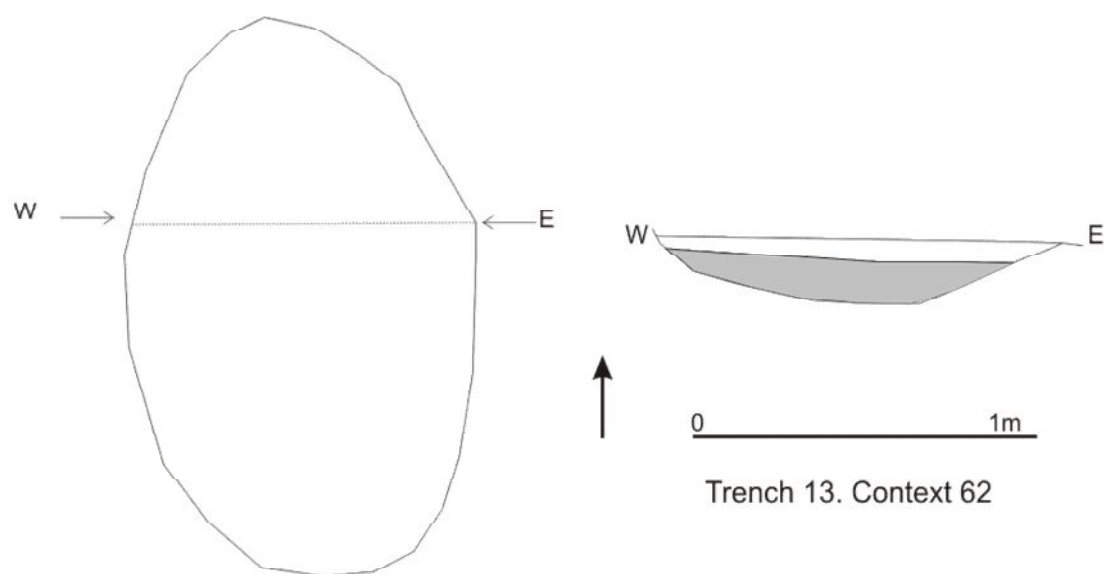
Stratigraphy: N end very rocky. S dip had topsoil over grey silt with rare charcoal flecks above natural. Feature 62 was c. 25m up slope to N, so the charcoal may be derived from/ washed down from it.

Features

Context No	Easting	Northing	Comment
62 **	376922	823550	Fire/ hearth

Context 62 was an irregular ovoid, 780mm N/S by 450mm E/W, with a slight hollowing into natural up to 70mm deep. The natural was heated red suggesting in situ fire.

Charcoal with maximum depth of 60mm. 100% sampled (MAS 2015-35. Sample 3) and excavated. No related finds. Trench 15 was excavated beside this area to see if any associated features were apparent.



Illus 10 Plan and section Context 62



Illus 11 Field 3, Trench 13, Context 62

Trench 14

GPS NE end: 376944, 823733 SW end: 376897, 823495

Orientation: NE/SW Length: 242m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: 300mm over rocky ridges. Dip at 376938, 823706 up to 900mm deep.

Stratigraphy: N end bedrock with natural dip.

Features None

Trench 15

GPS NE end: 376919, 823554 SW end: 376917, 823548

Orientation: NE/SW Length: 6.7m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: 450mm

Stratigraphy: As trenches 13 and 14.

Features None. Trench 15 was excavated to see if there were any features related to context 62 in trench 13.

Field 4

Trenches 26-41 were within Field 4, which was in grass at the time of the evaluation. Most of the field was a continuation of the slope of Field 3, from a high stony ridge at the NE end, sloping down towards the burn at the SW end. The deep dips between gravel ridges that were encountered in Field 3, extended across Field 4. At the SE corner of the field there was a noticeable hillock which proved to be a natural sandy mound with no evidence of earlier use.

Trench 26

GPS NE end: 377089, 823657 SW end: 377044, 823434

Orientation: NE/SW Length: 227m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: 250-300mm over N ridge, deepening to 800mm in a dip at 377064, 823544, sloping down to 1.2m in a S dip between 377066, 825524 and 377057, 823501.

Stratigraphy: Topsoil over natural. Darker silt at base of S dip.

Features

Context No	Easting	Northing	Comment
76	377053	823485	E/W clay drain

Trench 27

GPS NE end: 377111, 823658 SW end: 377058, 823431

Orientation: NE/SW Length: 233m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: 250mm at NE ridge, deepening to 800mm in the N dip at 377080, 823533 and 1m in the S dip at 377062, 823450.

Stratigraphy: As Trench 26

Features None

Trench 28

GPS NE end: 377130, 823657 SW end: 377077, 823420

Orientation: NE/SW Length: 243m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: 300mm at NE, deepening to 900mm in dip at 377098, 823525

Stratigraphy: As Trench 26

Features None

Trench 29

GPS NE end: 377150, 823649 SW end: 377102, 823436

Orientation: NE/SW Length: 219m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: 300mm at N ridge, deepening to 900mm into N dip at 377120, 823519 and in S dip to 1.3m at 377103, 823448.

Stratigraphy: As Trench 26. The lower slopes slope down to W as well as to S.

Features None

Trench 30

GPS NE end: 377096, 823410 SW end: 377087, 823372

Orientation: NE/SW Length: 40 m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: 1.2m

Stratigraphy: Trench 30 continued the line of Trench 29, S of electricity cables. It lay in deep deposits in the lower flood plain.

Features None

Trench 32 (Trench 31 number not used)

GPS NE end: 377166, 823643 SW end: 377127, 823449

Orientation: NE/SW Length: 198m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: 300mm on N ridge, deepening to 900mm in dip at 377136, 823500, then levelling to 350mm at S.

