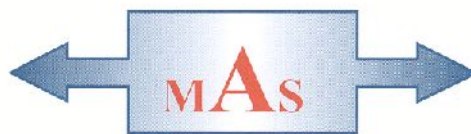


**WESTER CLOCHEASY  
URQUHART  
MORAY**



**- Archaeological Watching Brief -**  
Carried out 7<sup>th</sup> January & 18<sup>th</sup> January 2016  
by  
**Murray Archaeological Services Ltd**



**Report No: MAS 2016-01**

by

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**- Archaeological Watching Brief –**

**1. Background**

- 1.1 A Planning Application to Moray Council (15/01808/APP) for the construction of a Pot Ale Storage Lagoon at Wester Clockeasy Farm, Urquhart, Moray was granted permission subject to a condition ( Condition 4) requiring a programme of archaeological works in accordance with a written scheme of investigation agreed by the Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service. It was agreed that there would be a metal detector and walkover survey of the site under archaeological supervision followed by a watching brief to be maintained during groundbreaking work.
- 1.2 The Council's reason for imposing the condition was to observe and record any items of archaeological interest disturbed during the ground works. The Condition was applied in the context of PAN (Planning Advise Note) 2/2011, SPP and 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 Murray Archaeological Services Ltd was commissioned by McPherson Ltd, Aberlour, to undertake the work, part of which was carried out on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2016 and the remainder on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2016.

## 2. The Site

2.1 The site is situated c.0.5km E of Urquhart, N of a minor road between Lhanbryde and Garmouth and N of the A96. The lagoon will be directly to the E of the track leading to Wester Clockeasy Farm.

GPS: 329580, 862586 (centre of site)

Parish : Urquhart

2.2 The site had been used as an area to park machinery and for placing muck heaps and even piling timber. As a result it was deeply rutted and, in places (where for example muck had been piled, then loaded for spreading), already partly stripped. About  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the site was under water and in this area drainage channels and a pit for drainage had been dug in the past.

2.3 The area of the lagoon will be 36.5 x 40m. As there is to be hard standing for lorries turning, there is a margin of c.26m by the existing road to the W and c.10m to the S.