Stratigraphy: As Trench 26

Features None

Trench 33

GPS NE end: 377122, 823430 SW end: 37101, 823330

Orientation: NE/SW Length: 102m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: 350mm to N, deepening to 1.4m at 377111, 823383, with steep slope to ridge at S end of trench.

Stratigraphy: Trench 33 continued the line of Trench 32, S of electricity lines. The very deep dip near burn may be an earlier burn channel, possibly part of the 20th cent straightening of the Lochter Burn.

Features None

Trench 34

GPS NE end: 377185, 823636 SW end: 37156, 823471

Orientation: NE/SW Length: 168 m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: 280mm to N, deepening to 900mm at 377158, 823485 and levelling to 500mm by end of trench.

Stratigraphy: As Trench 26

Features None

Trench 35

GPS NE end: 377150, 823447 SW end: 377129, 823325

Orientation: NE/SW Length: 123 m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: 400mm at N end, deepening to 1.4m at 377143, 823418, rising slightly to 600mm and then at S end deepening to 1.7m.

Stratigraphy: Trench 35 continued the line of Trench 34, S of electricity lines. As Trench 33, the very deep dip near burn may be an earlier burn channel, possibly part of the 20th century straightening of the Lochter Burn. The dip in this trench had clear 20th century infill with rock and disturbed earth. A large sherd of early 20th-century earthenware was found near base (not retained).

Features None

Trench 36

GPS NE end: 377202, 823621 SW end: 377178, 823483

Orientation: NE/SW Length: 140m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: 300mm at N, deepening gradually to 600mm at S

Stratigraphy: As Trench 26

Features None

Trench 37

GPS NE end: 377167, 823432 SW end: 377148, 823292

Orientation: NE/SW Length: 141m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: 700mm at N end, deepening to 1m at 377165, 823421, then rising slightly before deepening to 1.1m at 377153, 823332.

Stratigraphy: As Trench 26. This trench lay along W edge of the hillock in SE corner of field.

Features None

Trench 38

GPS NE end: 377211, 823554 SW end: 377206, 823497

Orientation: NE/SW Length: 57m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: 300mm

Stratigraphy: As Trench 26. Trench 38 is on part of the upper stony part of the hill.

Features None

Trench 39

GPS N end: 377205, 823485 S end: 377199, 823420

Orientation: N/S Length: 65m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: 300mm at N, deepens to 900mm between 377204, 823478 and 377203, 823460, before rising to top of hillock at 300mm depth.

Stratigraphy: As Trench 26.

Features None

Trench 40

GPS E end: 377210, 823409 W end: 377175, 823404

Orientation: E/W Length: 35m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: 300-500mm.

Stratigraphy: Topsoil over sandy natural on top of hillock in SE corner of field.

Features None

Trench 41

GPS NE end: 377209,823408 SW end: 377194, 823360

Orientation: NE/SW Length: 50m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: 300-400mm

Stratigraphy: Topsoil over sandy natural on top of hillock in SE corner of field.

Features None

Field 5

Trenches 42-55 were in Field 5. At the time of survey the field was in grass. A small burn (former mill lade) ran between Fields 4 and 5 to join the Lochter Burn. As with Fields 3 and 4, Field 5 comprised a series of gravelly clay ridges sloping down to the burn, with intervening dips with greater depth of soil. In the dips there had been some formation of a thin grey sediment, with iron pan developing in places.

Trench 42

GPS NE end: 377190, 823278 SW end: 377162, 823321

Orientation: NE/SW Length: 54m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: 500mm on ridge at N end, with steep slope to S with 800mm depth of topsoil.

Stratigraphy: Topsoil over sandy natural to N, topsoil over sticky very wet clay to S (possibly the site of former mill pond (see illus 4).

Features None

Trench 43

GPS NE end: 377241, 823326 SW end: 377177, 823217

Orientation: NE/SW Length: 124m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: N end of trench for 8m in dip: 1m, rises to sandy ridge: 450mm, then wide gully up to 1.4m deep from 377218, 823286 to 377200, 823258 where it rises to another ridge : 300mm. Clay to S end of trench.

Stratigraphy: Topsoil over gritty sand on clay ridges. In dips up to 70mm grey/black silt over natural, wetter clay at S end.

Features

Context No	Easting	Northing	Comment
79	377226	823298	Old fence line
80	377205	823256	Cast iron water pipe in base of dip
81	377185	823232	Machine cut NW/SE c.2m wide

Trench 44

GPS NE end: 377280,823344 SW end: 377193, 823204

Orientation: NE/SW Length: 165m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: N end 700mm in dip to 377250, 823298, then rises to sandy ridge with 300-350mm topsoil, dips again towards burn at S end to 1.2m (water pipe in base).

Stratigraphy: As Trench 43.

Features

Context No	Easting	Northing	Comment
82	377232	823268	Cast iron water pipe in base of dip

Finds

Find No	Easting	Northing	Comment
1	377264	823319	Handle redware medieval/ post-medieval pottery. In grey silt in dip at base of subsoil
2	377236	823272	Possible hone. On sand natural

Trench 45

GPS NE end: 377298, 823335 SW end: 377206, 823190

Orientation: NE/SW Length: 171m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: N end 800mm in dip to 377268, 823289, then rising to a ridge: 300-350mm. Another dip from 377246, 823256 with topsoil to 1m, rising to a shallow ridge before the S end of trench which fell away into a localised hollow to 900mm depth.

Stratigraphy: As Trench 43. Clay natural at S end.

Features

Context No	Easting	Northing	Comment
84	377258	823273	Cast iron water pipe in base of dip

85	377261	823278	Old fence line
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Trench Nos 46-48 not used

Trench 49

GPS NE end: 377331, 823349 SW end: 377219, 823173

Orientation: NE/SW Length: 208m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: N end 600mm topsoil in wider, shallower dip than in Trench 45, rises to ridge with 300-400mm topsoil over much of trench in gentle slope, until deepens at 377229, 823189 into dip at S end with topsoil 900mm.

Stratigraphy: As Trench 43

Features

Context No	Easting	Northing	Comment
86	377230	823188	E/W clay drain
87	377259	823234	Drain cut
88	377272	823255	Modern disturbance filled with rocks
89	377280	823269	Old fence line
90	377285	823277	Cast iron water pipe

Trench 50

GPS NE end: 377350, 823339 SW end: 377227, 823141

Orientation: NE/SW Length: 233m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: N end as Trench 49, long wide dip to 900mm depth, rising to ridge from 377313, 823280 with 300mm topsoil. Deepens from 377268, 823208 to 800mm, then rises to stony ridge until S end where it dips away to burn with 500mm topsoil.

Stratigraphy: As Trench 43

Features

Context No	Easting	Northing	Comment
92	377256	823188	E/W clay drain
93	377293	823248	E/W stone drain
94	377299	823258	Old fence line
95	377314	823282	Cast iron water pipe
96	377323	823295	E/W stone drain along base of dip

Trench 51

GPS NE end: 377366, 823327 SW end: 377241, 823120

Orientation: NE/SW Length: 242 m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: Similar to Trench 50 with long slow dip at N end: 400-850mm deep, rising to ridge from 377329, 823256 to 377298, 823215 with 300mm topsoil. Then wide dip to 1m depth, rising again to a ridge with 300mm topsoil with dip up to 1m deep, rising slightly at end of trench.

Stratigraphy: As Trench 43

Features

Context No	Easting	Northing	Comment
97	377265	823160	E/W stone drain
98	377281	823186	E/W clay drain
99	377308	823230	E/W stone drain
100	377310	823234	ENE/WSW stone drain- links to 99
101	377312	823238	ENE/WSW stone drain
102	377316	823246	NNE/SSW drain along trench c 4m
103	377318	823247	Old fence line
104	377341	823287	Cast iron water pipe

Trench 52

GPS NE end: 377358, 823276 SW end: 377256, 823099

Orientation: NE/SW Length: 204 m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: Similar to Trenches 50 and 51 with N dip with 800mm topsoil, rising to ridge from 377341, 823246 with 300-400mm topsoil. Dip from 377315, 823202 to 1m topsoil. A sherd of 19th/20th-century white china was observed in the base of the topsoil. A narrow ridge from 377295, 823167 with 300-400mm topsoil, extended to 377268, 823121 where it deepened to 700mm topsoil over thick grey/blue clay; binder twine was observed in the base fill of this dip.

Stratigraphy: As Trench 43, but with apparent modern infill at S end.

Features

Context No	Easting	Northing	Comment
105	377306	823186	E/W clay drain
106	377324	823217	NW/SE drain
107	377337	823328	N/S drain along trench for 6m

Trench 53

GPS NE end: 377321, 823170 SW end: 377269, 823080

Orientation: NE/SW Length: 104 m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: N end in same as central dip observed in Trench 52 with topsoil to 800mm. Rises to ridge from 377314, 823158 with topsoil of 300-400mm, then gentle slope from 377301, 823136 to 377281, 823101 with depths to 1m.

Stratigraphy: As Trench 43, but with apparent modern infill at S end.

Features None

Trench 54

GPS NE end: 377330, 823147 SW end: 377291, 823055

Orientation: NE/SW Length: 100m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: N end on ridge with depth of 300mm, deepening into dip at S end to 600-900mm.

Stratigraphy: As Trench 43, but with apparent modern infill at S end. S end very wet clay with water ingress.

Features

Context No	Easting	Northing	Comment
108	377291	823055	Stony infill
109	377292	823060	NW/SE clay drain
110 **	377311	823107	Burnt patch
111 **	377327	823140	Clay burnt hard in patch

Context 110 Burnt patch 400mm N/S x 650mm E/W. Some (rare) wood charcoal in 15mm spread below 500mm topsoil. No artefacts and no formalised hollow or stones. May be modern.

Context 111. Natural clay burnt hard in patch 700mm x 500mm, below 400mm topsoil. No associated charcoal. No artefacts. May be modern.



Illus 12 Field 5, Trench 54, Context 111

Trench 55

GPS NE end: 377337, 823138 SW end: 377306, 823037

Orientation: NE/SW Length: 104 m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: As Trench 54, N end on ridge with depth of 350mm, deepening into dip at S end to 900mm.

Stratigraphy: As Trench 43. S end very wet clay with water ingress.

Features None

Field 6

Trenches 56-61 were within Field 6. At the time of the evaluation it was in grass. The N and E end of the field was fairly level, with dip to W. A small Late Neolithic/Bronze Age pit was found in Trench 58. As a result, Trenches 59 and 60 were dug on either side of it, but no related features were revealed.

Trench 56

GPS NW end: 377398, 823332 SE end: 377524, 823303

Orientation: NW/SE Length: 129m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: 400mm of topsoil, deepening to 700mm in W slope.

Stratigraphy: Topsoil over stony clay natural

Features

Context No	Easting	Northing	Comment
112	377419	823328	NE/SW clay drain
113	377498	823308	Cast iron water pipe

Trench 57

GPS NW end: 377410, 823308 SE end: 377521, 823281

Orientation: NW/SE Length: 114m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: 500-600mm topsoil deepening to 700mm below break of slope.

Stratigraphy: Topsoil over stony clay natural.