**Illus 1 General view during soil strip looking S**

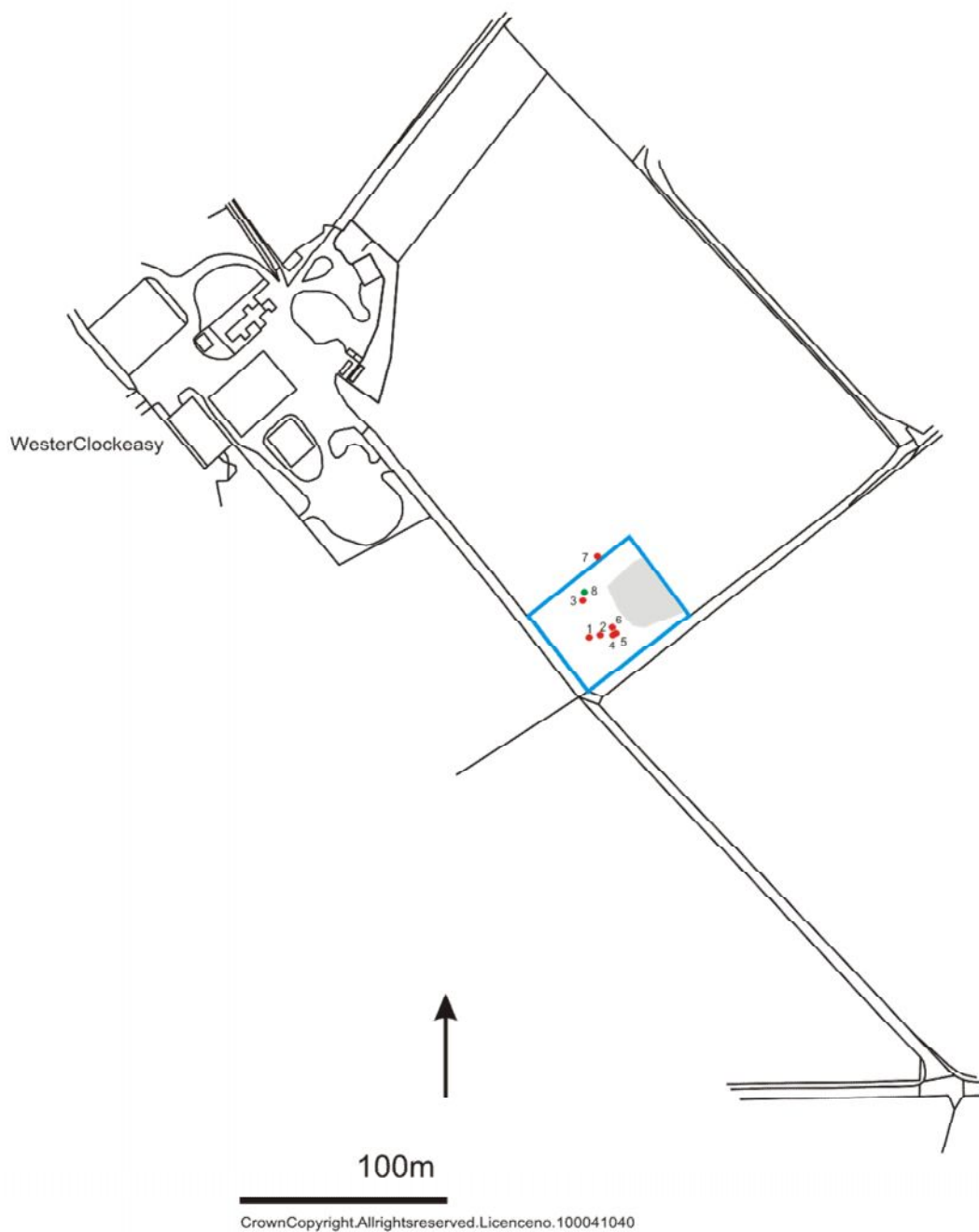


**Illus 2** General view of site 7<sup>th</sup> January 2016



**Illus 3** Waterlogged area.





**Illus 4 Location (site outlined in blue) OS map reproduced Crown Copyright. Licence 100041040**

### 3 Desk-top survey

- 3.1 A search was carried out in the Sites and Monuments Record, Archaeology Service, Aberdeenshire Council and in the Sites and Monuments Records of the Royal Commission for Ancient and Historic Monuments in Scotland (RCAHMS, now HES) through Canmore and Pastmap.

- 3.1.1 The site lies to the S of the site of the former Urquhart Priory (Moray SMR: NJ26SE0005. NMRS No: NJ26SE0005).
- 3.1.2 There is a documentary reference to the possible former existence of a manor at Urquhart (Moray SMR NJ26SE0042)
- 3.1.3 Fieldwalking and metal detecting finds have been made in fields E of the present site.

- Bronze Age barbed and tanged arrowhead. Moray SMR: NJ26SE0146 (NMRS NJ26SE129)
- French Coin 1621. Moray SMR: NJ26SE0139.
- Bishop Kennedy bronze alloy penny of James II. Moray SMR: NJ26SE0097
- Fragmentary Early Historic penannular brooch. Moray SMR: NJ26SE0082 (NMRS: NJ26SE111)

3.2 The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey maps were consulted.

Roy's Military Map of 1747-55 shows the land E of Urquhart under cultivation.

The 1<sup>st</sup> OS map (Elgin sheet VIII.15) of 1870 (published 1874) shows the area of the site as part of a cultivated field. There is no change on the 2<sup>nd</sup> OS map of 1903.



Illus 5 Detail of 1<sup>st</sup> OS map Elgin sheet VIII. 15 1870, pub 1874. Site indicated in red.  
[www.nls.ac.uk](http://www.nls.ac.uk)



Illus 6 Detail of Elginshire 008.15 1903. pub 1905. Site indicated in red. [www.nls.ac.uk](http://www.nls.ac.uk)

#### 4. The Metal detecting survey

##### 4.1 Methodology

A systematic metal detecting survey of the site was undertaken on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2016 by Alistair McPherson, MDG Archaeology, supervised by MAS Ltd. The machine used was a Teknetics T2SE operating at 13khz with a custom, ultimate 13inch coil to give greater coverage and depth, also more sensitivity to small items. Mr McPherson noted that ‘while searching I was switching between iron discrimination and all metal mode. This allows me to hear the ground mineralisation and the presence of iron in the ground relative to non-ferrous signals. Some areas of the search area were devoid of any response indicating that the natural sub strata was very close to the surface, if not the present surface’.



**Illus 7 Metal detector survey 7<sup>th</sup> January 2016**

#### 4.2 Results

With the exception of one 17<sup>th</sup>-century coin and two 19<sup>th</sup>-century coins, all finds were modern.