Features

Context No	Easting	Northing	Comment
114	377440	823301	Recent disturbance, possibly accessing water pipe
115	377511	823284	N/S stone drain

Trench 58

GPS NW end: 377402, 823282 SE end: 377516, 823261

Orientation: NW/SE Length: 115m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: E end 300mm topsoil, deepening to 900mm between 377462, 823272 and 377420, 823279, then rising to stony ridge at W.

Stratigraphy: Topsoil over stony clay natural

Features

Context No	Easting	Northing	Comment
116 **	377490	823266	Prehistoric pit
117	377476	823268	E end of ENE/WSW drain cut 117-118
118	377467	823271	W end of ENE/WSW drain cut 117-118

Context 116

Steep-sided pit with layer of stones over charcoal fill. Dimensions: 1.1m N/S x 950mm

E/W. Maximum depth 400mm. Sealed by 350mm cultivated topsoil.

Sub-contexts:

116/1 Topsoil mixed with some charcoal (rare), over and around stones.

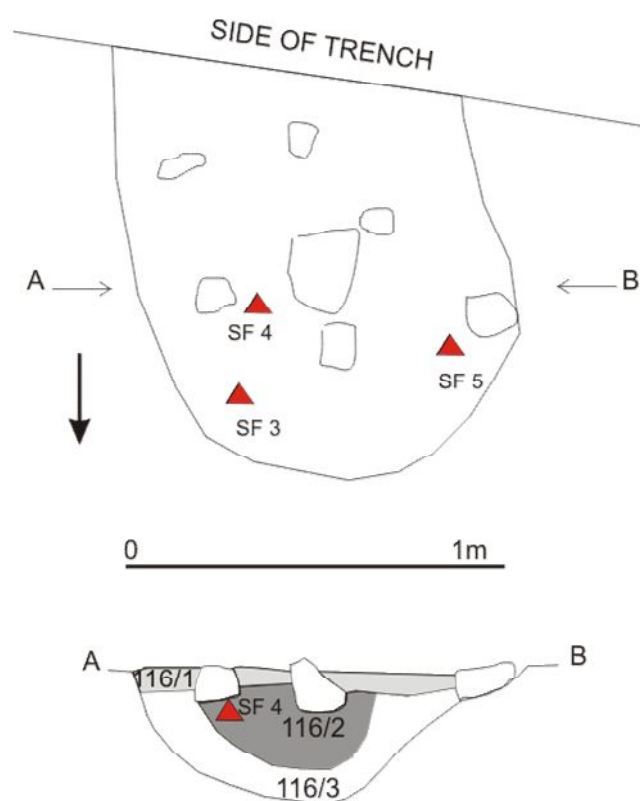
Stones in top of 116/2. One was quartzite but this is probably incidental as a fairly high percentage of natural stones on the site were quartzite. Flint pebble SF 3 in 116/1 among stones.

116/2 Very charcoal-rich main fill which was 100% sampled. Some of wood appeared to have been quite large pieces and may have been placed in while hot, or burnt in pit as there was some fire-reddening of sand. (MAS 2015-35. Sample 1= 116/2).

SF 4 was on edge of this layer. SF 5 was in it.

116/3 Grey silty sand with frequent charcoal but not as concentrated as in 116/2.

Find No	Easting	Northing	Comment
3	377490	823266	Flint pebble. In 116/1
4	377490	823266	Small sherd (50 x30mm. 18mm thick) thick-walled prehistoric pottery. In 116/2
5	377490	823266	Flint flake. In 116/2



Illus 13 Plan and section Context 116



Illus 14 Field 6, Trench 58, pit Context 116, sectioned.



Illus 15 Field 6, Trench 58, pit Context 116, fully excavated

Trench 59

GPS NE end: 377493, 823274 SW end: 377492, 823267

Orientation: NE/SW Length: 7 m Width: 4m

Depth above natural: 400-500mm

Stratigraphy: Topsoil over sand with c. 3m diameter area of modern stone infill.

Features None.

Trench 60

GPS NW end: 377482, 823263 SE end: 377491, 823262

Orientation: NW/SE Length: 9m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: 500mm

Stratigraphy: Topsoil over natural.

Features None

Trench 61

GPS NW end: 377436, 823255 SE end: 377507, 823242

Orientation: NW/SE Length: 72m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: E end 600mm, deepening to W to 800mm.

Stratigraphy: As Trench 57

Features None

Field 7

Trenches 62-69 were in Field 7. At the time of the evaluation this was in grass. The SE part of the field is part of the new Primary School site and was not part of the present evaluation. Field 7 was similar to Field 5, sloping down towards the Lochter Burn, with several sandy ridges running roughly NW/SE across the hillside. A prominent sandy hillock to the SE (which extends into the Primary School site) was cut by the S ends of Trenches 62-66.

Trench 62

GPS NE end: 377498, 823218 SW end: 377481, 823140

Orientation: NE/SW Length: 80 m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: N end 1.2m deep in dip, rises to 300mm on ridge, then at S end of trench 800mm topsoil at base of slope up to hillock.

Stratigraphy: Topsoil over clean yellow sandy clay

Features None

Trench 63

GPS NE end: 377477, 823221 SW end: 377453, 823113

Orientation: NE/SW Length: 110m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: 1.2m in dip at N end, rises to ridge, then another dip at 377458, 823136 with 900mm topsoil, then rises gently to sandy hillock.

Stratigraphy: Topsoil over sand in hillock. In dips topsoil over thin grey/black silt (c. 100mm) on sandy clay with some stones.

Features None

Trench 64

GPS NE end: 377459, 823229 SW end: 377430, 823092

Orientation: NE/SW Length: 139m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: N: 450mm, deepens to 900mm in dip at 377447, 823174. Rises to sandy ridge from 377441, 823146. Depth at S on hillock : 300mm.

Stratigraphy: As Trench 63

Features

Context No	Easting	Northing	Comment
119	377443	823154	E/W stone drain
120	377456	823217	NNE/SSW drain along N end of trench for c. 15m

Trench 65

GPS NE end: 377441, 823232 SW end: 377409, 823087

Orientation: NE/SW Length: 148m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: N end: 600mm topsoil over natural, deepens to 900mm into dip from 377437, 823217 to 377423, 823153, then rising steeply on sandy hillock with increasingly shallow topsoil to 300mm.

Stratigraphy: As Trench 63. Very sticky clay in base of dip.

Features

Context No	Easting	Northing	Comment
121	377432	823194	ENE/WSW stone drain

Trench 66

GPS NE end: 377421, 823233 SW end: 377370, 822992

Orientation: NE/SW Length: 246 m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: N end similar to Trench 65 with topsoil 750mm deep. Very sharp localised hollow/dip to 1.9m deep between 377416, 823208 and 377414, 823200; comprising topsoil over 0.2m grey sticky clay with some iron pan formation. Then long gradual slope with 500-600mm of topsoil to base of the sandy hillock, deepening to 1m at the base of the slope, then 300mm topsoil over the ridge.

Stratigraphy: As Trench 63

Features

Context No	Easting	Northing	Comment
122	377376	823022	NW/SE drain
123	377385	823067	E/W stone drain with NE/SW drain off it
124	377389	823088	Drain
125	377407	823166	E/W stone drain

Trench 67

GPS NE end: 377403, 823241 SW end: 377361, 823013

Orientation: NE/SW Length: 232m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: N end 700mm, shallow over sandy hillock with 300mm topsoil.

Stratigraphy: As Trench 63

Features

Context No	Easting	Northing	Comment
126	377368	823050	NW/SE drain
127	377373	823077	NW/SE drain
128	377377	823100	E/W drain
129	377380	823129	E/W drain
131	377394	823192	Stone drain along W side of trench for 27m to 377390, 823166
132	377398	823814	NW/SE drain
133	377402	823288	NW/SE drain

Trench 68

GPS NE end: 377367, 823155 SW end: 377344, 823026

Orientation: NE/SW Length: 130m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: N end 1.2m deep in dip which extended across much of Field 5.

Rises to ridge with only 300mm topsoil, then last 3m of trench slopes steeply to 700mm depth of topsoil towards river.

Stratigraphy: As Trench 63. The S end of this trench is near the confluence of the Lochter Burn and river Urie, so is liable to have had active erosion and deposition.

Features

Context No	Easting	Northing	Comment
134	377346	823041	NW/SE drain
135	377351	823071	NW/SE drain
136	377356	823096	ENE/WSW stone drain
137	377362	823131	NW/SE drain

Trench 69

GPS N end: 377385, 823018 S end: 377391, 822963

Orientation: N/S Length: 55m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: 300-400mm with dip to 600mm.

Stratigraphy: Topsoil over natural- quite gravelly at S end.

Features None

Field 8

Trenches 70-76 were in Field 8. At the time of the evaluation this was in grass. The SW part of the field is part of the new Primary School site and was not. part of the present evaluation. The road, which lies at some height above the field, formed the E boundary, with the field sloping away to the SW. Much water appears to drain below the road from the far higher ground to the E of the road; a number of drains were found. Most were following the lines of palaeochannels running NE/SW across trenches 72-75. A visible dip appears to be an NW/SE palaeochannel almost on the line of trench 76; this appears to have extended around the base of the ridge at the SE of Field 7 and appears as the dip in Trenches 62-66.

Trench 70

GPS N end: 377543, 823296 S end: 377535, 823226

Orientation: N/S Length: 70m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: N end thin topsoil to 250mm ,deepening to 600mm at S end.

Stratigraphy: Topsoil over stony gritty clay.

Features

Context No	Easting	Northing	Comment
139	377537	823245	Drain NE/SW to 377540, 823256
140	377541	823269	NW/SE drain cut

Trench 71

GPS N end: 377559, 8723283 S end: 377563, 823230

Orientation: N/S Length: 53m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: N end 260mm, deepening to 600mm by S end.

Stratigraphy: As Trench 70

Features

Context No	Easting	Northing	Comment
141	377562	823244	E/W stone drain
142	377562	823250	NNW/SSE drain cut along much of N end of trench from this point

Trench 72

GPS NW end: 377579, 823216 SE end: 377697, 823077

Orientation: NW/SE Length: 182m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: N end 250-300mm topsoil, deepening to 500mm in disturbed central area with drains. S end : 500mm.

Stratigraphy: Topsoil over gritty sand on stony clay.

Features

Context No	Easting	Northing	Comment
143	377669	823110	NE/SW drain
144	377662	823117	N/S drain along trench from this point to 377651, 823132
145	377645	823139	Modern stony sump/soakaway
146	377638	823147	N/S stone drain
147			NNW/SSE stone drain from 146. Running water
148	377599	823192	E/W clay drain



Illus 16 Field 8, Trench 72, looking SE

Trench 73

GPS NW end: 377560, 823210 SE end: 377682, 823062

Orientation: NW/SE Length: 192 m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: N end 600mm topsoil, rising to 300mm at ridge at 377569, 823199, deepening to 500mm in dip at 377596, 823166, with another shallow ridge before a further dip at 377623, 823133 and finally rising to 300mm at the S end of trench.

Stratigraphy: As Trench 72

Features

Context No	Easting	Northing	Comment
149	377680	823064	Patch c.1m across with some/rare charcoal. No evidence of date
150	377644	823108	E/W drain
151	377625	823131	E/W drain
152	377621	823135	E/W drain
153	377612	823146	E/W stone drain
154	377597	823165	Stony infill/soakaway c.5m across
155	377588	823176	E/W drain

Trench 74

GPS NW end: 377538, 823197 SE end: 377668, 823048

Orientation: NW/SE Length: 197 m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: N end 500mm topsoil, rises to 300mm over ridge, then deepens to 800mm in dip between 377589, 823139 and 377608, 823118. Rises again to another NE/SW ridge, then deepens into hollow at 377650, 823069, before rising to 400mm at S ridge.