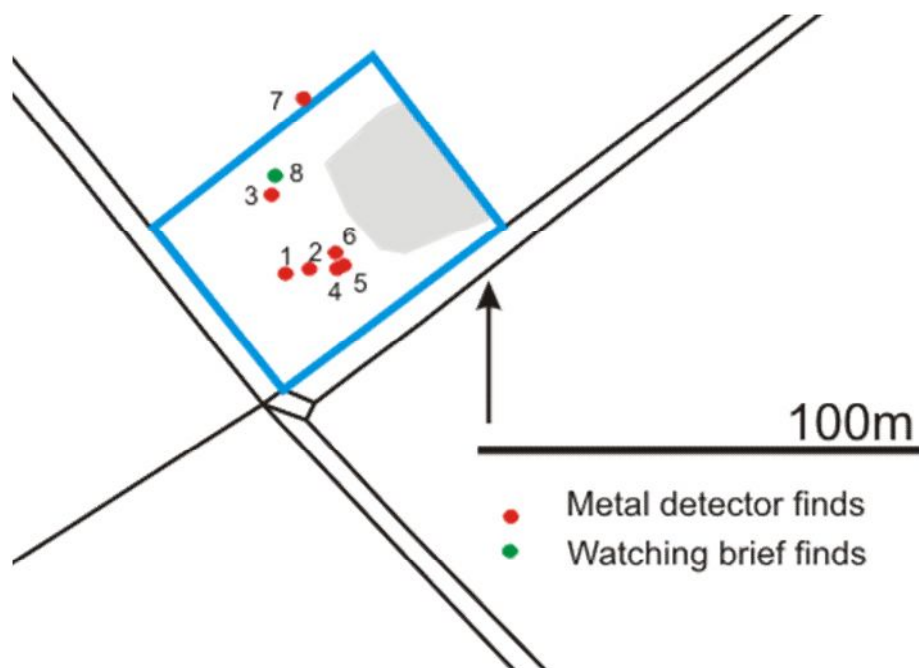
The area had been used as a machinery parking area and a number of iron fragments were clearly modern machinery parts. These were not retained.

The overall impression was of an area which had been partially stripped over the years and was very disturbed. The finds will be reported to SAFAP.

#### Metal Detector Finds

<b>SF NO.</b>	<b>ITEM</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>Easting</b>	<b>Northing</b>
SF 1	Decorated copper strip	Possibly modern (?)	329569.4	862574.8
SF 2	Copper Penny - Victorian	1883	329575.4	862575.8
SF 3	Copper ferrule (?)	Modern (?)	329566	862594.1
SF 4	Scrap Aluminium	Modern	329581.9	862575.9
SF 5	Scrap Aluminium	Modern	329583.2	862576.5
SF 6	Copper Penny - Victorian	1862	329581.3	862617.2
SF 7	Copper Turner of Charles I	Post-1642 (see Murray & Stewart, 1972)	329574	862617.2





**Illus 8 Detail of finds location. Site outline=blue. Grey shading = under water.**

## 5. The Watching Brief

### 5.1 Methodology

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.

All mapping was done with a Magellan Mobile Mapper 120 GPS and Glonass.

### 5.2 Results

Topsoil was a mid brown sandy loam with very few stones. Most of the stones appeared to be on the surface and may be the result of dumping. This overlay yellow/brown natural sand with occasional pebbles. Over much of the S and W of the site there was only c. 200mm of topsoil and in some areas this may have been partially scarped in the past. In the central area, to the W of the area of flooding, the natural sloped into a dip, with topsoil depths of up to 600-800mm (Illus 10). This appeared to be the result of natural silting.

The area under water was not watched as it had already been deeply disturbed. No features were identified.

Apart from the metal detected finds (above), a very abraded sherd of medieval/post-medieval redware pottery was found in the topsoil (Illus 8: No 8 at 329567.1, 862598.6.



**Illus 9** General view of soil stripping looking S



**Illus 10** View looking N of part of soil strip showing deep silting in central area

## 6. Impacts and Mitigations

6.1 Impacts There was no evidence of surviving archaeology other than the small scatter of finds found in topsoil. These vary in date from a medieval/post-medieval sherd of pottery to 19<sup>th</sup>-century coins, all within the range that might be expected in a field beside two roadways.

### 6.2 Mitigations

On the basis of the work undertaken there is no perceived need for any further archaeological investigation in the area.

## 7. References

J K R Murray, and B H I Stewart, 1972 *The Scottish Copper Coinages, 1642-1697*, British Numismatic Journal, Vol. 41, 105-35.

## Appendices

### **Appendix 1: Catalogue of digital photographic supplied to Moray SMR**

<b>Photographic catalogue</b>	
<b>Digital frame no</b>	<b>Content</b>
Wester Clockeasy	
1-11	Metal detector survey. 7 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2016
12-21	Soil strip looking S
22	Water logged area
23-25	Site during soil strip looking SSW
26	Detail of deep section looking SSW
27-28	Detail of deep section looking N
29-31	General views soil strip looking S