Stratigraphy: As Trench 72

Features

Context No	Easting	Northing	Comment
156	377641	823079	Modern disturbance
157	377632	823089	Drain or soakaway
158	377622	823089	Irregular hollow with grey silt fill with some charcoal. 1.28m N/S x 600mm E/W. Maximum depth 140mm. 100% excavated. No finds and rare charcoal fragments. Section above very loose, suggesting modern.
159	377606	823119	E/W stone drain in base of dip
160	377596	823131	Drain/soakaway in base of dip
161	377591	823136	NNE/SSW stone drain in dip
162	377585	823143	N/S drain
163	377561	823171	N/S drain

Trench 75

GPS NW end: 377524, 823174 SE end: 377627, 823061

Orientation: NW/SE Length: 153m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: N end 300mm topsoil, deepening to 900mm in dip at 377584, 823108, then rising to S end of trench to 500mm.

Stratigraphy: As Trench 72

Features

Context No	Easting	Northing	Comment
164	377602	823088	E/W drain
165	377597	823093	N/S stone drain
166	377596	823095	N?S stone drain
167	377594	823097	N/S stone drain
168	377591	823100	Soakaway

169	377572	823120	E/W drain
170	377564	823130	E/W stone drain
171	377540	823156	Test pit

Trench 76

This trench was angled to follow the line of the road between the housing site and the Primary School site.

GPS NW end: 377508, 823120 SE end: 377599, 823067

Orientation: NW/SE Length: 108m Width: 2.1m

Depth above natural: 300mm at S end but dips to 1.3m from 377513, 823113 to 377581, 823073. This is a NW/SE gully, also sloping down to W towards the line of the river.

Stratigraphy: Topsoil over grey silt in dip to clay natural with stones.

Features None

6 The Finds

Two sets of artefacts were found.

Medieval/post-medieval finds

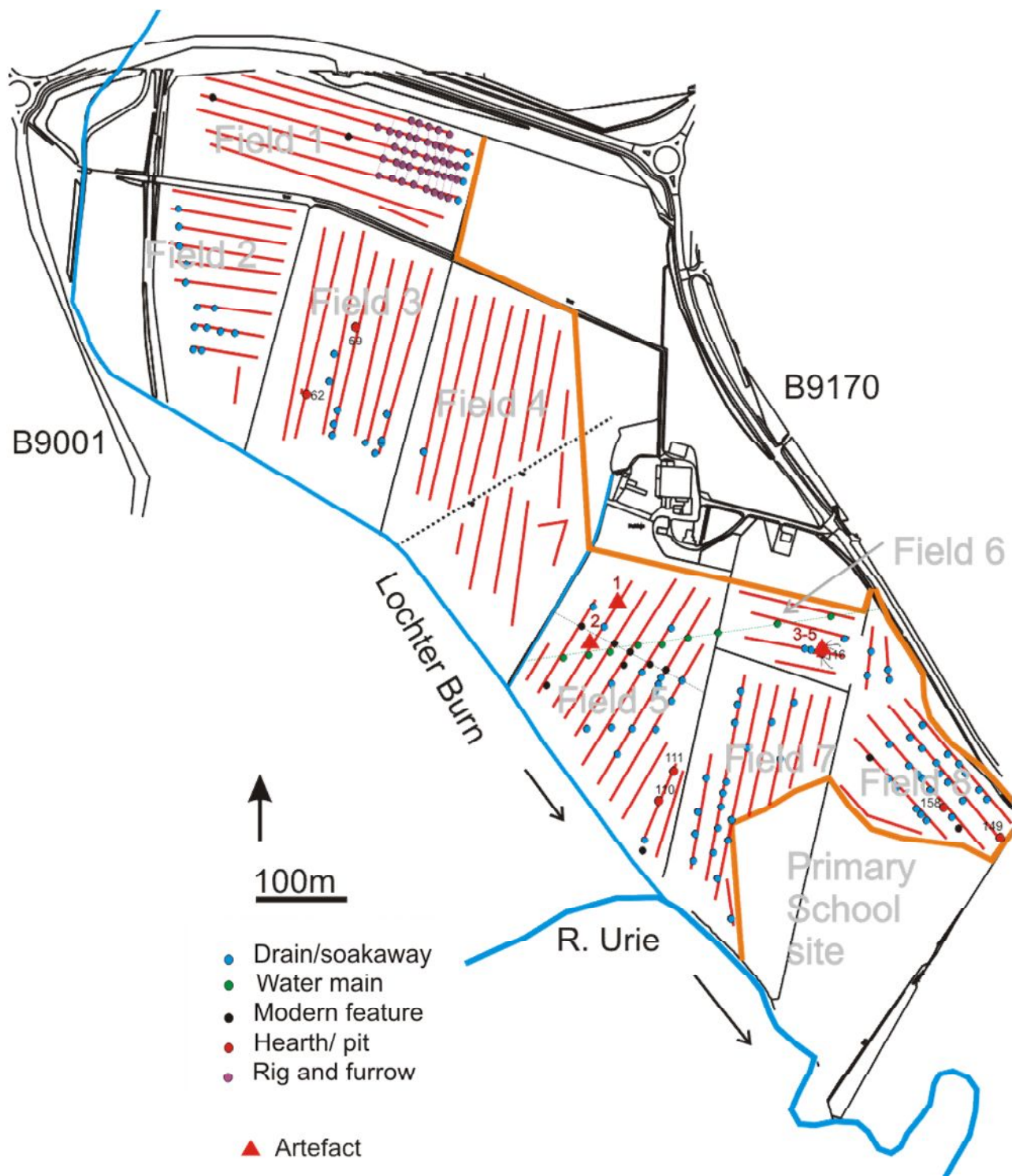
In Trench 44 there was a medieval or post-medieval handle sherd (SF 1) and a possible hone (SF 2). Both were at the N end of the trench, near the base of the topsoil, above natural. There were no related features. Although of little significance in themselves, these may indicate that, at the least, there was cultivation on the ground from the medieval/ post-medieval period. As their find spot lies near to the Portstown farmstead, which is situated on a prominent, localised hill/ridge, it is tempting to suggest, however tentatively, that there may have been a medieval/ post-medieval farm on the site.

Find No	Easting	Northing	Comment
1	377264	823319	Handle redware medieval/ post-medieval pottery. In grey silt in dip at base of subsoil
2	377236	823272	Possible hone. On sand natural

Prehistoric finds

The only prehistoric finds were from a small pit (Context 116) in Trench 58. The sherd of pottery appears to be of late Neolithic or Bronze Age date; it is too small to be diagnostic but appears to be from a large vessel. Charcoal from the pit may give a more exact date if the sample is suitable for radiocarbon dating.

Find No	Easting	Northing	Comment
3	377490	823266	Flint pebble. In 116/1
4	377490	823266	Small sherd (50 x30mm. 18mm thick) thick walled prehistoric pottery. In 116/2
5	377490	823266	Flint flake. In 116/2



Illus 17 Distribution of small finds

7 Discussion

The area of rig and furrow cultivation on the top of the hill in Field 1 (Trenches 1-5) corresponds to the evidence on Roy's map (para 4.1) of 18th-century cultivation around a settlement at Portstown. More rig and furrow has been recorded in the woodland E of the B9170 in the woods opposite the Portstown steading (para 4.2) and across the Lochter Burn on cropmark site NJ72SE0135 (para 4.2).

The medieval/post-medieval handle sherd found in Trench 44 (SF1) may indicate that the settlement had been in existence by the medieval period but at present this can only be regarded as very tenuous.

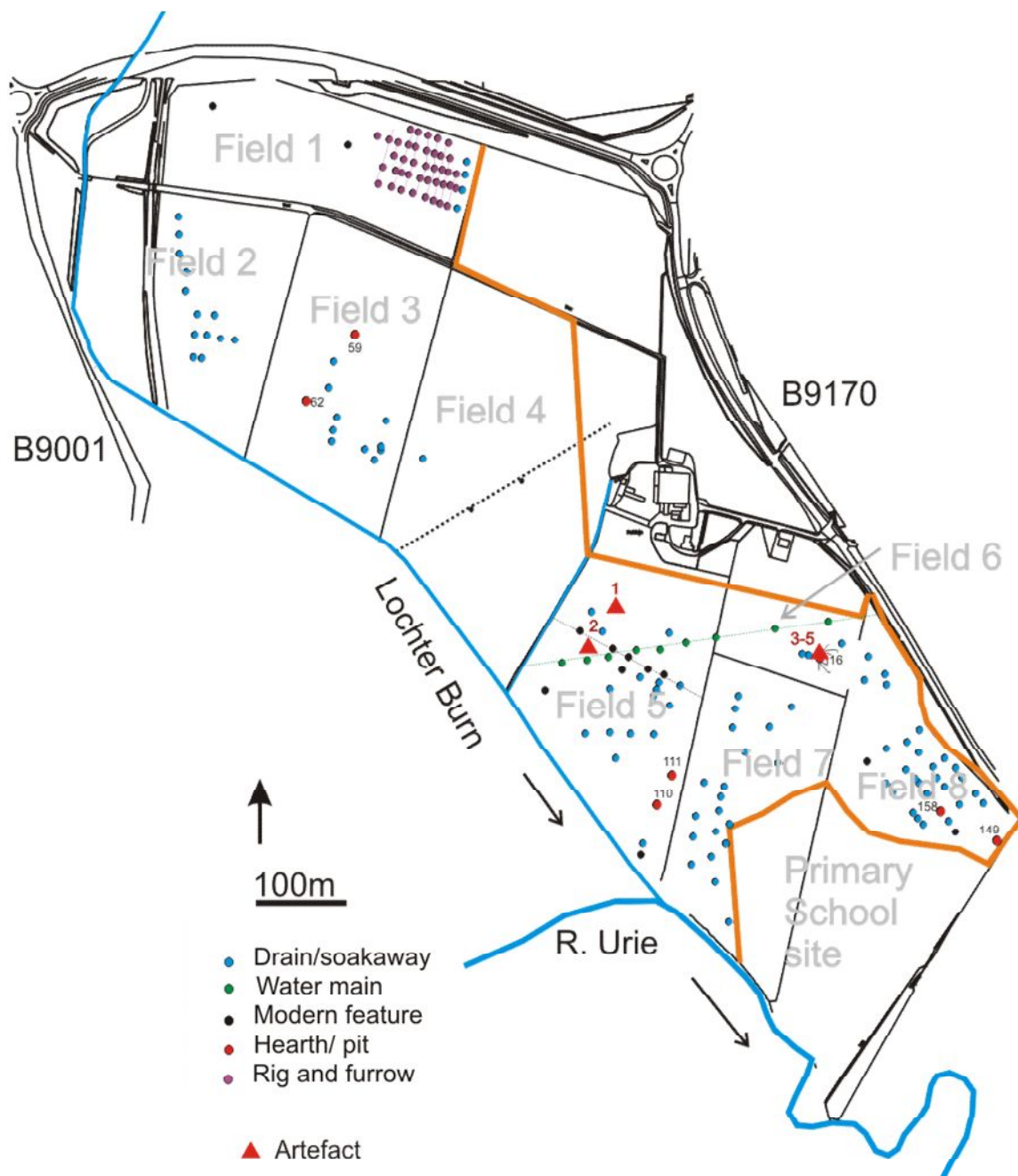
The paucity of prehistoric activity was initially surprising but is perhaps less so when looked at in relation to the landscape. Both the recent excavations (para 4.3: Roy 2005, Cameron 2014, Dalland and Cox 2014 and Ginnever 2015) and the two burial cairns at Shady Lea (para 4.2) lie along the higher ridge, predominantly E of the B9170, to the E of the present evaluation. Only the 2005 site was on the W of the road. This ridge (Illus 19) dominates the landscape, looking down over the lower ground towards the River Urie and the Lochter Burn. To the SW of the present site, cropmarks suggest another area of prehistoric settlement on a ridge overlooking the Urie (SMR: NJ72SE0135 and NJ72SE0117). While some settlement might have been expected on the higher part of the Portstown hill at the N/NE ends of Fields 1-4, the lack of even stray finds suggests that this was genuine, rather than a chance of survival. It is possible that the preferred sites for settlement were those on the ridges nearer the Urie.

As the pattern of drainage indicates, most of the lower ground on the present site was quite wet, with ground water running towards the burn and the river. The trenches showed that the ground was a series of ridges, more or less parallel to the water, with deep gullies or palaeochannels between them which had some iron pan formation over clay natural suggesting that they had been intermittently waterlogged. The overall impression is that the lower slopes of this site would have been, at least seasonally, wetlands around the very actively eroding courses of both the Lochter Burn and the Urie. If, as today, these flood plains were attractive to migrating geese, they would have been a useful resource.

Four small areas of burning (Trench 11 context 59, Trench 13, context 62; Trench 54, contexts 110, 111) may relate to transitory activity along the slopes above the burn.

There were no associated artefacts but samples from Contexts 59 and 62 may help to date this activity.

The small pit, Trench 58, Context 116, which yielded a sherd of pottery and two flints appears to have been a more formal deposition and may be of Late Neolithic or Bronze Age date; this may be confirmed by radiocarbon dating. Additional trenches on either side of this feature revealed no related structures; it may be regarded as an outlier of the activity on the ridges across the B9170 to the E.



Illus 18 Plan of the features and small finds



Illus 19 From SE corner of Field 7, beside Primary School site, looking SE across Field 8 towards the ridge on other side of B9170 where prehistoric occupation has been found. A: Approx position of recently excavated prehistoric settlement activity. B: Approx position of Shadylea cairns.

Impacts and Mitigations

8.1 Impacts There was little evidence of surviving archaeology. Where features survived, additional trenches were used to check if there were any related features. However, all appeared to be isolated. The paucity of artefacts, especially of flint, suggests that this was a genuine absence of settlement, rather than a matter of survival.

8.2 Mitigations

- (i) On the basis of the evaluation there is no perceived need for any further archaeological investigation on site.
- (ii) In order to date three of the small features that yielded sufficient charcoal for a possible radiocarbon date, three samples are being sent for identification and preparation of samples for dating at SUERC. When the results of the dating are available, these will be notified to the SMR.
- (iii) The lack of surviving archaeology within the evaluation area 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.

References

Cameron, A 2014 *Osprey Heights, Boynds Farm, Urieside Phase 2, Inverurie, AB51 6HL*. Unpublished Client Report.

Dalland, M and Cox, S 2014 *Results of an Archaeological Excavation at Boynds Farm, Inverurie* Unpublished Client Report.

Ginnever, M 2015 *Results of an Archaeological Excavation at Portstown, Inverurie* Unpublished Client Report.

Roy, M 2005 Urieside, Inverurie (Keithhall and Kinkell Parish) Evaluation in *Discovery & Excavation, Scotland*, Vol 6, 15

Appendices

Appendix 1: Catalogue of digital photographic record

Digital frame number	Content
Portstown	
001-005	Trench 1 looking W, rods indicate furrow of rig and furrow
006-007 008-011 012—13 014-015 016-017 018-019 020-021 022-023	Panorama from 376991,823697 to N To NE To E To SE To S To SW To W To NW
024-025 026-027	Panorama from 376994, 823663 to S To SW
028-030	Trench 8 looking N
031-033	Trench 8 looking S
034-038	Trench 11, Context 59
039	Trench 11 looking N. Context 59 indicated by rod
040-044	Trench 13, context 62
045	Field 2 looking NW to B9001
046	Field 2 looking SW to burn
047	Field 2 looking W

048	Field 2 looking SW to burn
049	Field 2, trench 25
050	Field 2
051-056	Field 3, trench 8, looking S to deep gully between 377023, 823564 to 377020, 823556
057-060	Looking N/NE from field 4 SE corner towards Fields 1-3
061	Looking N/NE from field 4 SE corner towards Filed 4 trenches 30-37
062-064	Field 5, trench 43. Disturbed ground over water main context 80
065-071	Field 5, trench 43. Water main context 80
072-075	Field 5. N end of trench 43, looking N. Iron pan
076-078	Field 5. Trench 43 looking S
079-084	Field 5. Trench 54, Context 111
085-101	Field 6. Trench 58. Pit 116
102-105	Field 7. Trench 64 looking N, showing deep dip
106-110	Field 7. Trench 63 looking N
111-	Field 7 looking NW from S end trench 63
112-114	Trench 69 looking S
115-132	Field 8, trench 72
133-136	From SE corner of Field 7, looking SE across Field 8 towards the ridge on other side of B9170 where prehistoric occupation has been found.
137-138	From SE corner of Field 7, looking NE